



# Education Politics

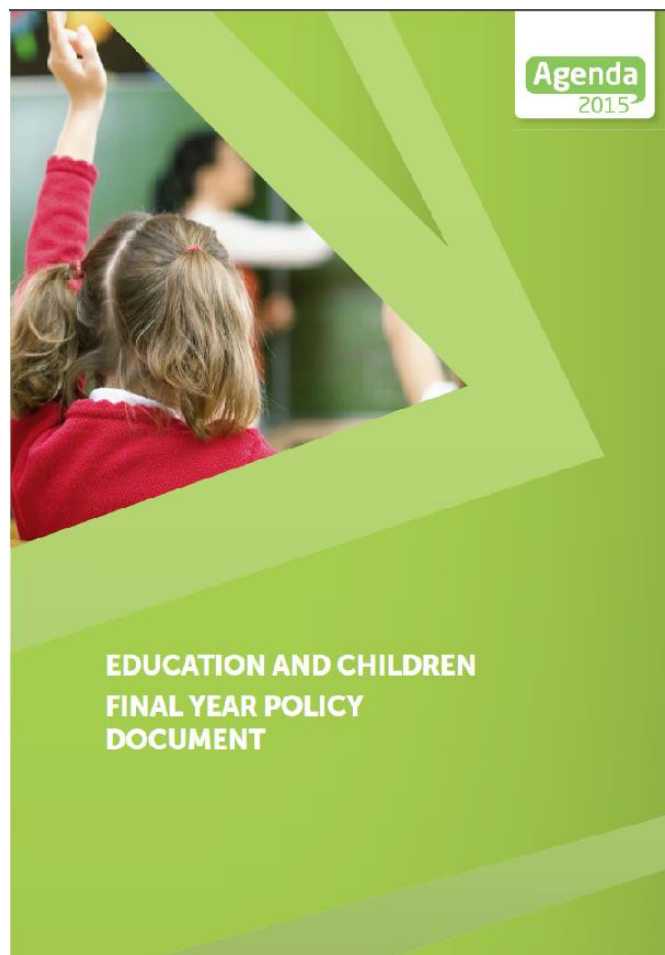
Journal of the Socialist Educational Association

September 2014, N° 121

Free to members

£1 non-members

## Labour's education and children policy



## Glass half empty or half full?

Inside: takes on the policy document from  
TUC, CBI, SEA's Gen Sec, and more

# Editorial

This edition is devoted largely to a series of commentaries on the Labour Party policy document 'Education and Children', to be debated at Annual Conference. Neither the earlier consultation document nor the final policy will attract more than two cheers from many of the large number of Labour supporters with a particular interest in education. After all, it only nods inactively at SEA's first aim, a non-selective system, and fails to signal a decisive return to local authority control of schools.

Yet such parsimony of approval would ignore the realities of the Westminster policy bubble, and the overriding desire within Labour and necessity from the point of view of the nation to win the election next May. Take selection. For us, its damage is self-evident and was proved by research many years ago. But the electorate is not as one on this; while opinion polls are not completely consistent, there remains a substantial fraction of the electorate which believes grammar schools are a jolly good thing – and not just natural Tories, either. The pity is that pollsters do not also investigate the popularity of secondary moderns.

It may be frustrating that we have to conduct all over again arguments with the right about issues like the impact of social background on achievement, or the damage caused by selective schools – but we have to.\* We cannot argue to turn back the clock; we are progressives, and perhaps we seek to climb a helix. We must debate with people shaped by hugely changed technology, means and relations of production, and resultant cultural forms such as the hegemony of neo-liberalism within the political elite in England (though perhaps not in the rest of the UK).

In this edition, we also say farewell to Michael Gove. Well, we say goodbye, anyway. For those with nothing better to do, there could be a debate about whether he is more of a neo-liberal or more of a neo-con. Whatever, he can believe six impossible things before breakfast, and simultaneously tried to intensify the market mechanism in education and impose on all England's youngsters the kind of schooling he had enjoyed at Robert Gordon's College (private) in Aberdeen.

Let's be honest, his concept of education as a commodity to be consumed by individuals was plausible to many. Of course, values of individualism and consumerism are generated by capitalism everywhere in the world, but the

Anglo-American variant of capitalism is uniquely invasive into all corners of life. The welfare state, including state education, is regarded as a market-free zone in many capitalist economies, even while facing attack from powerful lobbies of profiteers. It is up to the left in England to argue that there is an alternative even within a capitalist structure.

There is little doubt that one cause of public cynicism about politics is the apparent lack of major policy differentiation between the parties. An illustration was the reaction to the August 2014 report of the ill-conceived Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, which stated:

*Where institutions rely on too narrow a range of people from too narrow a range of backgrounds with too a narrow range of experiences they risk behaving in ways and focusing on issues that are of salience only to a minority but not the majority in society...It is time for a re-think in the institutions that have such a critical role to play in making Britain a country where success relies on aptitude and ability more than background or birth.*

We might not expect the Commission to propose any radical remediation, but those of us who grew up Before Thatcherism could be disappointed that there was no public response from anyone calling for abolition of independent schools, or even an end to early selection.

In the election campaign, Labour should step free from the neo-liberal consensus. It would do well to assert explicitly and confidently that the market is not suited to the provision of all our needs. Public transport, energy – and public services including education – should be market-free zones. This is clearly a popular message.

There is nothing in the education policy document which prevents this approach, and plenty which supports it. It's up to Labour educationists in the coming months to do the hard graft of walking the streets, pulling in votes to be rid of this odious government, so that from next May we can rebuild a democratic education system which meets the needs of the nation and all its people.

\* See page 19, *Forthcoming events*, 11<sup>th</sup> November

# Labour's policy document 'Education and Children'

## An Education Politics special

As Education Politics goes to press, final preparations are in hand for Labour's pre-election Conference. On Sunday 21st September, Conference will approve the policy document '*Education and Children*' which has developed through the Policy Commission and National Policy Forum processes.

**The document is available to Party members on the Membersnet website – <http://members.labour.org.uk>**

In the following pages, commentators review Labour's education policy from a variety of perspectives. First, SEA Chair Sheila Doré reports on the National Policy Forum meeting held in Milton Keynes in July, where a large number of proposed amendments to the original consultation document were subject to negotiation. Compositing amendments were agreed by consensus. While the direction of travel appears to have changed little, significant changes of detail signal to some readers progress from rather vague statements in the consultation paper. Due to the hard work of Sheila and Nicholas Russell, all of the ideas within the SEA's amendments were incorporated. Other analysts are not as sanguine; David Pavett, who blogs on the Guardian and Left Futures sites, explains his concerns.

The current mantra from the main parties, 'It's the quality of teaching, stupid', is an update of 'standards not structures'. It does not satisfy everyone on the left, and Pavett is not the only critic of the proposed Directors of School Standards. Here, Henry Stewart from the Local Schools Network presents the debate he held with Fiona Millar on this proposal.

The TUC and CBI provide complementary accounts of their policy aspirations. While naturally they focus on skills and post-compulsory provision, there are lessons across the system. A major difference between them is the role of employers. Tom Wilson, Director of Unionlearn, highlights the woeful record of employers in supplying and demanding training for their staffs.

One of their themes is picked up by the contribution of John Bolt, General Secretary of SEA. Lamenting the shortage of progressive thinking on the school curriculum in '*Education and Children*', he suggests some ideas for a new kind of national curriculum. He reminds us that there are very good reasons to retain one, but suggests a return to 'broad and balanced' and a greatly reduced level of detail.

Indeed, this hole in policy may soon look like something that needs filling in by the left. We should continue to think of the National Curriculum – all of it - as an entitlement for all pupils. This would be One Nation schooling. The comprehensive principle should be applied to the secondary curriculum as it is in primary schools. Labour must assert that throughout the secondary years all pupils need to experience the range of art and craft, physical, social, moral and spiritual as well as academic subjects. The tendency to early specialisation, and the false opposition between academic and vocational, must be avoided. Maybe it is time also that the NC specified the skills that pupils need to develop, as well as the knowledge content in outline. The Tory assumption that the chaps just pick up the right ways of doing things is not good enough outside of residential schools for chaps.

We can assume that '*Education and Children*' will provide a far more attractive offer to voters than the discredited ideologies of the coalition partners. Labour should also assume that there is far more to be said about future direction than is contained in this slim document.

**Join the debate on  
'*Education and Children*'.  
Post a comment on  
[www.socialisteducation.org.uk](http://www.socialisteducation.org.uk)**

# At the National Policy Forum, July 2014

## Sheila Doré

Attendance at NPF was much more worthwhile this year. Angela Eagle, the Chair, has made significant efforts to democratise the process. As an Observer I had speaking rights at all main events and it was only in the final session, an unresolved amendment on austerity (calling for an emergency budget), that my lack of voting rights was a factor.

The SEA submitted 3 priority amendments, on local authority management of schools, inspection and the 16+ agenda. Nicholas Russell submitted an SEA amendment on access and inclusion. Forum members were given booklets containing amendments on each area of policy. The *'Education and Children'* document covered a wide range of issues, including childcare, Sure Start, local authority oversight, and higher education. There were 4 amendments calling for free schools to be returned to LA management, 16 on local oversight and school structures, 3 on monitoring and inspection and 15 on skills and vocational education.

Labour Party staff had composited amendments and produced 'Consensus Wording' for delegates to discuss. Amendments were then made to this wording by delegates at amendment meetings. At a Friday afternoon Deliberative Workshop on School Standards and Oversight I made the case for our amendments, particularly the amendment referring to local oversight of Schools. The meeting was chaired by Tristram Hunt and attended by Kevin Brennan, plus about 40 delegates and observers. It was made clear that all discussion would be held within the framework of the Blunkett Report recommending the appointment of local Directors of School Standards.

Only delegates were allowed to attend amendment meetings and two of our amendments were proposed by Martin Rathfelder of the Socialist Health Association, who was both positive and supportive when I briefed him at a pre meeting. I also met Bill Esterson MP from the SEA Parliamentary Branch and secured his commitment to attend the relevant amendment meetings and to support the SEA amendments in discussion.

Members of the Shadow Cabinet were freely available to speak to members at meal times and I spoke to Harriet Harman, Hilary Benn

and Tristram Hunt, seeking to raise the status of education as an election issue, particularly in light of Michael Gove's departure and to impress upon them the importance of the SEA's policies in achieving an effective and equitable educational system.

### **Action on free schools endorsed**

On Saturday morning members were given a further booklet of 'Amendments Endorsed'. The resulting policies on two of our amendments were as close as we were likely to achieve at a pre-election forum, including the following:

*The Government's Free Schools programme has proven itself to be a poor use of taxpayers' money, with millions being spent opening Free Schools in areas with surplus school places and many offering a poor standard of education...Labour will end the Government's Free Schools programme and focus instead on ensuring every child has a local school place and local schools are challenged and supported to improve...We will ensure existing Free Schools become part of the local family of schools...This would include the possibility of changing a school's status, including to that of a community school, if appropriate. They will be required to collaborate with other local schools, follow the admissions code, ensure their teachers are or become qualified, and play their part in educating hard to place children.*

### **Win some, lose some**

On skills and vocational education a Consensus Wording was agreed which included the main points raised in the SEA amendment. There was no specific reference to the Husbands Review and no specific provision for those young people who have suffered the most under the policies of the coalition government. However there was a commitment to establish 'an overarching national baccalaureate framework for all post 16 students' and also a commitment to extend apprenticeships.

An amendment proposing the abolition of the 11+ was moved and seconded but was defeated. The admissions Consensus Wording conceded that *'academic selection at 11 damages education for all children'* but only committed Labour to ensuring *'that all schools, including free schools, academies and faith schools serve their local communities and*

*follow the admissions code so every child has fair access to schools'...*

Nicholas Russell worked very hard to promote SEA amendments on disability and the resulting statement 'Labour's Commitment to Equality' embodies the main principles of SEA policy.

It was an efficient and effective Policy Forum. The main focus was obviously to develop a manifesto that will lead to Labour's success in

the 2015 General Election and this created a greater sense of caution than many of those present, including myself, would have liked. Nicholas and I worked hard to raise the profile of the SEA and to establish a significant presence. Much work was done, both formally and informally to forge links with other Socialist Societies and to impress upon the shadow cabinet both the importance of SEA policy and the value of expertise the SEA represents.

## **Sheila Doré is the Chair of SEA and its Observer at the National Policy Forum**

### **Nicholas Russell 1968-2014**



The SEA is extremely sad to report that Nicholas Russell, whose work is described above, has died suddenly aged 45. Nicholas was a longstanding National Executive member of SEA but also a tireless campaigner, notably on disability rights and nuclear disarmament, as well as a former Labour Co-op Councillor in Waltham Forest.

Former SEA General Secretary Martin Doré writes, 'In addition to all his other commitments, Nicholas was also a longstanding NEC member of the Socialist Educational Association. He worked particularly closely with me recently, in preparing and campaigning for a series of policy amendments to the LP consultation documents which addressed our key educational priorities, including a powerful equalities agenda. He had a fantastic eye for detail and certainly knew his way around the abstruse procedures at the recent NPF in Milton Keynes. He helped us achieve far more than we would otherwise have done so without his expertise. He was a fantastic campaigner but more importantly, he was absolutely charming company. He will be sorely missed by us as well as by everyone else.'

Julie Hilling, MP for Bolton West and a Vice-President of the Socialist Educational Association, a close associate of Nicholas for many years, also posted a tribute: 'I've known Nicholas for some years since he came on to the SEA Executive. I'm so terribly sorry to hear of his untimely death - a dreadful shock. Nicholas has been a great campaigner, particularly on disability issues. He took his commitments extremely seriously and was dogged in his determination to ensure SEA policy reflected the needs of disabled learners. A thoroughly good person who will be missed by many. My condolences to Georgina, his family and all his many friends.'

# Adult and vocational skills: will Labour's prescription cure our ills?

Tom Wilson



Our skills problems are well known: a long tail of employers who do little or no training; far too few apprenticeships, especially at higher levels; little vocational training; poor links between skills and industrial policy and little social mobility. It all adds up to low productivity and a low wage/low skill cycle. At a personal level there is an equal cost: working people stuck in low paid jobs with little chance of the training to move on; young people who end up with no or low skills and not much help or advice to change; a waste of talent and impoverished lives.

If that's the diagnosis, will Labour's cure work? The National Policy Forum Agreement had plenty to say on skills: more and better apprenticeships; the new Tech Bacc; and more investment from employers. The NPF was damning: we have an education system failing the 'forgotten 50 per cent' who do not go to university and a vocational education and training system that has failed 'abysmally'.

## **Start from there?**

But is that the right starting point? Many would say it is not the education system but poor employers who are failing; not the system but the lack of funding which leads to poor pay and conditions for staff and, hence, inevitably, poor quality. The touchstone is how to improve training and make it attractive. How to create wider opportunities to train which will improve work and job satisfaction as well as pay and careers. Above all, how to rebuild skills at the heart of a sustainable economy.

From a trade union perspective, life in the workplace is the starting point. The 'system' is not just colleges and schools but their

customers and funders, above all employers. There are many good employers who care about their staff and provide good training; often the larger employers with the resources and market strength to make long term investments in staff. Then there are the many employers who don't train but would like to - yet can't risk such longer term investments in a cut throat short term market. And of course there are also the employers who cut wages to the bone and don't care about staff. What's to blame is the lack of a wider system which ensures all employers carry their fair share of training costs - as in most other advanced countries. We need not just a system but a wider workplace culture which takes training seriously. Would the NPF Agreement help?

## **The keystone of any such system and culture must be trade union involvement.**

Every serious commentator on the skills scene acknowledges the need for this 'Social Partnership' between unions, employers, providers and government. The OECD report *'Skills beyond School'* says that union involvement is a hallmark of a good skills system. We can't just leave training employers or government. Learners must be represented too.

So it is welcome to see the NPF agreement endorse much stronger trade union and employee involvement. Union involvement will guarantee to working people young and old that their qualifications will mean something and will genuinely help to get them a decent job. Union reps (or employee reps where there is no union) are vital. Sitting on local, regional and national bodies they will help ensure that

learners and working people have a voice in crucial decisions about skills funding. A say in what is learned on courses, how they are taught and examined. Those skill bodies should be designed around strategic industrial priorities.

To be fair, the current coalition government has also acknowledged the value of this social partnership. There are trade union reps on the national UK Commission on Employment and Skills, and on National Industrial Partnerships which channel funding to particular sectors. The government have also continued funding for Unionlearn, the TUC's learning organisation, albeit with some cuts. But most countries with strong skills systems do far more to support and encourage trade union involvement in skills at all levels. Labour's approach would move in the direction of stronger skills systems such as in Germany or Denmark.

## Apprenticeship



*The Husbands report underlies Labour's approach to vocational qualifications*

Turning to apprenticeships, which seem to have become the symbolic touchstone for all skills policies, the NPF is right to demand higher quality. Again, to be fair, the current government has already acted, setting the minimum length of an apprenticeship at 1 year. It should not be forgotten that there were some scandalous examples of 6 month (or less) so called 'apprenticeships' which were just an excuse to exploit blatantly young people by paying the miserably low apprenticeship statutory minimum wage of £2.73 not the full £6.50 rate.<sup>1</sup> The NPF Agreement rightly says apprenticeships should last for at least 2 years, with 3 years the minimum in sectors such as

<sup>1</sup> Both effective 1<sup>st</sup> October

construction and engineering. It could go further and give all young people the right to a 3 year level 3 apprenticeship, if they wish. It is also good to see the promise of action to end the endemic discrimination which sees young women or BME apprentices paid less than their male or white counterparts – an area where Unionlearn has been leading on research and campaigning.

The holy grail which all governments and parties are seeking is a skills system which encourages employers to do more. We need the weakest employers to emulate, not undermine, the best. All parties offer a deal: employers will be given more control over government funding and regulation in return for much greater employer investment. This "something for something" grand bargain is not new. It builds on the existing coalition government "employer ownership" approach which urges employers to work together, setting standards for their sector, alongside trade unions. Would Labour's stronger and more explicit deal work?

Employers would certainly like more control. They frequently complain that qualifications are not relevant, training is too removed from real work, or young people are not well prepared. Yet few employers engage in the hard work of revising qualifications, or offer work placements to trainees or work with schools to improve careers guidance. Persuading employers to do more is the key problem, the key question is how?

## Training levies?

The answer must be action on many fronts. Using government spending power will help. The report is right, for example, to link government contracts to a requirement to employing apprentices, but how much for how many? In construction there is a rough yardstick that every £1m contract value equals 1 apprentice but building unions like Unite or UCATT argue for much higher ratios. Training levies work well in many other European countries. In the UK the film industry has an effective levy, based around a strong skills partnership involving unions; it would have been good to see the NPF say more such levies should be encouraged.

Existing tax relief should be targeted. Any future government will not have much money so it makes sense to use the existing levers most effectively. Currently government gives away almost £5bn in corporate tax relief to employers for training but with almost no conditions attached. Why not link that relief to high quality

training which attracts qualifications and in priority strategic industrial sectors? Why not give tax relief to individual learners to help pay their FE and HE fees? More mention of these levers would have been welcome.

One small but significant change would be a simple requirement that employers should publish what they spend on training in their Annual Reports. Gordon Brown was almost persuaded to do this but then deterred by Treasury arguments that it would be more red tape. Many countries require licences before practising in certain trades. That drives out cowboys and drives up training. All these ideas are not just more bureaucracy. They work with the grain of what good employers already do, in the UK and elsewhere.

### **Higher education**

Turning to higher education, the NPF report is right to encourage second chances and more action on access, but it is short on detail. It is welcome that international students would be removed from migration targets. Of course the big question is fees. With a default rate approaching 50% does it make sense to continue with the current system? Unionlearn has negotiated a 10% discount on fees with Birkbeck College, part of London University. That has helped over 1,000 union members gain degrees. With tax relief and encouragement to employers to help their employees, plus more choice of different routes (adult learners don't necessarily want the same experience of HE as typical 18-21 year olds), many more adult learners could be helped into HE. We need higher vocational qualifications,

offered by both universities and FE colleges. Labour should seek more action on adult access and on higher vocational skills in return for funding.

And finally the "Tech Bacc" itself. From a vocational perspective it makes sense. Most commentators, from City and Guilds to the Conservative party have already advocated some kind of technical qualification at 18. We obviously need a comprehensive qualification at 18 when the law says that all young people up to 18 must be in some kind of education or training. And it makes sense to include more technical and vocational options for those who want them. The principle of a Baccalaureate is that it combines academic and vocational. Labour's Tech Bacc does offer more choice and does prioritise key skills like maths.

Will all this bring parity between academic and vocational skills? The UK is cursed with a continuing veneration of the academic; partly driven by snobbery, partly driven by a very sensible recognition that academic qualifications often pay better. And they still do. Despite the expansion of HE there is still a substantial graduate pay premium, including for so-called fake degrees like golf club management which are actually pretty challenging and much sought after. The problem, as ever, is employer investment in higher vocational qualifications. If Labour's changes begin to grow, employer investment, then pay, will follow suit. That's the way to parity. A well designed Tech Bacc could help; but only as part of a wide and concerted strategy which takes training seriously.

**Tom Wilson is the Director of Unionlearn**

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# Would a Labour Government take *First Steps*?

## Rob Wall

In November 2012, the CBI published '*First Steps*' – which takes a comprehensive look at our education system and sets out the reforms that are needed to create an education system that delivers for young people, for business and for the economy. Whatever the political complexion of the next government, the CBI will assess its education policies against the principles set out in that report.

Our research showed that improving levels of attainment to match those of the best systems in Europe could add up to 1% to growth each year – the potential for an extra £8trn to be added to UK GDP over the lifetime of a child born today. Getting education right is one of the most important investments we can make in the future of our country.

Much has happened since the launch of this report, with reforms affecting the entire education system. While many of them are steps in the right direction, there is still some way to go to achieving the education system we need – the one that delivers the best outcomes for all. Business is clear that

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**a successful outcome for education is one that supports the development of rigorous, rounded and grounded young people - with not only skills and knowledge, but also the key attitudes and behaviours that will set them up for success in life and work.**

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This includes resilience, enthusiasm, creativity and curiosity.

We see some key areas where more needs to be done to create the system we need – ensuring that the curriculum and examinations system is aligned to the development of the skills needed in the workplace, increased engagement between businesses and schools, a greater focus on developing and supporting leaders in education, and creating an accountability system that encourages and incentivises the right behaviour.

Rigour and relevance is central to ensuring that the qualifications young people are studying for carry real currency in the employment market, so involving employers in the design of curriculum and qualifications should be a priority. Equally – ensuring that examinations are assessing and accrediting the knowledge

and skills that employers value is of real importance. The removal of contributory marks for speaking and listening in English GCSEs and for practical assessments in science A Levels is of real concern to business, with worries that this will lead to the development of these highly-valued skills being de-prioritised in schools and colleges in England.



There is also a strong case to be made for all young people to continue studying English and maths in some form up to the age of 18 – regardless of what pathway they choose to follow through the education system, as is the case in many developed countries. An increasing focus on STEM subjects and the potential career pathways that these can open up is welcomed by employers – engaging more young people, especially girls and young women, in these economically vital topics will open rewarding careers and help to close the ever increasing skills gaps in sectors such as manufacturing, digital, engineering and science. The importance of this issue cannot be overstated.

We know that giving teachers the freedom to use their professionalism to develop the innovative lesson plans that can really engage young people in their education is the right step, but they must also be supported in this – with a real focus on continuing professional development. If we are asking teachers to link learning in the classroom to real life, or the

experiences of the workplace – this support must also clearly come from employers.

But there are many different activities where business engagement can help to improve ambitions and outcomes for young people - from light touch activities such as providing inspiring speakers or supporting employees in acting as governors to more in depth, strategic engagement such as academy sponsorship or providing practical support for head teachers.

The annual CBI/Pearson education and skills survey shows that some 80% of employers now have links of some kind with at least one school or college – but there is scope for this to be scaled up even further, particularly around careers guidance and work inspiration. Involving employers in the careers guidance system is a key part of ensuring young people receive accurate and relevant information about what it is employers are looking for in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as generating the inspiration and ambition young people need to pursue a particular career pathway. We must also be clear that there are many different routes to success for young people, and highlighting the potential of vocational routes – including apprenticeships – must be a part of any good careers service.

Exposure to the workplace is also essential to ensuring young people are inspired and prepared for employment, and restoring the requirement for work related learning at Key Stage 4 would help to make sure that all young people can benefit. This would, of course,

require a commitment from business – but expanding the definition of work experience to include workplace visits, projects and employer-led activities would facilitate this.

### **Support for leadership**

With the welcome moves towards more freedom and autonomy for schools, the role of the headteacher has changed – with, in many cases, the roles and responsibilities increasingly reflecting those of a CEO. Supporting headteachers and future leaders in developing skills well-ingrained in industry through offering placements or shadowing in business, for example, could be of real benefit. A clear focus on the professional development of current and future headteachers will help to continually drive improvements.

The systems and structures surrounding schools must also support the right kind of behaviour in schools. The accountability system must be aligned to the outcomes we want. In practice, this must mean reform of the Ofsted framework so that academic progress and the development of those behaviours that set young people up for success in work and life are equally prioritised.

Much of the debate around education in recent months has highlighted that there is a growing consensus around the outcomes we are trying to deliver – the challenge remains in generating the stability to positively affect change in all schools, for all young people.

**Rob Wall is Head of education and employment policy, CBI**

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## **Education debate and NPF outcomes**

### **David Pavett**

Informed discussions about education are not thick on the ground in the Labour Party. There is no system to provide regular information, for example, with briefing papers and other materials. The few educational documents that appear are produced to promote a particular point of view and rarely consider alternatives.

There is little basis for resolving difference through informed debate.

This difficulty increases in a pre-election period when airing differences can be seen as “rocking the boat”. But Party members have the right to know about the different views in contention at the July National Policy Forum and what was the upshot.

### The raw ingredients of the process

The central educational document for the NPF was the policy draft *'Education and Children.'* There were also background documents:

- the Blunkett Review, *Putting students and parents first*
- the Husbands Review
- the section on apprenticeships in the Adonis Review.



Strictly, the Blunkett Review was more than background material since it covered much of the same ground as the draft and made specific proposals which were part of the debate.

The final ingredient was the 243 amendments to *'Education and Children'* submitted by CLPs, affiliated organisations and NPF members. There is no space here to cover all the major contending views in the materials discussed. Instead, I shall select a few major themes, looking at the inputs to the process and its outcomes.

### The role of local authorities

The first draft of *'Education and Children'* contained many references to "local communities", "local accountability", "local oversight" etc., but, interestingly, local authorities were not mentioned.

The issue of just where and how all this local power is to be exercised was entirely unclear. I guess that this vagueness was intended to allow readers interpret "local" in their own preferred ways. The Blunkett report, on the other hand, leaves no room for doubt. Statutorily independent Director of School Standards (DSS), appointed by local authorities, singly or in groups, from a government approved list, would be responsible for the standards and commissioning of all state-funded schools. The DSS would commission new schools through competitive tendering. The role of the local authority in all this would be to supply information and express views, and even to enter the competition to

provide new schools, but the decision would be with the independent DSS.

The amendments submitted to this draft expressed contrary views. Over 40 amendments called for a return of education to a local authority framework. Many were explicit that this meant bring all academies and free schools (which legally are academies) back into that framework. The SEA expressed the general view clearly:

*Education must serve its local communities and must be guided by local knowledge and expertise. To achieve this we do not need to invent any more quangos, instead we want democratically revitalised local authorities to be the hub of educational reform and to be the basis for setting new standards of both educational achievement and democratic involvement.*

Nineteen amendments were written on the assumption that Directors of School Standards were already Party policy as speeches by Tristram Hunt and Ed Miliband had implied prior to the NPF meeting. A key passage repeated in most of these amendments was:

*Decisions over school places should be taken locally with accountability. Local authorities in conjunction with Directors of School Standards will be responsible for overseeing the commissioning of new schools, taking decisions based on the needs of the local area as set out by local authorities.*

The final document retains the ambiguity of the draft as to what "local" actually means (e.g. local authority or DSS or something else?). Thus:

*Labour will ensure equal access to educational opportunity through making sure that every school has a fair admissions policy and will give local areas the powers to direct all schools to admit hard-to-place and vulnerable children.*

The exact nature of this "local area" is unspecified. In amendments supporting a DSS, we find: "*local support for schools, local oversight and better planning of schools places*" leaving it unclear exactly who is going to be doing these things. Does it mean the local authority or the DSS? Is it both and if it is how are the responsibilities divided and which plays the leading part?

There was, in my view, no 'middle way' between returning schools to a local authority framework and having a statutorily independent official in charge of regulating, opening and closing schools. Without significantly changing the role

of the DSS, the only way a consensus could be reached was by backing one proposal and rejecting the other. However, it seems clear that the majority involved in the educational discussion took the multiple references to local powers, local support etc., as heralding a return of powers to local authorities. If they did think that, then my view is that they were misguided. According to the final document the commissioning of schools would be a joint decision of local authorities and the DSS. How does an elected authority make a "joint decision" with a statutorily independent official invested with the power to make the decisions? Having served its purpose of achieving internal Party consensus this ambiguity will, I believe, disappear in the election manifesto showing more clearly the contours of the Blunkett solution.

Polls have shown that the public favours a return to a local authority framework for schools. The same was true for most of the amendments dealing with the issue. Labour has never made a case why this should not happen. Its leading spokespersons have simply repeated that there can be no going back to "local authority control".

### **The 11+ examination**

Selective schooling in the state sector is closely associated with the 11+ examination (rather than ability to pay as in the private sector). It is a topic that Labour prefers not to talk about; 'Education and Children' and the Blunkett Report don't mention it.

Nevertheless two amendments called for the abolition of the 11+. Tristram Hunt opposed this call at the NPF on the grounds that it might endanger marginal seats in Kent. No research was produced to show the degree of this threat or even that it actually existed. Nor was there any discussion about how Labour might campaign to raise awareness of the harm done by the 11+ or by the apparent lack of commitment to a genuinely one-nation education policy.

The upshot was:

*Academic selection at 11 damages education for all children and is not the best way to give all young people the best start in life.*

In other words the 11+ was recognised as damaging but nothing will be done about it. It is hard to imagine this featuring in the manifesto.

### **Faith schools**

"Education and Children" said nothing about faith schools. The Blunkett Report simply said:

*The historic settlement with faith groups, diocesan authorities and foundations has stood the test of time.*

A number of amendments expressed outright opposition to faith schools as socially divisive. The final consensus wording on this issue was:

*Labour will ensure that all schools including free schools, academies and faith schools serve their local communities and follow the admissions code so every child has fair access to schools.*

### **Ofsted**

'Education and Children' and the Blunkett Report were entirely positive about Ofsted. This contrasts with the view of the teaching unions and widely held views of teachers. Eight of the submitted amendments were critical of Ofsted and variously called for it to be abolished or reformed, or for a commission to evaluate its work. The final wording contains a lot of references to the need for changes to the inspection process, but is weak on specifics:

*Labour believes the role of the Schools Inspectorate needs examining.*

### **Other issues**

Many of the changes made by the NPF either restated what was in the 'Education and Children' draft (e.g. on QTS) are near meaningless (Labour will "increase" the number of apprenticeships) or demands things that are already in place (that Ofsted should require a "broad and balanced" curriculum). And what is the point of statements like "Labour also recognises that industry cannot succeed without a skilled workforce"?

There is much in the final wording which is difficult to interpret in terms of a commitment to do anything specific. Thus, it is said that Labour will ensure that early intervention for babies and young children will be "properly funded". The "importance" of the Disabled Student Allowance is "recognised". "Reasonable adjustments" are promised for mainstream examinations and assessments to make them accessible for disabled learners. Labour believes in "sustained investment" in further and higher education. It will also "look to ensure" that adult and career development courses are as effective as possible.

There were clear commitments to: disability training for all school staff; better qualified childcare workers; full-time FE courses to include at least 12 hours of face-to-face tuition (sounds low to me); no new grammar schools (but expansion of existing ones?); no more free schools (but parent-led academies which look

rather similar are okay); limiting HE tuition fees to £6,000 and probably introducing a graduate tax.

There is an apparent commitment to national pay and conditions negotiations which are “*recognised*” to be important in recruiting and retaining staff. But even here the formulations leave room for doubt in that it is said that moves

from those conditions would be kept under review.

Would ‘*Education and Children*’ as amended by the NPF give Labour policies that would at least undo the Gove revolution or does it try to work within the framework that he established? We will get a clearer idea when the election manifesto appears.

**David Pavett is a member of the SEA Executive. David blogs on the Left Futures site.**

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## Who should hold schools to account?

### Henry Stewart



When the Coalition came to power, there were two big educational experiments to learn from. One was the change in schools in London, which transformed education in the capital. The other was the academies programme, for which the effects were unclear.

Michael Gove chose to ignore the lessons of London, probably because it was based on things he didn't like: collaboration, active local authority involvement, peer learning, support for teachers and professional development. Instead all the resources and focus of the Department for Education were put into structural change – a massive expansion of the academies programme, and the introduction of free schools, leading to the chaotic system we have now.

While London's schools continue to perform well above the national average, the same cannot be said for academies nationally. When the DfE had to defend its record in the High Court this year, it dropped the dramatic claims of the previous Secretary of State. Instead they argued only that academies had shown “marginally better” improvements than other

schools. Even these marginal gains in GCSE results disappear when the GCSE are removed. And the first results for the new primary academies indicate that they improve at a slower rate than community schools.

So Tristram Hunt's attack on the “reform psyche” that focused on “re-organising the school structures at the expense of improving the quality of teaching” is spot on. He deserves 100% support for his vision of a “relentless focus on teacher quality”, of “valuing vocational as much as academic”, of deeper knowledge, and of character, resilience and grit being as important as exam results. However, he does support a new structure, an independent Director of School Standards, to work across local authority boundaries, brokering collaboration, commissioning school places and holding schools to account. This was first proposed in the Blunkett report and inserted into the ‘*Education and Children*’ document at the NPF in July.

Fiona Millar and I debated this proposal on the Local Schools Network website earlier this year, and here are some extracts.

**Fiona Millar:** Overall I think these proposals are an inevitable tentative first step to resolving the chaos that the Coalition will leave behind. To understand the extent of the fragmentation and atomisation read the article by David Wolfe QC in the Education Law Journal last year. In it the barrister spells out the legal minefield created by thousands of schools accountable only to the DFE via a multitude of subtly different funding agreements, depending on how and when each school was established.

That a new order must arise from this chaos seems to me inevitable, preferably one that creates strong, collaborative local systems that embrace ALL schools, whether free, maintained or academy. Given that so many schools now lie outside the LA framework, it may be necessary to create a new all-encompassing layer.



**Henry Stewart:** Surely the simplest response would be to make all state schools – whatever their structure – accountable to the local authority? If it wasn't for that strong Westminster prejudice against local government, that would be the obvious proposal. The distrust of national politicians for local government is a peculiarly British disease, in probably the most centralised system of government in the developed world, and one which has caused considerable damage to our society. The chaos over school places is a direct result of Michael Gove's refusal to let councils plan and build new schools to meet the local need.

And his intense distrust of local authorities (which he apparently sees as part of his much disdained "blob") meant that now almost any group can put together a business plan to run chains of academies. The fact many have precious little educational experience seems to have been an advantage in his book.

I have described elsewhere the result of this. Of 151 local authorities only two have an average GCSE benchmark, without equivalents, of 35%

or below. Of the seven largest chains, four of them (over half) have an average GCSE benchmark of 35% or below. Compare those two statistics. What this means is that the personal ideological dislike of local educational authorities by the Secretary of State has led directly – in the schools in these under-performing chains – to lower achievement for thousands of our young people.

**Fiona Millar:** I can understand the reaction of people who are disappointed that councils can't take over all these functions again. I have sympathy with that view. Some local authorities have successfully nurtured and maintained their families of schools against the tide of national policy, and done so more effectively than many academy chains. We shouldn't forget that. But in other parts of the country local authorities haven't been as successful and in many areas the infrastructure is disintegrating; local authorities either don't want, or haven't got the capacity, to do what is needed.

The proposal for a new director post is more sensible than Gove's regional commissioners who are only responsible for academies and free schools, or the idea of Ofsted running both an inspectorate and a school improvement service.

**Henry Stewart:** I can understand the reason behind Blunkett's proposal. It is likely that if he had recommended a greater role for local authorities, his report would have been sidelined by national politicians with a deep distrust of the local. You may be right, Fiona, that the educational capabilities of many local authorities have disintegrated over the last four years. But many are still performing strongly. You have yourself powerfully described the transformation enabled by Tower Hamlets Council in one of the most deprived areas in the country.

This is the decision that Tristram Hunt faces: Does he create a new and entirely unproven education layer or does he recognize the decades of experience and the large number of high-performing local authorities, and seek to sort out those that are under-performing.

**Fiona Millar:** The fundamental problem remains that there are now thousands of schools contracted directly to the Secretary of State so it is impossible to just wave a magic wand and give them back to the local authority. But you are right. There are still too many unanswered questions. Labour must explain clearly how the local authority and the independent directorate will relate to each

other, how the statutory duties will be divided up; and to go back to David Wolfe's original piece, how will the jungle of different rules governing each academy and free school be streamlined and what legislation will be necessary to ensure all this happens seamlessly?

Parents probably don't think much about who actually ensures the smooth operation of their local schools. But they do care when things go wrong, they care when they can't get a place for their child, when they are not listened to and when they can't get quick and easy redress. That is what these proposals are about. Everyone knows deep down that something must be done. The new proposals may just be a tentative first step, but it is an essential one.

**Henry Stewart:** Let's face reality. Local authorities are always going to be part of the

solution. The DSS appears to be little more than a one-person quango. It can alert people to problems in individual schools but it will not be the source of support and school improvement. Those will either be provided by a similar chaotic range of hundreds or thousands of chains, federations and others as at present or it will be provided by the 151 local education authorities – with a focus on making sure they are all effective.

You are right to conclude with the needs of parents. Where do they go when things go wrong? They don't go to the DfE and I'm not sure they will go to the new DSS. They overwhelmingly go to their council and to their local councillor. Call me old-fashioned but that good old democratic accountability is something to support and enhance, not disregard in a new combination of centralisation and atomisation.

**Henry Stewart is co-founder of Local Schools Network, an education blogger and Chair of Governors of a Hackney comprehensive school.**

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## What kind of National Curriculum?

### John Bolt

Andrew Pollard (one of Gove's original expert panel on the curriculum) has given us a devastating insight into the process of re-writing the National Curriculum. He wrote:

*“Michael Gove's instructions to the Expert Panel were to trawl the curricula of the world's high performing countries, to collect core knowledge, and put it in the right order. Then, he believed, we'd have a national curriculum to restore our economic fortunes and provide new opportunities for all.”*

What finally emerged from a thoroughly opaque process was subjected to an extraordinary level of criticism. Robin Alexander called it “neo-Victorian. Andrew Pollard wrote “the constraining effects on the primary curriculum as a whole are likely to be profound and the preservation of breadth, balance and quality of experience will test even the most committed of teachers”. Brian Lightman described much of

the secondary curriculum as “so vague and nebulous as to be meaningless and impossible to implement.”

But now it's all gone quiet. Schools are getting on with making the best of it and there are few proposals on the table to do anything about it. Anyone proposing yet another complete upheaval would probably not be welcome in many schools given how much work has gone into implementing all the current changes.

At one point, Labour's “get out of jail card” on the curriculum was “academy freedoms for all”. This would mean the kind of vague instruction found in academy funding agreements to deliver a curriculum that is “broad and balanced including English and maths” would become universal. And of course tests and exams would act as some kind of control.

This approach however has clearly not stood up to the challenge of events in Birmingham and elsewhere. It is now clear, if it wasn't before,

that a curricular free for all is not viable. Anyone who had ever read the HMI reports of the 1970's and 1980's that built up the case for a National Curriculum will not be surprised.

What a Labour government should not do is to just tear up what has been done and impose something else. From all that has been said by the front bench about re-empowering the profession, it seems that this lesson has been learned. What though is less clear is how Labour would go about making fresh sense of the whole process of curriculum design.

The first priority should be a self-denying ordinance by politicians. The whims of ministers of any party can't be the principal determinant of what schools teach. Nor, it needs to be said, should the curriculum be determined simply by education professionals. There needs to be an arms-length structure put in place so that the National Curriculum is the outcome of a transparent process involving everyone with an interest in how our schools work and what young people should know and be able to do. It should be reviewed as a matter of routine on a rolling programme with no party political point scoring involved.

The second priority should be to re-define what a National Curriculum does and what should be left to schools to decide for themselves. It would be right to row back from the kind of prescription that produces 23 pages on spelling in primary schools or which tells primary schools to teach almost no history after 1066. It would be perfectly possible to define what most young people should know and be able to do at, say, 7, 11 and 14 to a level that would give adequate guidance to schools but would not drive out creativity and local decision making. It then goes without saying that this should apply to all state funded schools.

But before there is any review of the curriculum, there is an urgent need to understand what the aims of education actually are. Currently they seem to be being reduced to the achievement of certain narrow academic outcomes with the assumption that A\* in maths, physics and chemistry will enable young people to meet all the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century life.

This is not the view of employers. John Cridland, CBI Director General, said in November 2013:

*"We need young people who are rigorous, but also rounded and grounded, and possess characteristics like determination, optimism and emotional intelligence. Too many young people are failed by a system which is primarily focussed on getting them through exams rather than nurturing and developing the whole person."*

Nor, increasingly, is it the view the Asian jurisdictions that we are so often told we must copy. The OECD wrote about Shanghai and Hong Kong

*"reducing the emphasis on rote learning and increasing the emphasis on deep understanding, the ability to apply knowledge to solving new problems and the ability to think creatively".*

Good teachers have always known that schools are places where young people learn much more than subjects. We want to see young adults who have the skills, knowledge and personal qualities to succeed in a tough and complex world. It has been encouraging to hear Tristram Hunt talk about the importance of character and resilience but the set of skills and qualities needed is wider than that.

We need a broader definition of the desired outcomes of schooling, including but not limited to, the essential knowledge, skills and understanding that everyone needs. We then need to recognise that there are many pathways that schools can follow to achieve these.

Labour is currently making teacher quality its big electoral pitch. But that won't be enough if what they are teaching has been reduced to a lowest common denominator of facts to be learned and regurgitated.

The top-down model of curriculum design that began in 1988 is broken beyond repair. It would be a mistake for Labour either to ignore the need for change or to turn everything upside down immediately after the election. There is an opportunity here to put in place a new settlement that will have the support of the profession and the wider community and which will last.

## **John Bolt is General Secretary of the SEA**



# The purpose and governance of universities

## A review of 'Warwick University Ltd' ed. E.P.Thompson

### Margaret Morris

As a reaction to the failure to predict the 2008 economic crisis, University students in Britain and over 35 other countries have currently joined together to demand fundamental change in the way economics is being taught. They want a curriculum covering all aspects and interpretations of economic development instead of courses based on neoliberal theories designed purely as a training ground for working in big business or finance.

The origins of this subordination of universities to the demands of industry and commerce are brought out clearly in the timely re-publication of "*Warwick University Ltd*", edited by E.P.Thompson (Spokesman Books). First published in 1970, it details the events which led to a student occupation of the Registry of the University and what was revealed in documents discovered there both about the way local industrial leaders were dominating the decisions of the Council and its committees and, shockingly, that routine political surveillance of staff and students was taking place using employees of these members of the Council and reporting back to the Vice-Chancellor, John B. Butterworth.

Student demonstrations, occupations and general "revolt" were an international phenomenon of the late 1960s and early 1970s from France to America, where opposition to the Vietnam War was the dominant theme. Students had a new confidence over their right to be consulted over facilities, the content and assessment of courses and the way their universities were being run. At the newly opened Warwick University there was a paucity of social facilities and initially the Student Union tried to negotiate with the Vice Chancellor and relevant committees for the development of a staff/student or student building controlled by its users. It was only after being fobbed off time after time that they resorted to occupying the Registry.

Their almost accidental discovery of a number of incriminating secret files transformed the occupation into a major political confrontation. The first damning file to be found was the "Montgomery Report". Dr. David Montgomery, a visiting American historian of labour, had addressed a meeting of the Coventry Labour Party which was attended by the Director of Legal Affairs at Rootes Motors. He reported on who was there and what was said to the managing director, Gilbert Hunt, and advised that though "nothing would involve persecution under the 1919 Aliens Restriction Act [it is]...advisable to keep a copy for your confidential files".

The full story of what followed is described in detail in the book and is a fascinating story in itself. Its significance for universities and the labour movement was analysed at the time by E.P.Thompson and also needs reading in full. He described the conflict as having two strands:

1. "the struggle to enforce...the open operation of democratic procedures of academic self-government – as against undue influence, or manipulation, or the introduction of inappropriate managerial methods";
2. "student militancy and revolt" and the demand for students and non-professorial staff to participate at all levels of decision making, together with the relationship which should exist between the academic and civil communities.

The book traces the sidelining of the neighbouring local authorities, which were very involved in the initial development of the new university. But relationship with the wider community had quickly been replaced by reliance on business leaders, even though their financial contribution was very limited compared with that of the state. The participation of academic staff had also been reduced. It was local business leaders who were dominating the decision making committees. Hence the title of the book, "*Warwick University Ltd*".

### Margaret Morris is a Vice-President of SEA

*In the next edition of Education Politics, Jackie Lukes will relate the events of the late sixties and early seventies to current issues in higher education.*

# Gove, the last word

## Mary Bousted

It is safe to say that Michael Gove may be gone but he will not be quickly forgotten. He was a 'marmite' Secretary of State for Education – you either loved him, or you hated him. Much has been said and written about his abrupt departure from the Department for Education. For what it's worth, my observations of Gove lead me to these conclusions.

Michael Gove knew what he wanted, was untroubled by doubts, undeterred by evidence and undaunted by opposition from any quarter. His aim was for an autonomous, diverse and self-improving school system which floated free from the shackles of government at local and national level. Academies increased at an exponential rate: in May 2010 there were 203 academies, a number dwarfed by the 4,000 academies in existence by June 2014 – although the primary sector has resisted the lure, with only 11% of all primary schools having converted. And then there was his free school programme – on which public money has been spent to provide schools in areas where there is no extra pupil need, whilst schools suffer cuts and huge cuts have been made to FE and sixth form colleges.

And yet, for all his talk of freedom, autonomy and difference, Michael Gove failed to realise his vision. He realised, too late, that whilst the Department for Education might propose, it is the inspection agency Ofsted that disposes. Throughout Gove's period in office Ofsted continued on its merry way – with an inadequate inspection methodology which misuses national data sets to categorise individual schools; with inadequate quality control of its inspection teams which leaves school and college leaders highly vulnerable to whichever Ofsted team turns up at their gate – one that has a clue, or one that is clueless.

The effects of Ofsted on the lives of education professionals cannot be overstated. Based on an intrinsic and fundamental lack of trust in them, Ofsted operates on a tide of fear and trepidation with inspection teams that are seen as capricious and all-powerful, so that heads responding to their perception of the wishes of the Chief Inspector looks like rational behaviour. But when those wishes encompass (in no particular order) teachers wearing smart

clothes, competitive sport, phonics, setting children by ability, a focus on spiritual and moral development, a broad and balanced curriculum – you begin to see the problem. It is not that, of themselves, any item on this list is a bad thing – some are very good things (although setting by ability is the single biggest in-school factor limiting the achievement of deprived pupils); it is, rather, that taken together they are a complete hotch potch. With inspection frameworks changing every time the Chief Inspector has a new idea, leaders are left endlessly chasing up the next new thing, and then the next, and then the next. Too late did Michael Gove realise that Ofsted was more of a problem than a solution, and, despite increasing evidence of Ofsted's effects, Gove did far too little about it. In this key respect he failed to create the conditions in which a self-improving school system can thrive.



Whilst he was strongly driven by ideas, Gove was impatient of their implementation. Having no experience of leadership of any organisation and the challenges it brings, he did not understand that careful implementation of policy is a pre-requisite for success. Gove's legacy is of weak and ineffective policy support. The National College for Teaching and Leadership is, ironically, lacking clear direction and leadership. Its flagship 'School Direct' programme is, as was predicted by many, failing to achieve consistent quality control of training programmes which are devised by thousands of school providers. So an emerging crisis in teacher supply is happening at the same time as a primary pupil places crisis.

Existing primary schools can only build over their playground, convert the music room into a classroom, divide the school hall, once. In the end they run out of space.

Any Secretary of State for Education has two key responsibilities – and these are to ensure that there are enough school places for pupils and that there is an adequate teacher supply. My prediction is that Gove will be judged to have failed on both these counts – and in this his legacy to his successor, Nicky Morgan, is especially toxic because she cannot look to free schools to come to her aid. As the influential Public Accounts Committee found in their most recent report, in over half the local authorities in most need of extra school places, no application has been made to start a free school. The Local Government Association has called for local authorities to be able to build schools in response to an almost unprecedented rise in pupil numbers. But Gove's legacy is such that ideology will triumph over pragmatism.

The final Gove legacy was the sheer weight of policy implementation, the results of which are only starting to really bite now that he's gone. A new primary and secondary national curriculum (although its claim to nationhood can be

disputed as academies and free schools are liberated from its strictures); the abandonment of levels in primary education; new GCSEs in the core subjects, the decoupling of AS from A levels, new A levels in the core subjects, new vocational qualifications, performance related pay, new Ofsted inspection framework – the list goes on and on and makes Michael Gove's protestations of trust in the profession and autonomy for school and college leaders look like what they actually are – protestations devoid of any meaning and any reality.

Nicky Morgan will have her work cut out to deal with the fallout from Michael Gove's frenetic period in office. She has made it clear that, whilst she wants to do business differently, and she does not want to further alienate the teaching profession, she will not change the fundamental direction of travel. I have my doubts about her resolve in this respect. Things happen and demand responses. Nicky Morgan may well find herself in the place teachers and lecturers have been in so long – not in control of external events and having to change course far too often and far too quickly as new problems start to emerge. I think we may be in for interesting times....

## Mary Bousted is General Secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers

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### Forthcoming events


Email [socialisteducation@virginmedia.com](mailto:socialisteducation@virginmedia.com) for more details of any of the following:

Sat 8 <sup>th</sup> November, 1pm	London	SEA Executive – all members encouraged to attend and join in debate
Tues 11 <sup>th</sup> November, 6pm	House of Commons, London	Caroline Benn Memorial lecture: <i>The golden age of the grammar school: exploding the myth</i> . Speaker: Dr.Selina Todd, author of the acclaimed new book, <i>The People. The rise and fall of the working class, 1910-2010</i> .
Sat 15 <sup>th</sup> November	Birmingham City Hall	Reclaiming Education Conference – speakers include Tim Brighouse, Laura McInerney, Richard Hatcher, Dr Nicola Rollock, Mary Bousted.
Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> January, 1pm	Birmingham	SEA Executive – all members encouraged to attend and join in debate

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SEA is a member of the Picking up the Pieces coalition. See previous page for its Conference in November. This is its current leaflet.

**A Better Future for Our Schools**



**RECLAIMING EDUCATION**

- 1. The National Curriculum should be what it says** - a curriculum for all children in all English schools. As originally promised, it should be a curriculum to which all children are entitled, broadly based, balanced and designed to promote children's emotional, as well as intellectual, development.
- 2. No school should be allowed to choose its pupils.** Admission to schools should be fairly administered according to well understood rules drawn up by a locally elected education service. Selection tests must end. No child should be branded a failure at 11.
- 3. Inclusion and equal opportunities need to be at the heart of education provision** and discrimination and segregation tackled in all their forms. The needs of every child, including those with SEN and disabilities, should be fully met.
- 4. All schools should be treated equally** and funded according to a common formula which responds to pupils' needs.
- 5. All schools within the same area should work together,** rather than compete against each other. A locally elected education service should guide, support and monitor schools as well as take decisions on school places.
- 6. The inspection system, perceived by schools as hostile and threatening, should be replaced by one which is supportive, as well as rigorous.** Standards should be agreed through a national consultation process and inspectors should help schools by developing and sharing successful practice.
- 7. All those whom we employ to educate our children should have qualified professional status.** Continuing professional development should be an entitlement and requirement for all staff. Unqualified staff should be given appropriate training to become qualified.

**WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?**

These are the seven principles agreed at a House of Commons meeting on April 8th 2014 that the 'Picking up the Pieces' alliance will be campaigning for in the next General Election.

If you agree with us, please circulate them as widely as possible so that candidates of all political parties can be challenged on their stance.


We want to ensure that Education is a high priority topic in the debate and that the future of state education does not fall into the hands of profiteers who would deny a high quality education to everyone.

**WHO ARE WE?**

"Picking up the Pieces" is supported by the Campaign for State Education, the Socialist Educational Association, Information for School and College Governors, Forum, Comprehensive Future and the Alliance for Inclusive Education in conjunction with other campaigning groups and trade unions.

More information can be found at [www.pickingupthepieces.org.uk](http://www.pickingupthepieces.org.uk)

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Education Politics (issn 1354-2028) is the journal of the Socialist Educational Association. The articles reflect the views of their authors and not the SEA unless indicated otherwise.  
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