

# Pearson Research Institute 'flashback'

Hot Breakfast briefing (post-election special), Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2010

More than 100 guests packed into the our staff restaurant to hear Steve Besley, Head of Policy (UK and International) for the Pearson Research Institute, outline the new landscape for education following the general election.

Against the background of the Conservative/Lib Dem coalition agreement which blends the two political traditions of the Conservative and Lib Dem manifestos along the lines of freedom, fairness and responsibility, Steve drew attention to the new tone of political discussion in the light of the economic deficit dominating public attention.

The Tory theme tunes of 'we're all in this together' and 'collective strength will overcome our problems' were aligned with the new emphasis on social responsibility represented by Cameron's seminar last week on 'the big society' indicating a new architecture underpinning government policy. Announcements on immediate cuts to spending add further emphasis to the theme of 'bye bye bureaucracy' coupled with the key Lib Dem commitments to fairness on taxes, the pupil premium, a green economy and a fairer voting system. The Coalition Agreement, spending announcements, the Queen's Speech and the Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn all indicate key phases of policy implementation, with department-based compromises on manifesto commitments.

Potential changes to education policy could include scrapping the compulsory raising of the participation age, cuts in quangos, reform of regional development agencies and Train to Gain, while the well trailed £2.5 billion for the 'pupil premium' would enable schools to shrink class sizes.

Steve highlighted key policy commitments made by both parties on education and skills together with likely areas of both agreement and necessary compromise. Marrying academy commitments with local accountability, devising new forms of league table and removing Higher Education tuition fees would all need to be worked through. Fuller details are indicated in Steve's slides by [clicking here](#).

Key issues for schools included the impact on provision of the new freedom to set up state funded independent schools, plans to redefine the pay and rewards system for teachers and changes to the national curriculum. Key issues for young people included the future of Diplomas, arrangements for 'NEETs' and fine tuning of the system for Information, Advice and Guidance. Key issues for FE included the commitment to 'set colleges free from state control and abolish many of the FE quangos', the idea that 'public funding would follow student choice' and less counting of qualifications with more mapping to need. The introduction of a radically new approach to Welfare to Work was expected to create 400,000 new apprenticeships and work-based training places over the next two years.

Questions from the floor concerned the possible impact of current changes on education-business links, on the silo culture across Whitehall (for example between DfE and BIS) the future of Connexions and Children's Services, the future of widening participation in HE and likely developments in the curriculum.

The Hot Breakfast evaluations showed an overwhelming appreciation for this kind of free early morning update over breakfast on developments in this rapidly changing landscape:

*"Excellent. Gave us a clear picture of what the educational. Political & Economic landscape looks like."* Ethlyn Weekes, Managing Director, The Learning Trust

*"A tour de force! This was a really clear masterclass. Many thanks"* Alastair Thompson, NIACE, Principal Policy & Advocacy Officer

Free resources on <a href="http://www.pearsonresearchinstitute.com">www.pearsonresearchinstitute.com</a>	Click on the icon to access
Download a PDF version of Steve's slides	
Watch a slide-show video of the event on YouTube (please leave us a comment)	
Follow Steve Besley and Nick Linford on Twitter	
Sign-up for Steve's Policy Watches	Email <a href="mailto:policywatch@pearson.com">policywatch@pearson.com</a>

Photos from the Hot Breakfast Briefing

