

Parliament and Public Affairs Update Wk Commencing 25th October 2010

This week Parliament continued to debate details arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review. The Education Select Committee held its third evidence session on school discipline taking evidence from; Russell Hobby, General Secretary, National Association of Head Teachers; Mike Griffiths, Head of Northampton School for Boys, Association of School and College Leaders; Gillian Allcroft, Policy Manager, National Governors' Association; and Charlie Taylor, Head teacher, Willows School. The Business and Skills Committee took evidence from Vince Cable MP and David Willets MP on the Comprehensive Spending Review. BIS published its White Paper on local growth and the Public Bodies Bill was published in the House of Lords. Peter Lauener joined David Bell, Permanent Secretary, to give evidence to the Public Accounts Committee on academies following the NAO report published in September.

Public Accounts Committee

Peter Lauener joined David Bell and Peter Houten, Director, Academies Policy Group to give evidence to the committee on the academies programme following the NAO progress report published in September. The minutes to the meeting are yet to be published and will be circulated in due course. The follow-up study will track progress made by academies in improving educational outcomes and identify any lessons for the future expansion of the programme.

Public Bodies Bill

The Public Bodies Bill was tabled in the House of Lords yesterday. This enabling legislation will make provision for the government to carry out its public body reforms. It is an enabling Bill which means it will not in itself make changes to specific public bodies. It's second reading and first full debate will take place on the 9th November and the Bill can be downloaded here: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/publicbodieshl/documents.html>

Local Growth White Paper

The Secretary of State for Business announced to the House of Commons on the 28th October his departmental plans for sustainable growth. The detail outlined in the white paper outlines the future status of Local Economic Partnerships or LEPs replacing Regional Development Agencies. The White Paper can be downloaded here: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/regional/docs/l/cm7961-local-growth-white-paper.pdf>

Consultations and Reports

Regulating qualifications, examinations and assessments

Ofqual has launched a consultation on how Ofqual proposes to secure the standards and efficiency of qualifications through regulation.

The consultation builds on regulating for confidence in standards which was published in December 2009 and is aimed at securing efficiency and value for money in the provision of regulated qualifications. Views are sought from anyone involved in or with an interest in the way qualifications, examinations and assessments are regulated.

The consultation closes on January 31 2011.

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[Ofqual, October 20 2010](#)

Questions, Early Day Motions and Back Bench Debates

Funding

Lord Willis of Knaresborough: to ask Her Majesty's Government whether the pupil premium will transfer from a school to a further education college if a pupil embarks on a 14 to 16 full-time course of study. [HL3352] (For answer 11/11/2010)

Angela Eagle: If he will make an estimate of the number of redundancies likely to be made by schools as a result of the spending reductions proposed in the Comprehensive Spending Review. [21580] (For answer 01/11/2010)

Lord Greaves: to ask Her Majesty's Government whether the pupil premium will be payable in respect of students at (a) sixth form colleges, (b) further education colleges which are responsible for all or most sixth form provision in an area under a "tertiary system", and (c) other further education colleges providing sixth form courses. [HL3341] (For answer 10/11/2010)

Caroline Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what information his Department holds on reductions in funding to (a) Brighton and Hove Connexions Service, (b) Connexions services nationally and (c) other frontline services within his Department's area of responsibility; and what assessment he has made of the effect of reductions in Connexions services on (i) the provision of careers support and guidance to young people, (ii) the number of young people not in education, employment or training and (iii) the number of young people accessing (A) substance misuse programmes, (B) teenage pregnancy and sexual health programmes and (C) reducing offending programmes. [14009]

Mr Gibb [*holding answer 8 September 2010*]: The Department for Education does not hold information on the funding of individual Connexions services funded by grant from the Department. It is for Brighton and Hove city council, and for councils in other areas, to decide the level of funding for Connexions and other services supporting young people, and where to make savings. While the Department's area based grant (ABG) to local authorities was reduced by £311 million as part of the local government contribution to deficit reduction in 2010-11, the reduction in ABG does not imply a direct cut to the services funded by the grant. The Government have made it clear that local authorities should have the maximum flexibility to make efficiency savings from all their funding sources, taking into account their statutory responsibilities and the need to protect front line services as much as possible. We do not expect that cuts should fall disproportionately on Connexions services over others.

HC Deb 27 October 2010 c361W

Stella Creasy: What the monetary value of the pupil premium will be per qualifying pupil in each year to 2014-15; and whether the figure per pupil will be identical in each year irrespective of geographic location. [20783] (For answer 28/10/2010)

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John Cryer: What his timetable is for setting the criteria for determining which pupils will qualify for the pupil premium. [20449] (For answer 28/10/2010)

Stella Creasy: Whether local education authorities will continue to receive funding for education welfare services and services for pupils with special educational needs following the introduction of the pupil premium. [20785] (For answer 28/10/2010)

Dr Phillip Lee: What mechanisms are in place to ensure that his Department's decisions on regional funding allocations are based on the most recent available population data. [20692] (For answer 28/10/2010)

Academies and Free Schools

Vernon Coaker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how much funding his Department has provided per pupil to schools with academy status in each local authority area in England in each of the last five years. [12673]

Mr Gibb: [*holding answer 6 September 2010*]: The amount of funding per pupil paid to academies in each relevant local authority area for academic years from 2005/06 to 2009/10 is shown in the table. Since April 2010, payment has been made by the Young People's Learning Agency on behalf of the Secretary of State. It does not include start-up grants (since these would distort comparisons), nor standards fund grants, which for many academies in the years in question were paid by local authorities.

Toby Perkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education how many of the 16 schools that have been accepted for free school status previously had grant-maintained status. [14581]

Mr Gibb: 16 proposals for free schools have been approved for progression to the business case and plan stage. Of these, none are schools that previously had grant-maintained status. HC Deb 28 October 2010 c477W

Luciana Berger: To ask the Secretary of State for Education for what reasons academies are not required to (a) have regard to the local Children and Young People Plan, (b) promote the well-being of pupils and (c) promote community cohesion. [12271]

Mr Gibb: Academies are currently required to have regard to the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) in the same way as maintained schools. However, the Government intend-subject to parliamentary approval-to withdraw the regulations requiring CYPPs to be prepared.

Academies have a very important role in promoting the well-being of their pupils and we trust the governors to exercise their functions with the aim of promoting their pupils' well-being, responding to local circumstances and the wishes of their parents.

Finally in relation to community cohesion, one of the conditions of grant in the model Funding Agreement is that the Academy will be

- "at the heart of its community, promoting community cohesion and sharing facilities with other schools and the wider community".

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Academies are therefore required to promote community cohesion as part of their Funding Agreement which includes the right of the Secretary of State to call for information on their outreach work with other schools and the local community.

HC Deb 28 October 2010 c468W

Mr Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what mechanisms exist for parents to submit complaints about the operation of academy schools. [8981]

Mr Gibb: Academies are required by the independent school standards regulations to have a complaints procedure which must be available on request to parents. The procedure must provide for complaints to be managed within clear timescales. If initial informal consideration does not resolve the complaint, then the procedure must also include steps to escalate a complaint through both a formal written stage and, if necessary, a hearing before a panel that includes at least one member who is independent of the academy.

If the complaint cannot be resolved at school level the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) will be the next route of redress. The YPLA will review the evidence provided by the complainant and the academy to determine if the academy has followed its own complaints procedure or is in breach of a contractual or statutory obligation. If the academy has not followed its procedures or obligations it will be asked to do so to rectify any failings.

Mr Gibb: On 6 August the Government confirmed the capital allocation for some of the academy building programmes listed as for discussion, and announced that the capital allocation for the remaining academies would be announced after the spending review. Tudor Grange Academy, Worcester, falls in to the first category and so the Government have confirmed that the capital allocation for this academy will go ahead.

HC Deb 27 October 2010 cc359W-360W

Charlotte Leslie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what the name and postcode is of each academy school; when each such school opened; who the sponsor is of each such school; and what the name was of the community school that preceded the academy school in each case. [4910]

Mr Gibb: The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries. Postcode information can be obtained from Edubase, the database of educational establishments in England:

www.edubase.gov.uk

Mr Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what evidence he took into account in his assessment that academy schools would raise the standards of other schools in the same area; and whether he plans to review that assessment when the proposed academy schools have been established. [9487]

Mr Gibb: The Fifth Annual Independent Academies Evaluation Report from PricewaterhouseCoopers found that there is evidence of academies increasing collaboration with neighbouring primary schools and secondary schools. It also found that neighbouring schools have increasingly realised the benefits they can derive from

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academies with some adopting policies introduced by academies-the report found that this had a positive impact on other local schools.

More recently, the National Audit Office report on Academies did 'identify effective examples of partnership working with other schools, particularly 'feeder' primary schools'.

All outstanding schools that convert will be expected to partner and provide support to weak schools to help improve standards. Currently, the former and existing city technology colleges are sponsoring over 20 academies or are supporting weaker schools. We will continue to monitor the progress and performance of academies and ensure that they remain accountable against the results and outcomes they are expected to deliver.

HC Deb 26 October 2010 c284W

EMA and Support

Lord Willis of Knaresborough: to ask Her Majesty's Government what provision is made in each year of *Spending Review 2010* for the maintenance support of 16 to 19 year olds in full-time education. [HL3350] (For answer 11/11/2010)

Pat Glass: What recent assessment his Department has made of the likely effects on young people from poor backgrounds of the ending of educational maintenance allowance; and if he will make a statement. [20401] (For answer 28/10/2010)

Christopher Pincher: How much his Department spent on advertising the availability of educational maintenance allowance between May 2005 and May 2010. [20678] (For answer 28/10/2010)

Helen Jones: What eligibility criteria he plans to use for the Education Maintenance Allowance, or its replacement, in 2011-12; and whether the criteria will vary depending on the number of children in a family unit. [20049] (For answer 27/10/2010)

Participation

Lord Willis of Knaresborough: to ask Her Majesty's Government whether the school leaving age will rise to 18; and, if so, when. [HL3349] (For answer 11/11/2010)

Damian Hinds: What estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of raising the participation age to 18 years in (a) 2013, (b) 2014 and (c) 2015. [20585] (For answer 28/10/2010)

SEN

Pat Glass: To ask the Secretary of State for Education if he will review the provisions governing the ability of (a) local authorities and (b) the Special Educational Needs Tribunal to name an academy on a statement of special educational need in order to permit an academy to be named on such a statement. [7007]

Mr Gibb: The Academies Act 2010 brought in new provisions which mean that in future all state-funded schools will have the same obligations in relation to children with special educational needs, including requirements with regard to the naming of a school on a statement of special educational needs.

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In practical terms, the new obligations on Academies are:

- An obligation to inform parents that their child has SEN and the special educational provision (SEP) being made;
- An unqualified obligation to admit a child to the school if the school is named in the statement; and
- An obligation to appoint a person as SENCO who is a qualified teacher and that new SENCOs will have to undertake prescribed training.

This applies to any new Academy and any existing Academy which moves to the new Funding Agreement, the contract between the Secretary of State and the Academy which regulates how an Academy operates. As a result, local authorities can now name an Academy on a statement of special educational needs in the same way as they can name a maintained school on a statement.

Parents, either for or against the naming of an Academy in the child's SEN statement, have always had the same rights of access to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability). The First-tier Tribunal can determine that an Academy should be named on a statement of special educational needs.

HC Deb 27 October 2010 cc360W-361W

Lord Willis of Knaresborough: To ask Her Majesty's Government further to the Written Answer by Lord Hill of Oareford on 27 September (WA 564), how many children currently with statements have low incidence special needs.[HL2735] [HL2735]

Lord Willis of Knaresborough: To ask Her Majesty's Government what is meant by "low incidence special needs".[HL2737] [HL2737]

Lord Hill of Oareford: There is no statutory definition of "low incidence special needs". The department commissioned Peter Gray of the Special Needs Consultancy to conduct a national audit of support, services and provision for children with low incidence needs, which was published in 2006. The categories included in the project specification were as follows:

multisensory impairments;

severe visual impairment;

severe/profound hearing impairment;

profound and multiple learning difficulties;

severe autistic spectrum disorders; and

severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

The report pointed out that the concept of low incidence special educational needs was not simply related to rarity but also has a functional element, with an emphasis on the

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complexity of the task of supporting and providing for the children concerned and the nature of the skills and organisation that are required to ensure that all their needs are properly addressed. These children will typically be provided for through local authority support services and in units or resource bases attached to mainstream schools, maintained special schools or in independent or non-maintained special schools.

The department collects data on the numbers of children with statements by type of need but does not distinguish by severity. However, being given a statement itself is an indication of the severity and complexity of

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need. As of January 2010 there were 88,400 children with statements for types of need listed above (see Table 11 of Statistical First Release: Special Educational Needs in England, January 2010 (DfE, 2010)

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000939/index.shtml>). The total number of children with statements in January 2010 was 220,890.

Lord Willis of Knaresborough: To ask Her Majesty's Government whether academies will be required under current legislation to provide appropriate facilities to support the learning needs of children with mild or moderate hearing loss, including building adaptations and specialist classroom equipment.[HL2738] [HL2738]

Lord Hill of Oareford: All schools, including maintained and independent schools, are required to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which includes a requirement to prepare and implement accessibility plans. These accessibility plans provide for the implementation of improvements to the school premises to accommodate existing, and future, disabled pupils within a reasonable period. While the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 was revoked by the Equality Act 2010 on 1 October, the requirement for all schools (including academies) to prepare and implement accessibility plans was replicated.

If a pupil with low incidence SEN attracts individually assigned resources through a statement of special educational needs, the local authority pays this to the academy from its schools budget and is responsible for monitoring the provision made. Academies, like maintained schools, are responsible for making the provision specified in the statement.

The Academies Act 2010 requires any new academy and any existing academy which moves to the new funding agreement (contract between the Secretary of State and the academy trust) to have exactly the same SEN obligations as the governing bodies of maintained schools.

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Alun Cairns: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what steps he plans to take in response to the recommendations of Ofsted's report on special educational needs. [R] [19415]

Sarah Teather: [*holding answer 25 October 2010*]: The Government aim to publish a Green Paper on special educational needs and disability later this year. Ofsted's report

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and the issues that it highlights will be taken into consideration as the Department develops the Green Paper.

Alun Cairns: To ask the Secretary of State for Education what plans he has for the future of the statementing process for children with special educational needs. [R] [19416]

Sarah Teather: [*holding answer 25 October 2010*]: The Government have made clear that they want to make the special educational needs system, including the statementing process, less adversarial and bureaucratic and for it to provide a more comprehensive service for families. A Green Paper on special educational needs and disability, which we aim to publish later this year, will set out the Government's vision for the future of special educational needs.

HC Deb 28 October 2010 c479W

Building Schools for the Future

Joan Walley: (Stoke-on-Trent North) (Lab): On 7 July, the Secretary of State for Education told me that

"Stoke-on-Trent, as a local authority that has reached financial close, will see all the schools under Building Schools for the Future rebuilt or refurbished."-[Official Report, 7 July 2010; Vol. 513, c. 490.]

Given the points of order in the House last Monday, and the media speculation that Building Schools for the Future might be affected by the pupil premium, will the Leader of the House arrange for an urgent debate on

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the funding for BSF, so that people in constituencies all across the country, including Stoke-on-Trent, can have some certainty about the multi-million pound programme for schools investment on which they are now negotiating?

Sir George Young: The pupil premium is not being funded out of the schools programme. It is being funded from elsewhere in the Department's budget and from savings in other parts of Whitehall. There is £15 billion worth of investment going into new schools' capital. On the specific issue of Stoke, I will ask the Secretary of State for Education to write to the hon. Lady

Apprenticeships

Andrew Stephenson: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what his policy is on the provision of funding for pre-apprentice courses. [19243]

Mr Hayes: The Government are keen for as many people as possible to benefit from an apprenticeship. We are looking at how training and support available through a wide range of routes could be harnessed to prepare people for this opportunity, and at whether it may be necessary to create specific, designated pre-apprenticeship training. Indeed, our recent consultation on the future direction of skills policy sought views on what form of pre-apprenticeship training might be appropriate and how we could ensure it was a first step towards ongoing learning. However, the details of what these routes may look like have not yet been determined. Consideration of funding arrangements is a key element in the development of our policy.

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HC Deb 26 October 2010 c264W

Higher Education

Lord Taylor of Warwick: To ask Her Majesty's Government how they will provide support for poorer students wishing to enter higher education.[HL2973] [HL2973]

Baroness Wilcox: In the 2011-12 academic year, full-time students with household incomes up to £50,020 can apply for a non-repayable grant to help with their living costs at university, with those on household incomes of £25,000 or less are eligible for the maximum grant amount of £2,906. Further means-tested grant support is available to those with caring responsibilities. All students will be eligible for loans to cover tuition fees and help towards living costs.

Universities are required to offer a minimum bursary for low-income students, and those facing financial hardship can also apply for help from the discretionary Access to Learning Fund through their university.

Lord Browne's recent review makes recommendations on the future of student support. We are considering these recommendations carefully and will respond shortly. The Government are committed to supporting poorer students and have already announced £150 million for a new national scholarship scheme to improve access for students from families of modest means.

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Mr Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills how many students have paid all or part of their tuition fees from their own funds in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [19763]

Mr Willetts: The latest available information from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) is shown in the following table. Figures for the 2009/10 academic year will be available in January 2011.

<i>Academic year</i>	<i>No award or financial backing</i>		<i>Mix of student and SLC</i>	
	<i>Full-time</i>	<i>Part-time</i>	<i>Full-time</i>	<i>Part-time</i>
2004/05	441,900	362,435	75,180	20,855
2005/06	446,025	363,290	70,600	24,440
2006/07	343,695	355,465	41,430	30,790
2007/08	309,015	336,770	60,330	35,575
2008/09	271,605	340,345	40,020	40,290

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(1) Covers enrolments to all levels and modes of study.

(2) Excludes those with unknown/missing tuition fee information. In 2008/09 16,005 students had missing information.

Note:

Figures are based on a HESA standard registration population and have been rounded to the nearest five.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

HC Deb 28 October 2010 c458W

House of Lord Debates

Education Standards

Moved By Baroness Perry of Southwark

To call attention to the case for providing excellence in education for all pupils and young people; and to move for papers.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101028-0002.htm>

Baroness Perry of Southwark (Conservative):

Perry opened the debate by speaking on the great Education Act of 1944 that "set the goal of every child to be entitled to education suited to their "age, ability and aptitude". That goal, also, has so far not been attained."

Education has failed to capture at least three groups of young people since the Act. First, far too many bright children from disadvantaged backgrounds receive an education that is far below their ability. Secondly, far too many young people are forced into a mould of education unsuited to their interest or aptitude. Thirdly, far too many exceptionally gifted children-perhaps most particularly those gifted in the sciences-are insufficiently challenged by the education that they receive.

Perry supported these claims in stating that "fewer than half as many pupils who are eligible for free school meals achieve the magic five good GCSEs as do their better-off contemporaries."

In support of the Academies programme, Perry claimed the Academies programme is so important, as it offers the greatest prospect of lifting the standards of schools in the areas of greatest need.

Baroness Morris of Yardley (Labour):

Yardley spoke on the improvement there has been in our school system over recent years.

Yardley said:

"Certainly I remain proud of the achievements under the previous Government-we made a wise investment-but I am not blind and I know that there is work still to be done. It will be more difficult to do at a time of falling budgets but that is the situation we are in."

Speaking on the quality of teaching, Yardley stated she believes that we have the best generation of teachers we have ever had. However, teachers must work within a framework of challenge and high-quality support.

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The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools (Lord Hill of Oareford):

Speaking on the points raised during the debate Hill said:

Hill confirmed that the Government will publish for the first education White Paper before Christmas. Hill told the House that, in that White Paper, teachers and other education professionals will be at the front and centre because everything else that we want to achieve flows naturally from the quality of the workforce.

"In the White Paper, we will unveil a whole range of further proposals to ensure that we attract the best possible people into education."

Hill stated the Government can also help with discipline and behaviour in schools and commented that accountability of schools to parents and local communities will be crucial.

Speaking on future curriculum reforms:

"The principle behind the curriculum that we want to construct is that it will be informed by teachers and experts, will have greater flexibility and will be based on the best global evidence of what knowledge and concepts can be introduced to children at different ages."

Higher Education Funding

Moved By [Baroness Wilcox](#)

That this House takes note of the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (Baroness Wilcox):

Wilcox opened the debate speaking on the central role that higher education plays in England and how they must remain centres for 'free thought and discovery'.

<http://new.dodsmonitoring.com/site/home.php?app=mon&subapp=display&page=4&docid=949092&pid=5171>