

2013/32

8 May 2013

## Pocket Watch – Some education ‘bits’ in the Queen’s Speech

### Introduction

There may not have an Education Bill among the list of Bills announced in the Queen’s Speech this week but it was a useful opportunity for the Government to update its position on a number of key policy areas all the same. Most of the information included in the accompanying supplementary announcements was pretty familiar but it was a useful reminder of where things currently stand. For education, these positional statements covered: the National Curriculum, exam developments, teachers’ pay and apprenticeships and traineeships

### Context

All in all 15 new Bills were announced largely responding to current high-profile policy issues such as social care, immigration and pensions. A couple of Bills of potential interest to the world of education include the long-planned for Local Audit and Accountability Bill, of interest because of the continued pressure on local funding and local accountability and secondly, the Deregulation Bill, intended to lift more ‘excessive’ regulations from employers and of interest in that this might enable employers to become more engaged in such areas as work experience and apprenticeships. Elsewhere, the Prime Minister in his commentary continued to stress the importance of growth, pointing to apprenticeships numbers and the proposed devolution of growth-related funding to local areas as evidence of this

### What about those other education announcements?

As suggested, much of the information provided here was familiar but some of the nuances were interesting as follows:

- National Curriculum. Three pointers stand out here. First, the importance of the difference between the core curriculum and the wider school curriculum, the former highly prescribed, the latter more stripped down to essential knowledge to encourage greater teacher creativity. Second, discontinuation of the current National Curriculum from this Sept, presented as an opportunity for teachers to prepare for the introduction of the revised Curriculum the year after. Third, languages at Key Stage 2 and Computing, both new and subject to Draft Orders for 2014
- Exams. Two strong messages here. First, that the Government intends to stick to its timescale for introducing new GCSEs and A levels and second, that the priority of creating a world-class qualification system remains as high as ever
- Teachers’ pay. Presented as an opportunity to remove barriers from rewarding teachers in line with performance and where revised guidance has already gone out and where updated pay scales will be published this August
- Apprenticeships and traineeships. Considerable developments referenced here including for apprenticeships, re-iteration of the pledge to publish an updated vision for the system based on the Richard principles this autumn and for traineeships, advance notice of the new Framework of Delivery, now formally published



**Steve Besley**

Head of Policy (UK and International)  
*Pearson Think Tank*

Pocket Watches are intended to provide quick, informal updates on 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.  
**Queen’s Speech. May 2013**