

2015/10

30 Oct 2015

Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in October 2015

Main talking points

Teacher recruitment, exam performance data, apprenticeships and the funding of high-level skills top the headlines this month where 'quotes of the month' pretty much capture the current mood

Key headlines from the month

- iPads. A third of pre-school kids now have one according to research
- Reception assessment. NUT leads the handing in of a petition against baseline assessment
- Foundation stage. 70% of pupils at required levels in latest government figures
- Primary schools. Come in for praise in Chief Inspector's monthly commentary
- Numeracy projects. EEF trials new resources to help with primary mental maths
- School absences. PM announces new tougher truancy rules
- School holidays. LGA call for more reasoned approach
- School types. Education Secretary approves new grammar school site in Kent
- School sizes. Local councils plan to increase intake in many secondary schools
- School funding. Likely to be down by 8% over next 4 years according to IfS
- Exam appeals. Ofqual due to consult on possible changes
- Performance data. Government publishes interim figures from this year's exams
- Destination data. Latest unofficial data shows 73% participation by 18 yr olds
- Work experience. BCCs call for restoration of this for under 16s
- Careers. Careers and Enterprise Co launch new £5m Investment (support) Fund
- Mindfulness. New report published calling for training in schools
- Teachers. NUT survey suggests workload proving unbearable for many
- Maths teachers. 10% more trainees needed next year under latest government modelling
- Teacher recruitment. Education Committee to hold one-off session
- Workload Challenge. 3 new groups under way
- Education and Adoption Bill. Moves to 2nd Reading in the Lords
- Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill. Progresses to 2nd Reading in the Commons
- Functional Skills. BIS calls on ETF to lead new development programme
- FE. BIS confirm latest area-review schedule
- Apprenticeships. Ofsted critical of some provision for younger people
- Apprenticeship levy. Consultation closes with employers expressing concerns
- Devolution. Sheffield City latest region to sign up for local growth deal
- HE applications. UCAS and others commit to anonymous forms to remove bias
- 2016 applications. UCAS report latest figures as of 15 Oct deadline
- University websites. Which? complain that some fail to have up-to-date info on fees

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

- **Making Apprenticeships Work.** C/G's Industry Skills Board includes a UCAS style application system among its 25 proposals to reform the apprenticeship system
- **Levels of Success.** The Sutton Trust examines the earnings potential of apprenticeships v degrees and finds many best apprenticeships offer better returns than some non-Russell degrees
- **Funding for disadvantaged pupils.** The Public Accounts Committee reports on its review into the pupil premium and concludes that although its helped, more could be done to close the gap
- **Annual Qualifications Market Report for 2013/14.** Ofqual reports on the size and nature of the market which saw 16m certificates issued and 166 regulated awarding bodies in place
- **The Contribution of FE and Skills to Social Mobility.** BIS's commissioned report highlights the contribution of FE in general and voc quals in particular in hitting core social mobility targets
- **University Technical Colleges.** The DfE updates its guidance for new applicants
- **FE Statistical First Release.** BIS publishes latest data on learner participation and attainment showing apprenticeship starts up but only modest increases at 16-19 and at higher-level
- **Provisional GCSE and equivalent results 2014/15.** The DfE publishes provisional data earlier this year showing a slight increase (to 52.8%) in numbers getting 5 A*-Cs
- **A level and other level 3 results 2014/15.** The DfE also publish early picture of A level performance showing familiar traction of slight drop in A*s but overall pass rate up to 98.7%

- **Education and Adoption Bill.** House of Lords Library explains all in a helpful summary of the Bill's proposals for their Lordships
- **Higher, Further, Faster, More.** The think tank Policy Exchange urges the BIS Dept to consider re-assigning HE funds to support FE higher-level skills training
- **Apprenticeships: developing skills for future prosperity.** Ofsted points the fingers as it finds apprenticeships failing to meet the needs of some young people and employers
- **Intervening in failing, underperforming and coasting schools.** The DfE updates guidance on schools causing concern and issues consultation on new coasting and intervention criteria
- **Why Teach?** Pearson/LKMco ask the question and conclude that for many teachers it's being able to make a difference to young people's lives that really counts
- **It's the finance, stupid.** HEPI collates essays from leading commentators on the decline in p/t student numbers and, as the title argues, suggests money's got a lot to do with it
- **Higher Education Review: 2014/15 Findings.** QAA reports back on its latest round of peer reviews of 24 HEIs and 62 FECs and finds enhancement of learning a concern for the latter

Speeches of the month

- George Osborne's 5 October Conference **speech** announces the creation of a new National Infrastructure Commission to help oversee the push towards local skills and growth
- Nicky Morgan's 6 October Conference **speech** promises greater provision of childcare opportunities and further 'raising of the bar' on standards
- David Cameron's 7 October Conference **speech** includes commitments to more academies and Free Schools and a registration scheme for religious supplementary schools
- Glenys Stacey's 8 October HMC **speech** sets out to soothe independent sector concerns about exam marking arrangements, appeals procedures, qualification reform and much more
- Glenys Stacey's 22 October FAB Conference **speech** highlights the changing nature of the qualification system with its impact on regulation and awarding organisations
- Sir Michael Wilshaw's 22 October CBI **speech** challenges schools, FE providers, employers and government to help improve apprenticeship arrangements for young people

Quotes of the month

- *"Learning is about so much more than just filling in the right bubble."* President Obama reacts to concerns from American teachers about too much testing
- *"Early indications from the regions showed that colleges could be forced into shotgun marriages."* Labour's FE Minister on marrying in haste as a result of area-based reviews
- *"We want to see a new politically independent Levy Board setting the rate based on clear evidence with the funds ring-fenced."* The CBI respond to the apprenticeship levy consultation
- *"We do not believe that coasting should be about isolated dips in performance but about identifying schools which have consistently not stretched their pupils sufficiently over a number of years."* The DfE incorporates the stretch challenge in its coasting consultation
- *"This does not reflect a change in this government's position on selective schools."* The Education Secretary on the decision to allow a new grammar school site
- *"It is not clear to me that paying markers more of its own will deliver improvement although of course we don't argue against this."* Ofqual Chief Executive confirms it's not all about the money
- *"This is a goldilocks scenario. It must be neither too fast nor too slow. We need a gap of at least 2 years between design and implementation."* The NAHT's Gen Sec on school funding reform
- *"Schools shouldn't be places where business people drop their kids off at the beginning of the day like they drop off their dry cleaning."* The Chief Inspector on employer engagement

Word or phrase of the month

- *'Gig work.'* No 9-5 jobs anymore, more gig work instead
- *'Self-serving generation.'* Kids who turn to google for anything from careers to homework

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