

2014/12

19 Dec 2014

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

Main talking points

Some important announcements this month on careers, a College of Teaching, qualification development and performance, and HE but it's the Autumn Statement at the start of the month that provides the strongest messages for next year and beyond

Key headlines from the month

- KS2 tests. The DfE confirm summer test results
- SEND. The government puts more money in to support the new special needs system
- GCSE Science. Ofqual consults on assessments of practicals
- GCSEs in Hist, Geog, Ancient, Modern Languages. Ofqual consults on regulations
- Maths. Government confirms introduction of maths/further maths A/AS deferred to Sept 2017
- Core maths. Six new quals announced
- Character in schools. Significant announcements from all sides
- PISA tests. 2018 tests to include digital competences
- Exam reforms. Education Secretary tells Education Committee things are on course
- Careers. Education Secretary announces a new independent advisory company
- Grammar Schools. Conservative Group launches campaign for more
- College of Teaching. The government comes out in support and launches consultation
- Ofsted (1.) Consultation closes on proposed new common inspection framework
- Ofsted (2.) Latest Annual Report points to 'stalling secondaries'
- 16-19 English and maths. The EFA update funding conditions following latest developments
- VQs. Approved quals for Sept 2015 teaching published
- Digital Skills. The PM announces a new College to train future digital innovators
- QCF. Ofqual announces the timetable for dismantling
- Apprenticeships. Target of 2m starts under this government reached
- FE outcome measures. Further consultation due in 2015
- National Colleges. Vince Cable announces 4 more
- LEPs. Government publishes accountability framework
- HE QA arrangements. Steering Group confirms discussion document due in New Year
- Postgrads. HEFCE sets out interim funding arrangements
- Uni research. Results of latest review exercise released

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

- **Early Years Literacy Survey.** Second annual survey report by the National Literacy Trust and Pearson finds technology a bonus for those who need the most help with reading
- **Autumn Statement 2014.** The government lays out its plans for future growth and improved productivity but with a further sting of more cuts
- **Economic and Fiscal Outlook.** The Office for Budget Responsibility predicts higher growth at 3% and 2.4% for the next two years but a fall to 2.2% the year after
- **Do students swing elections?** According to a report by the Higher Ed Policy Institute they do and they could 'swing' some dozen marginal seats in the 2015 election
- **Business-University Collaboration.** The BIS Committee calls for the science, innovation and research budgets to be protected following its inquiry into HE-Business links
- **National Curriculum KS3 and 4 framework document.** The DfE adds a final piece to the jigsaw in the shape of the KS4 science programme of study
- **Investigation into financial support for students at alternative HE Providers.** The National Audit Office expresses concerns about funding, drop-out rates and quality issues
- **FE and Skills: implementing the Simplification Plan.** The National Audit Office finds over 30 commitments implemented but plenty more still to do
- **A tale of two classrooms.** The think tank Demos publishes a collection of essays on tackling the attainment gap for the most disadvantaged
- **Will we ever have a fair education for all?** The Fair Education Alliance of 25 leading organisations calls for a re-distribution of the pupil premium in its first report card

- **The economic value of key intermediate qualifications.** The DfE costs out the value to the economy of the numbers reaching appropriate L2 qualifications
- **A world-class teaching profession.** The government invites proposals to help sort out how the new independent College should operate when it starts in 2016
- **Avoiding the same old mistakes.** The think tank IPPR considers what lessons can be learnt about 14-19 reform from Australia and the Netherlands
- **Careers of the Future.** Train drivers to technicians feature in the top 40 jobs for the future listed by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills
- **Technical and vocational qualifications for 14-19 year olds.** The Dept publishes the lists of tech and voc quals approved for first teaching from Sept 2015 and first reporting in 2017
- **Outcome based success measures.** The government confirms a further bout of consultation is needed as it responds to earlier proposals
- **Average Earnings Post Study.** BIS publishes new estimates showing increases in annualised earnings between 2010 and 2013 for L2/3 learners in FE and for apprentices
- **Ofsted Annual Report.** Ofsted's latest report on the education system finds a familiar mixed bag with the primary and FE sectors improving but concerns remaining around some secondaries
- **LEP Assurance Framework.** The government moves to support the devolution drive with a strengthened national accountability framework
- **Delivery of Summer 2014 General Qualifications.** Ofqual confirms that it will overhaul the enquiries about results system as it reflects on this year's summer exams
- **Effective Practices in Post-16 Vocational Maths.** The ETF ponders research evidence about how best to tailor maths learning for young adults who continue to struggle with it
- **Our plan for growth.** The government launches a new science and innovation strategy built around six elements and including a big emphasis on STEM subjects and digital skills

Speeches of the month

- George Osborne's 3 December **Autumn Statement** includes money for careers, postgrads and science research but warns of more cuts to come for at least the next 3 years
- Tristram Hunt's 8 December Demos **speech** sets out Labour Party plans for helping schools and families develop character in young people
- Sir Michael Wilshaw's 10 December Annual Report **speech** reflects on some of the reasons why primary schools are improving but secondary schools, in some areas, are struggling

Quotes of the month

- *"The measures I announce today are not a net giveaway but actually tighten the public finances a little."* The Chancellor tightens the belt in the Autumn Statement
- *"One thing is sure-if we move in anything like this direction, whilst continuing to protect health and pensions, the role and shape of the state will have changed beyond recognition."* The IFS considers potential long-term effects of cuts on public services
- *"I'm delighted to see the QCF go."* Alison Wolf on the funeral notice for the adult qual framework
- *"Character, resilience and the ability to bounce back: it's what makes us British."* The Shadow Education Secretary on building character and spirit in schools
- *"Things would be healthier if we would all stop thinking about Ofsted quite so often."* The Gen Sec of the NAHT on keeping our thoughts to ourselves
- *"We don't need more tinkering with the existing system: we need a new system."* The former High Master of St Paul's School on what the education system really needs

Word or phrase of the month

- 'Al desco.' Having to take lunch at your desk

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Policy Tracker on what happened in December 2014

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