

2014/10

30 Oct 2014

Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in October 2014

Main talking points

Things have been pretty busy on all fronts this month as the long list of news items below indicates. For schools, the stand-outs include the Workload Challenge, Ofsted's consultation on future inspection arrangements and some of the exam data now coming out. For FE, AoC's submission to the Treasury and Glenys Stacey's FAB speech provide useful starting points while for HE, the three Reports listed continue to mark out the agenda there.

Key headlines from the month

- Early years. IFS question the value of the current entitlement
- Primary Futures. Programme of visits by business volunteers initiated
- Pupil motivation. EEF commissioned research shows it ain't all about the money
- Disadvantaged kids. The Social Mobility Commission issues 2 reports highlighting concerns
- Absence rates. Improved and at lowest rate for 8 years
- Exam results. Provisional figures for 2013/14 show a dip in nos reaching 5 GCSE benchmark
- Exam appeals. Ofqual stats reveal significant rise this year
- Maths. Survey reveals schools planning to increase teaching time at KS3 and 4
- Vision for literacy. Launched with cross-Party blessing
- Careers. Further report (from Sutton Trust) highlights concerns
- Teaching assistants. Independent review set up to develop professional standards
- Teacher Workloads. Politicians from all sides show support
- Ofsted. Consultation begins on new inspection arrangements
- Inspections. Ofsted shatters myths about lesson observations and other alleged requirements
- Underperforming schools. The PM looks to grant Regional Commissioners new powers
- Free schools. 35 more approved
- Trojan schools. Ofsted reports only slow progress
- 16-19 participation. Public Accounts Committee announces new inquiry
- Funding. EFA publish initial arrangements for 16-19 yr olds for 2015/16
- Functional Skills. Minister makes welcoming noises
- ESOL. The SFA confirms funding arrangements for 2014/15
- Voc Quals (1.) Ofqual confirms changes to accreditation arrangements
- VQs (2.) Edge survey confirms strong parental support
- Apprenticeships. More trailblazers announced
- FE. AoC confirms extent of college engagement with business
- FE teaching bursaries. Minister confirms continuation of scheme into 2016
- FE Commissioner. Writes to the sector with views on how to raise standards
- Uni applications. UCAS reveals drop in home applications at Oct deadline
- HE (1.) Quality Assurance. HEFCE announces new review
- HE (2.) UUK publishes report on impact of schools led teacher-training
- University hot and cold spots. HEFCE maps them out
- Unemployment. Significant drop in latest figures, down to 1.97m

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

- **16-19 Accountability Headline Measures: Technical Guide.** The DfE publishes its latest technical info for schools and colleges with more promised before 2016
- **England's schools and the middle tier.** The think tank IPPR makes the case for merging the regional commissioner and director of school standards role to make a strengthened middle tier
- **Cracking the Code: how schools can improve social mobility.** The first of two reports in the month from the Social Mobility Commission highlights the continuing attainment gap
- **Trained teachers to ensure every child's right to primary education.** UNESCO report on progress being made towards universal primary education where 4m more teachers are needed
- **Better inspection for all.** Ofsted launches consultation on a proposed new common inspection framework from 2015, with more frequent but shorter inspections for 'good' providers
- **Pulling together.** The CBI proposes more STEM graduates and better employer aligned skills funding as part of its proposals for strengthening UK supply chains

- **Social Mobility Report 2014.** The Commission's 2nd Annual State of the Nation Report indicates only slow progress and sets a number of challenges to help close the gap by 2020
- **Unleashing Metro growth.** The City Growth Commission publishes the latest broadside on devolving more powers and responsibilities including skills training to city regions
- **HEFCE draft business plan 2015-2020.** HEFCE consults on the five core areas of funding, regulation, research, institutions and analytical services that constitute its future operations
- **Financial health of the higher education sector.** HEFCE feels the financial pulse of the sector and finds it still beating strongly despite current challenges
- **Universities Challenged.** The Institute of Economic Affairs adds its views on tuition fees with a Paper calling for university set levies on future earnings rather than student loans
- **Guidance for Developers of Apprenticeships.** The BIS Dept issue the latest set of guidance to accompany Phase 3 of the Apprenticeship Trailblazers
- **AoC submission to the Treasury.** The Association of Colleges submit ten recommendations on funding for the FE sector as the Chancellor prepares for his Autumn Statement
- **Future colleges.** The 157 Group of colleges sets out its vision of colleges of the future operating as a central cog in the skills system
- **Oversight of Academies and maintained schools.** The National Audit Office examines how effectively the current oversight and intervention systems are

Speeches of the month

- Glenys Stacey's 2 October Key Conference **speech** explains how the qualification regulator is managing the current qualification reform programme
- Vince Cable's 6 October Conference **speech** announces plans for a single national minimum wage for 16-17 year olds
- Nick Clegg's 8 October Conference **speech** includes a promise to protect funding up to age 18 as one of 5 pledges intended to position the Party between the other two
- Matthew Hancock's 13 October Industrial Strategy **speech** sets out the role of the Strategy for manufacturing and other sectors
- Glenys Stacey's 14 October FAB Conference **speech** sets out the thinking behind changes to accreditation requirements for VQs and other quals
- Sam Gyimah's 21 October Policy Exchange **speech** makes a strong case for further development of school-led nurseries
- Nick Clegg's 22 October Public Sector **speech** pledges to cut back on the paperwork and other bureaucracy making the life and work of public servants like teachers so burdensome

Quotes of the month

- *"There's lots of things I lie awake at night worrying about. This is not one of them. We really shouldn't get exercised about it."* Vince Cable on tuition fee repayments
- *"Teaching isn't a job for the faint – hearted."* Nick Clegg gets to grips with the reality of teaching
- *"A Labour government would retain the primary curriculum and, in the main, continue with the GCSE changes."* The Shadow Ed Minister on Labour's approach to qual reform, in the main
- *"You can spot a good school in half an hour."* The Chief Inspector on the inspection reforms
- *"Social mobility in Britain is low and stalling and nowhere is this more apparent than in education."* The Social Mobility Commission on the importance of education
- *"We know that something funny happens when teenagers start to be slightly out of sync with the rest of the world."* The Education Endowment Fund investigates the nature of sleeping patterns on young people's learning outcomes

Word or phrase of the month

- To procaffeinate. To put things off till you've had a coffee

Steve Besley

Head of Policy

@SteveBesley

Policy Tracker on what happened in October 2014

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.