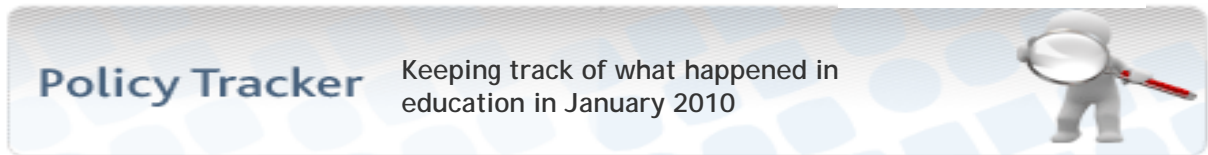


POLICY TRACKER

2010/01

28 January 2010



Main Talking Points

Snow, the economy and general election pledges have been the main talking points for education this month. In the end, few exams were lost to the snow but Ofqual was kept busy. On the economy, the country 'limped' out of recession but Ernst and Young warned of "a decade of painful adjustment" as disturbing reports came in on child poverty, NEETs, economic inequality and the impact of the recession on some big cities. On the election front, things have started to hot up with significant announcements made this month on health, schools, and families

Key headlines from the last month

- *Primary.* The government confirms details of its KS1 Guarantee
- *Money.* The new PSHE will see pupils taught about money from 2011
- *Science.* The 3D character Scimorph arrives to support science
- *Coursework.* Ofqual publish new guides for parents and teachers
- *Perf Tables.* Final stats for 2009 exams confirm 49.8% get 5 A-Cs inc Eng/ma
- *NEETs.* The Prince's Trust launches a new campaign to help 16-24 yr olds
- *Quangos.* The Tories propose a future Office of Budget Responsibility
- *Schools Bill.* 2nd Reading sees heated debate on the School Report Card
- *HE.* Stats reveal 62% of students gained a 1st or 2.1 last year
- *Jobs.* Figures drop to 2.46m and 927,000 for 16-24 yr olds

Reports of the month

- *Treasury Select Committee Report on the Pre-Budget Report 2009.* The Committee highlight concerns about growth forecasts, youth unemployment and economic uncertainty in a lukewarm verdict on December's Report
- *DCSF Select Committee Report on School Accountability.* A robust report on "the bewildering array of new initiatives" used in school accountability. Unsurprisingly the Committee plump for more self-evaluation
- *'Improving the skills system.'* The latest report on the 'dysfunctional' skills system, this time by Policy Exchange calls for an end to Train to Gain, RDAs and qualification targets and the lifting of the heavy hand
- *'The Economic Value of Intermediate Vocational Education and Qualifications.'* This report commissioned by the UK Commission finds many Voc Quals lead to wage and employment dividends but also that a lot depends on the type and level of qual and how it is achieved
- *'The 2009 evaluation of QCF regulation.'* Ofqual's 2 year evaluation of QCF regulation notes amongst its 12 conclusions "an encouraging picture of the quality of provision" but a need to be vigilant on compliance and IT systems
- *School Manifesto.* The latest part of the Conservative draft Manifesto focuses on raising the lot of teachers, providing greater choice but more rigour for the curriculum and a new 'independent' state school system

- *'Families and Relationships' Green Paper.* Ed Balls releases the government's latest set of family friendly pledges: more flexible employment rights; clearer role for grandparents, support for Dads and more help when it comes to relationship breakdowns
- *'Trends in young participation in HE in England.'* Latest HEFCE research finds participation trends up and a notable increase, up 30% over the last 5 years, in those entering HE from disadvantaged backgrounds
- *Public Accounts Committee Report on Train to Gain.* The Committee go for the jugular with a number of concerns on expectations, under performance and management information
- *'Government Response on Fair Access to the Professions.'* The government accepts most of the Panel's recommendations on improving access to the Professions and sets up a new Social Mobility Commission to monitor things
- *'16-19 Statement of priorities and Investment Strategy.'* This Paper sets out the priorities for how the £8.5m 16-19 budget should be spent

Speeches of the month

- *Lord Mandelson's speech to the Work Foundation* sketches out an updated Plan for Growth around enterprise, innovation, skills and knowledge
- *Lord Mandelson's speech to the Learning and Technology World Forum* pledges support for Online basic IT courses for adults
- *The Prime Minister's speech to the same Forum* announces a new taskforce under David Puttnam "to help expand our education technology sector"
- *Mervyn King's speech at Exeter University* warns of long-term worries over pay and inflation
- *David Cameron's speech launching the School Manifesto* warns of his Party's "ruthless, relentless and uncompromising commitment to rigour"

Quotes of the month

- *"The next spending review will be the toughest we have had for 20 years."* Alistair Darling begins the spending review with no illusions
- *"It's taken 800 years to create one of the world's greatest education systems and it looks like it will take just six months to bring it to its knees."* The Russell Group spells out the impact of the cuts for HE
- *"I would hate to be a head teacher having to handle Diplomas, GCSEs and A levels and not quite knowing to what extent they are going to be sustained or not."* The Director General of the CBI feels for head teachers

Word or Phrase of the month

- *'Welllderly.'* Harriet Harman describes the post pension working generation

Look out for

- Select Committee inquiry into NEETs
- Review of 14-19 provision
- BIS Report on developing the next wave of key industry sectors
- Conservative Paper on economic recovery

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