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## Policy Eye

Highlights of week ending Friday 15 July 2016



*(Welcome to Policy Eye, a weekly service from Policy Watch offering a regular round up of UK education headlines and stories from over the previous 7 days.)*

### The week summed up

“The qualities required in a modern prime minister certainly lie beyond the reach of most of us.” So wrote the biographer and Vice chancellor of the University of Buckingham, Sir Anthony Seldon as he reflected on the comings and goings this week at No 10, Downing Street. He went on to list the required qualities as: an iron constitution, a thick skin, an ability to remain calm, and a sharp intellect able to cut through the fog of constant information. There’re likely to be qualities in strong demand as we move on from another turbulent political week.

For those of us with a particular interest in education, the week has brought us three things.

First considerable moving not just of ministerial chairs but also of depts. There’s been no shortage of profiles of the new Education Secretary, both [Schools Week](#) and the [TES](#) for instance have excellent summaries but perhaps more intriguingly at the moment is the move to bring all of education and skills under one roof, ‘end-to-end, supporting people from early years through to postgrad study and work’ in the words of the announcement. A seamless join has always been an attractive option and has been attempted in various guises before but the core issue for any big dept is how the pecking order plays out; would skills get shoved down the order once schools and HE start shouting? [Wonkhe](#) and the [HEPI](#) have useful reflections on this.

Second, the changing of the leadership guard has brought in a new tone. In her only campaign speech before the dynamics changed, Theresa May focused heavily on the theme of a government and a country that works for everyone, she used the phrase six times in her opening salvo. Her speech on the steps of No 10 three days later, echoed this even more loudly. She’s promised more on school policy shortly but for the moment, the message is clearly one of aspiration and opportunity.

Third, and back to the education muttens, there’ve been some sharp reminders this week of key policy issues that remain whoever’s in charge. They include teacher recruitment, retention and training, school system reform and the future of science and research post Brexit. Each is referenced below but a quick pointer in each case.

On teachers, a priority signalled for the new Education Secretary by many people, this week has seen figures from both UCAS and the IfS on recruitment volumes and costs but also significantly, the splurge of reports on initial training and continuous professional development, all important. On school system reform, also in the new Education Secretary’s in-tray, the Education Committee and Education Policy Institute have been hosted important events this week with a more informed picture of performance emerging. On science post Brexit, the hope from the Chair of the Science Committee that the current Minister would stick around long enough to see things through rather captured another fast moving week.

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## Top headlines this week

- 'Church of England plans more schools.' ([Monday](#))
- 'Asian maths method offered to schools.' ([Tuesday](#))
- 'Private tutors must face full checks.' ([Wednesday](#))
- DfE to take on FE, skills and HE.' ([Thursday](#))
- 'Study reveals huge variations teacher training costs.' ([Friday](#))

## People/organisations in the news this week

### General Policy

- [Let's meet in the autumn](#). The Chair of the Education Committee wrote to the new Education Secretary, welcoming her to the role and proposing to invite her in the autumn to discuss policy plans
- [Status of EU nationals](#). The Cabinet Office released a Statement setting out the current position on EU nationals in the UK and UK nationals in the EU, indicating no change to current policy
- [Tech talent](#). The UK technology sector reported that confirming the status of EU residents and continuing to be able to recruit global talent were two of the biggest concerns facing members in a post referendum survey
- [Brexit trade-offs](#). The think tank IPPR published a couple of briefing papers on options around a single market and free movement as minds continue to concentrate on future Brexit negotiations and their implications for the economy, society and skills
- [Estuary expansion](#). The Thames Estuary Commission under the leadership of Lord Heseltine became the latest regional area to launch a growth plan which will be formally confirmed in this year's Autumn Statement

### HE

- [Responding to TEF2](#). Universities UK submitted its response to the consultation on implementing year 2 of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) accepting the basic principles but calling for a more measured approach to costs and benefits, a criteria-based approach to grading and the re-labelling of the 'meet expectations' baseline to 'good quality'
- [Uni applications](#). UCAS published the figures at the latest deadline point in the 2016 application cycle of 30 June showing an increase in EU applicants and a slight fall in male applicants
- [Teacher Training profiles](#). UCAS released 'end of cycle' data on last year's applications through its postgrad teacher training route showing women continuing to outnumber men 2:1 and applicants from less advantaged backgrounds outnumbering those from more advantaged ones
- [Carry on studying](#). The government announced changes that would make it easier for armed forces personnel and their families to continue to undertake distant learning when posted abroad



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- **End of term report.** HEFCE published its 2015-16 annual report and accounts which saw it allocate £1.36bn in teaching and £1.52bn in research funding this year as it starts to face a new era under the White Paper proposals
- **Watching the pennies.** The Office for Fair Access (OFFA) published a further report based on its monitoring of university access agreements suggesting that while universities and colleges were spending a lot on financial support for students not enough were measuring what effect it was having

## FE/Skills

- **No more BIS.** Reactions have been coming in, generally positive, to the news that FE and skills along with HE have been brought under a newly constituted DfE
- **Held to account.** The Skills Funding Agency published its annual report and accounts for 2015-2016 showing how it had supported 5.7m learners in over a thousand providers and had met all five objectives (though the one on the financial health of colleges was causing concern)
- **Preventing radicalization.** Ofsted reported on how well the FE sector was managing the implementation of the Prevent 'duty' six months on and found some variation in how it was being applied with some providers being more diligent than others
- **Resetting the threshold.** The government has accepted the recommendations from the Maynard Review on access into apprenticeships for those with disabilities meaning that in future the English and maths requirement will be set at entry level 3 rather than at level 1

## Schools

- **Fast track Free Schools.** Maintaining an interest in schools system reform to the end, David Cameron announced, in one of his final acts as PM, that approval had been given for a further 32 new free schools
- **Onwards and Upwards.** The Church of England announced that it was looking to open up 125 new schools over the next four years as it published a new Vision for Education at its General Synod
- **Teacher Training.** The Institute for Fiscal Studies published research conducted by the Nuffield Foundation showing that 40% of teachers who start initial training are no longer in a state school job five years later and how much this costs
- **Making ITT better.** The DfE finally published the three reports it commissioned last year looking into beefing up and strengthening initial teacher training (ITT) in each case largely accepting the formal recommendations made
- **Up to standard.** The DfE also finally published the report from the Expert Group who had been looking into developing standards for teachers' professional development and which called for the adoption of five core principles as the basis of future CPD
- **MAT Inquiry.** The Education Committee held two witness sessions as part of its ongoing inquiry into multi-academy trusts where issues about whether they'd grown too fast (Ans: yes,) should be inspected by Ofsted (Ans: yes) and what size was best (Ans: possibly 6-12 schools) featured
- **Academies 15 years on.** The Education Policy Institute and Sutton Trust hosted a conference to examine the impact and future of academies 15 years on from their original inception where research from the LSE provided further evidence of variable impact by some academy chains



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- **'Shanghai maths.'** The Schools Minister announced that following an evaluation from Sheffield Hallam University of the teacher exchange pilot, the so-called Shanghai maths mastery model would be rolled out with government funding across nearly half of the primary school sector from this autumn
- **More maths.** The government finally confirmed the terms of reference for the Smith Inquiry into the feasibility of compulsory maths up to age 18, announced in the 2016 Budget and due to report back before the end of the year
- **Executive Heads.** The NFER along with the National Governors' Association and Future Leaders Trust published a report on the growth of Executive heads noting that clearer definition and career pathways may be needed as their numbers expand

## Tweet(s) of the week

- "HE people who think they are best served inside an education budget line with schools – with major budget and cost problems – are mad." [@xtophercook](#)
- "Summer holidays revealed as one of the loneliest times of the year for young people." [@Independent](#)
- "If you want to know what applying for acting work feels like, it's like all the journalists shouting unanswered questions outside Downing Street." [@ProResting](#)
- "We need a general election ASAP. Not because of Brexit. I'm just not spending the next 4 years in a dress." [@rorybremner](#)

## Word or phrase(s) of the week

- The 3 Rs of classroom behaviour management. According to the report this week from Tom Bennett's group which has been looking at strategies that should be included in initial teacher teaching, the 3R's that trainee teachers need to develop are: Routines, Responses, Relationships. In summary, structured classroom routines, crafted responses to deal with confrontation, and understanding relationships

## Quote(s) of the week

- "I'll be setting out my own plans for schools policy in the coming weeks" – Theresa May
- "I take pride in three things (as minister for skills and planning:) the introduction of the apprenticeship levy; the development of the Skills Plan; and the introduction of permitted development rights" – Nick Boles lists his legacy in his resignation letter
- "We very much hope you're going to stick around" – the Chair of the Science and Technology Committee hopes the HE and Science Minister will still be around to discuss post Brexit developments
- "I have already written to sir Michael Wilshaw to ask Ofsted to take into account when inspectors examine schools, the fact that this is the first year of much more challenging tests and a much more challenging curriculum" – Schools Minister Nick Gibb aims to re-assure MPs during this week's debate on SATs
- "All I can urge is a resolution as quickly as possible" – Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University urges the government to clarify the future status of EU students and staff as soon as possible



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- “The post’s title is, in full, ‘Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills. That is a heck of a lot of responsibilities” – The Institute of Economic Affairs reflects on the challenges facing a Chief Inspector
- “Glaring omission” – the failure to include much of behaviour management in initial teacher training programmes according to Behaviour ‘expert’ Tom Bennett
- “We’re in danger of teaching a whole generation of kids how to make a crystal meth, leaving little time for them to create a beautiful sculpture” – the actress Liz Hurley offers her thoughts on the English education system

## Number(s) of the week

- 44%. How many Ministers in the new Cabinet went to Oxbridge according to research from the Sutton Trust (44% equally went to state schools)
- 750,000. How many more school places will be needed by 2025 according to latest school census research
- 674,890. How many people had applied for full-time courses to UKHE by 30 June according to the latest stats from UCAS
- £3.47bn. The amount of government funding managed by the Skills Funding Agency over the last year
- £23,000. Average per trainee costs of initial teacher training which later rises to £38,000 based on dropout rates five years later according to IfS commissioned research
- 38. The number of schools out of the original group of 48 who committed to changing their approach to teaching maths following their involvement in the China-England maths exchange, according to an official evaluation report by Sheffield Hallam University
- ‘£300. How much a quarter of parents spend on their daughter’s prom dress according to a recent retail survey (it’s a bit cheaper for boys at £200)

## What to look out for next week

- MPs debate the freezing of the student loan repayment threshold (Monday)
- Second Reading of the HE and Research Bill (Tuesday)
- Universities UK Conference on ‘Understanding Opportunities around Degree Apprenticeships’ (Tuesday)
- IFS Report on ‘Living Standards, Poverty and Inequality in the UK 2016’ (Tuesday)