

2013/9

30 Sept 2013

Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in September 2013

Main talking points

It's been Party Conference season this month and the main political Parties have been carefully positioning themselves as the build up to 2015 continues. Education topics attracting attention have included: meals, where Lib-Dems have proposed extending free school meals to younger and older recipients and Labour have called for breakfast clubs in primary schools; exams where Michael Gove has stepped in to curb early GCSE entry; and apprenticeships where the Lib-Dems have proposed them as part of a unified 14-19 system and Labour have called for big employers to train more home grown recruits. Elsewhere a number of important reports have heralded the start of the new 'school year' including for schools the (nearly complete) National Curriculum, for colleges new accountability proposals for 16-19 and for HE, the launch of FutureLearn and an interim report from UCAS on the 2013 recruitment picture

Key headlines from the month

- SATs. Maths and writing slightly up, reading slightly down in this year's figures
- Free school lunches. Reception, Yrs 1 and 2 and eligible post 16s can line up from 2014
- National Curriculum. Final version out, build up begins
- Schools. 93 Free Schools, 13 Studio Schools, 12 UTCs all prepare to begin life
- GCSE. Early entries curbed
- Tutors. Nearly 25% of 11-16 yr olds have them according to Sutton Trust survey
- School improvement. Ofsted report 9% increase in rate of improvement
- English/maths. 16-18 yr olds without C grade GCSE prepare to plough on
- Careers guidance. CIPD, Pearson and Ofsted highlight further concerns
- 16-19. Consultation on new accountability measures launched
- Apprenticeships. Labour's Skills Taskforce call for L3 gold standard model
- Education and Training Foundation. Advertises for key roles
- Employer Ownership Pilots. Further successful bidders announced
- SFA. Consult on new business rules for funding adult qualifications
- Uni fees. Lib-Dems hold off further rethink until after 2015
- Uni choice. Head north for 'fun' according to latest Which? survey
- MOOCs. The FutureLearn online platform launches with 21 unis on board

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

- **Requires Improvement.** The Centre for Social Justice continues its Breakthrough Britain series with some alarming data on the problems facing deprived children as they start school
- **Where student fees go.** Universities UK deploys case study evidence to show fee income being ploughed back into improving facilities, outreach and teaching and learning
- **Science Education: have we overlooked what we are good at?** The NFER think we have and caution against throwing out the baby with the bathwater with the current exam reforms
- **Funding apprenticeships through PAYE.** The UK Commission makes the case for the tax system option in its submission to the current consultation on funding apprentices
- **The Impact of Teach First on school and dept performance.** The IoE goes through the performance data to highlight the impact Teach First teachers can have
- **Student number controls.** HEFCE outlines some changes to recruitment for 2014/15 following earlier consultation
- **How to use the Innovation Code in 2013/14.** The Skills Funding Agency shifts the emphasis on to Entry and Level 4 as it updates the Code for a further year
- **General Conditions of Recognition.** Ofqual undertakes some fine tuning for the latest set of conditions to be applied for 2013/14
- **Going in the right direction?** Ofsted finds careers guidance isn't in this latest Report on what is fast becoming a vexed area
- **Careers Guidance Action Plan.** The Government lists 20 proposed actions as it responds

- **Growth Dashboard.** The Government updates the data on UK economic performance and growth measures
- **The Wider Benefits of International HE in the UK.** Not all are easy to quantify but they range widely across the economy, society and HE generally as this latest BIS Report identifies
- **16-19 Accountability Consultation.** The Government highlights key measures including attainment, completion, progress and destination in its latest accountability consultation
- **The National Curriculum for England.** Just Key Stage 4 English, maths and science to come but the new, slimmed down version is published ready for a 2014 start
- **Annual Qualifications Market Report 2013.** Ofqual's comprehensive analysis comes with dedicated schools and FE sections this time and no shortage of data for the enthusiasts
- **A Cloudy Horizon.** Pearson's latest summary of careers service in its 2020 Survey finds little sunlight as it charts service diminution over the last couple of years
- **Changes to the System of School Organisation.** The Dept consults on some further freedoms for school structures and systems
- **The Maturing of the MOOC.** Sounds like a film title but in fact heralds an important moment for UKHE as it enters the digital age with a swathe of online courses
- **A revolution in apprenticeships.** Labour's Skills Taskforce continues the trend towards employer ownership but puts the emphasis on Level 3 in the first of three final Reports

Speeches of the month

- Michael Gove's 5 Sep Policy Exchange speech reminds any doubters that teaching remains a valued and noble profession which he says he reveres
- Matthew Hancock's 5 Sept Ofsted speech focuses on the three main accountability weapons at present: high-quality information; minimum standards; tougher inspections
- Vince Cable's 11 Sept Industrial Strategy one-year on speech charts progress made and sees strengthening the skills supply chain as essential for UK competitiveness
- The President's 12 Sept UUK Conference address outlines four issues facing the HE sector: student funding; research and capital funding; regulation; international positioning
- Elizabeth Truss's 18 Sept CBI speech explains how the Government is transforming the school curriculum and asks for employers' support in 3 areas: maths; languages; science
- Stephen Twigg's 22 Sept Conference speech lists work exp tasters in primary, higher standards in FE and reversing the current changes to the AS level as key priorities

Quotes of the month

- *"More tough choices will be required after the next election to find many billions of further savings and anyone who thinks those decisions can be ducked is not fit for Government."* George Osborne throws down a challenge
- *"Offering free taster courses online is a no-brainer."* One Vice-Chancellor on the MOOCs revolution
- *"Whenever I can, I give thanks for their work not just privately but on any public platform I'm given."* Michael Gove comes to praise teachers, everywhere
- *"If this change goes ahead, we will reverse it."* Stephen Twigg on de-coupling the AS level
- *"There is time and space in the school day and each week, term and year to range beyond the National Curriculum specifications."* The DfE on the space created by the new slimmed down National Curriculum

Word or phrase of the month

- *'BOYD: Bring your own device.'* Important reminder for all meeting enthusiasts now
- *'Digital Storefront.'* What all leading providers should have

Steve Besley

Head of Policy (UK and International)

Pearson Think Tank

It is also possible to follow some of the team with [Steve Besley](#) and [Louis Coiffait](#) on Twitter, and to subscribe to our [YouTube](#) and [Vimeo](#) channels.

Policy Tracker on what happened in September 2013

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