

Fabian Education Policy Group Briefing paper
Labour's developing policy agenda.
*Maximising impact and breaking down barriers
to opportunity*

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Executive Summary

The aim of this document is to provide a range of policy ideas and solutions to issues in the education sector for Labour's ministerial team to consider in developing their policy agenda..It was originally submitted in 2023 to tie in with labour's preparation for government..

The proposals are designed to be attractive to stakeholders and are based on an analysis of what is currently working and what is not working. Many of the proposals impact on breaking down barriers to opportunity.

This document will provide an essential background paper for DfE officials when discussion continues about Labour's policies.

We propose *independent commissions* are set up to produce briefing papers which would provide solid foundations on which to build policy. Such commissions would include stakeholders and cross-party representation. See Appendix A for an example of how Labour used the Commission process prior to the 1997 election (people volunteer their time, costs are in travel and document production).

It may be that introducing new forms of [Public Benefit Corporations](#) such as [New Zealand's Crown Entity corporations](#) or the USA [Public Benefit Corporations](#) would ensure that investments of taxpayers money in e.g. [online resources](#) are protected from closure by future incoming administrations. If, for example, the new [organisations](#) are set up to require cross party consensus for closure. Many of the previous Labour administration's achievements in education were simply closed down when the new administration took over in 2010 such as the National College for School Leadership, Teachers TV, The Teacher Training Resource Bank, Sure Start centres, and online materials such as those on curriculum and assessment, SEND, diversity and subject specific issues.

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Introduction: Aims and Values

The Fabian Education Policy Group (FEPG) is committed to creating an education system with cooperative aims and values which primarily enable young people to explore their individual talents, identity, views, values and develop as a whole person with a commitment to creating a just and inclusive society.

Such an education system would:

- Value academic, practical, creative and cognitive skills.
- Enable young people to understand the democratic system and the values of the different political parties and pressure groups.
- Enable young people to understand how power is exercised, from individual interactions to global economic structures.
- Help young people to learn to live together and to value difference, diversity and equity.
- Give students the freedom to explore ideas, to develop their personal talents and to be critical reflective thinkers.
- Support young people's development and wellbeing by protecting mental health, emotional resilience, and love of learning by encouraging curiosity, imagination, purpose and engagement
- Prioritise inclusion, belonging, community, positive relationships (for staff, young people, families).
- In so far as it is possible, assessment would be designed to serve the curriculum and be formative. It would not constrain the curriculum and be socially stratifying with judgements on a narrow range of cognitive outcomes.

The values that would drive such an education system would include co-operation, collaboration, valuing people, diversity, cognitive knowledge, and critical and creative thinking. In other words, the system would value the whole child, head and heart together.

Preparing for government: using Independent Commissions to produce briefing papers

In 1997, the incoming Labour Government hit the ground running in areas where they had well developed policies and briefing papers. In Appendix A Professor Stephen Heppell describes the year-long process used by *The Independent ICT in School Commission* during 1996/7 to prepare the *Stevenson Report on ICT development for schools* which then shaped investment and enabling policies such as the use of the Big Lottery/New Opportunities Fund funds for the upskilling of teachers. Those advising on the report were drawn from all stakeholders and the report was funded independently supported by pro bono work by McKinsey and those on the Commission. Some ideas for potential funders for such commissions are included in the sections below (See Appendices A and D). The Labour Party will have its own contacts to call upon.

‘Take back control’ in Education - What it might mean

Commissions could call for evidence around the ***take back control*** theme thus engaging a wide group of stakeholders. We suggest Commissions on:

- **Systems: national, regional, local, including admissions** (developing the *take back control* concept)
- **Early Years**
- **Lifelong Learning**
 - Adult ed, community education, a virtual national Open FE college and a virtual national Open School, vouchers, SEND
- **Curriculum and Assessment** (see Appendix H on the XP school)
 - Local business and major employer engagement in curriculum, in work experience
 - Curriculum and assessment options, including revisiting the values underpinning the education system and aims of education and young people's entitlement, interpersonal skills and emotional literacy
 - 14-19 skills and FE
- **Education Technologies and Digital Resources**
- **Staff recruitment, initial training, and ongoing professional development**
- **Higher Education**
- **Inspection and Accountability**

Accelerating change through understanding civil service processes

Being prepared with detailed policy proposals as described above e.g. through using the Commission process described in Appendix A, could mean that changes happen a year or more earlier than would otherwise be the case as once a party is in government there are many day to day issues to be dealt with which can distract from policy development.

The civil service has necessarily transparent processes for development, approval, costing and contracting of proposals for implementing government policies through an annual cycle of review.

Competitive tendering of contracts for example is a long process which can be shortened with Treasury approval if, for example, specialist groups likely to be the only groups eligible to contract for the work can collaborate together e.g. on the training of physics teachers. Using the grants process rather than the contracting process is a quicker way to get action started but, unlike with contracts, there is no comeback if the outcome of a grant is not what was asked for.

See Appendix D for advice from a retired civil servant on preparation for government.

Policy Areas and suggested action points

The following sections based on the topics above, outline policy issues, and preparatory work that can be undertaken now to ensure that change starts to happen within the first hundred days.

1) Early years

Principles underpinning policies: Early intervention, equity and prevention.

Potential funders for an independent commission (as described in Appendix A): Teacher professional organisations, unions, CBI, Nursery umbrella organisations.

Policy/issue and rationale	Preparatory work /Commission remit/potential policy details
<i>Provision of affordable, high quality child care for all. Nursery offer reimagined.</i> Rationale: A child's development during the Early Years significantly influences their basic learning, educational attainment, economic participation and health.	The Commission remit could include consider replacements and adjustments to: • Maternity/Paternity leave for two years • 15 hour offer • 30 hour offer • LEA Nursery Education • Governance of private sector nurseries. • Breakfast clubs • Wraparound services • Sure Start: Feasibility/ costings to reinstate SureStart • Consider revisiting the 'Every Child Matters Agenda' of the last Labour government.
<i>Enhanced funding for 15 hours for under 2s. Enhanced opportunity to access 30 hours funding for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.</i> Rationale: Funding at 2 and 3 is currently confusing and impacts on parents' ability to work.	The Commission could: • Engage with recent IPPR Reports • Seek out good practice in other countries (Norway, Estonia, Finland etc) • Establish costings with the shadow Treasury Team • Establish a Timeline: within which timeframe can these policies be delivered? 1 month? 6? More than 1 year? See Towards a childcare guarantee IPPR; Delivering a childcare guarantee IPPR.
<i>Governance of private sector nurseries.</i> <i>More LEA maintained Nursery provision provided and funded.</i> Rationale: State funded Nursery provision is very patchy and private providers typically do not engage in local partnerships with other providers.	The Commission could: • Investigate changing governance in private nurseries • Consider whether the existing governance models of private nurseries might be reconstituted as "Public Benefit Corporations (PBC)", or whether Board Members might create a non-remunerated Governing body; or whether LAs might nominate one governor for each nursery • Investigate the feasibility of changing and enhancing the LA funding formula to fund state nursery provision.

<i>Breakfast clubs etc - wraparound care.</i> Rationale: There is no national funded breakfast club entitlement for all.	As already announced by Labour: ● Breakfast clubs in Junior Schools to be funded (in part) by the scrapping of private school charitable tax exemption.
<i>Sure Start reinstatement programme.</i> Rationale: 1,342 Sure Start centres have closed since 2012. They provided a significant support and impact on children's and parents' health and welfare during the Early Years.	The Commission could: ● Investigate the feasibility and cost of reinstating the successful Sure Start policy across England.

The following changes can be implemented for little or no cost apart from staff time:

- Investigate changing governance in private nurseries. Consider whether the existing governance models of private nurseries might be reconstituted to follow a Public Benefit Corporations (PBC) model; whether Board Members might create a non-remunerated Governing body; or whether LEA's might nominate one governor for each nursery.

2) 14-19, Skills and FE

Principles underpinning policies: Extending and delivering lifelong learning within communities; developing much needed soft skills in order that students become ‘ready for work and ready for life’.

Potential funders for an independent commission (as described in Appendix A): [CBI](#), [Association of Colleges](#), [Sixth Form Colleges Association](#), [ASCL](#), [TUC](#)

Policy/issue and rationale	Preparatory work /Commission remit/potential policy details
<i>The need to have a flexible education system supporting second chance, retraining and adult learning.</i> Rationale: Opportunities to access new knowledge and learning are essential in our world. There is an increasing need to provide people opportunities to retrain,refresh and learn new skills during their lifetime as society develops and changes.	The Commission remit could include: • Exploring ideas/Feasibility Study with Further Education (FE) partners, to create a Virtual/Open FE college to give near universal just-in-time access to training and qualifications especially for those in remote/rural areas or who have work/family responsibilities. See the Australian TAFE Digital example. In London, see Birkbeck College. (See complementary proposal for a National Open school in Section 6.) • Identifying opportunities for local apprenticeships for public works contracts. See Appendix Fi • Producing a Briefing Paper on 14-19, Skills and FE provision.

<i>Encourage the creation of more “Community Schools”.</i> <i>Explore enhanced funding for schools who genuinely deliver community services.</i> Rationale: State funded resources should be used for the benefit of everyone in a community.	The Commission could redefine the role of state funded schools as “Community Schools” providing: ● Integrated curricula focused on academic learning, health and social services, youth and community development ● Places for community engagement ● an Adult Education agenda ● Places of learning for the whole person which recognise how successfully meeting human needs and development is dependent on strong families and healthy communities. Real community schools are open to everyone as partners in these endeavours. The Commission might create models of how communities and schools can leverage their shared physical and human assets to help all young people succeed and provide a platform for learning for life. The Commission might provide models of how Community schools can successfully extend service provision to encompass wider community needs and retain a clear focus on their primary stakeholders - the young people in their classrooms.
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<i>Maximise quality outcomes of Tutor Time.</i> Rationale: The ethos of the school is delivered, experienced and personalised through the first lesson of the day - the time with the student's tutors. See the 4Cs and citizenship references in Section 4 on Curriculum.	The Commission might create an outstanding paradigm for Tutor Time practice by: • Engaging with research on Tutor Time usage in school (See Top tips for tutor time (sec-ed.co.uk)) • Reviewing models for CPD for all staff responsible for tutor time • Providing examples of effective reward systems including character merits using powerful words such as grit, responsibility, kindness, courage, resilience • Exploring options for schools to be rated outstanding by OFSTED for their Tutor Time programme. Note: Appendix H provides an example of the "CREW" philosophy activities which include: registration (equipment) checks; reflections, academic support and mentoring; reading independently; study groups; focusing on and discussing our habits of work and learning; making academic and character pledges; team building and problem solving; with a focus on topical issues...to name just a few. These all contribute to the academic and character growth of young people.
<i>Review the curriculum pathways at 14-19.</i> Rationale: the curriculum has been narrowed and is not developing the skills young people need for the future.	The Commission could: • Establish how the curriculum at 14-19 can provide different pathways, choice and personalisation for learners. Create a curriculum, too, that reflects our 21st Century world and the skills needed to engage with it so that young people have a broader knowledge to draw on in an increasingly more flexible work environment • Utilise the Blunkett Report on skills as background, and the earlier Blair era Tomlinson report on diplomas (2004) • Consider enriching the current A level system by broadening the curriculum to include 5 areas of knowledge like the Scottish Higher approach • Consider the components and approach of the International Baccalaureate with its theory of

	knowledge, extended essay and creativity, activity, service components ● Include AI as a component part of any review of the 14-19 curriculum. See Skills for life - a statement by David Blunkett.pdf (ioe.ac.uk) See: Key points: the Tomlinson report 14 - 19 education The Guardian
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The following changes can be implemented for little or no cost apart from staff time:

- Identifying opportunities for local apprenticeships for public works contracts. See Appendix Fi.
- Establish how the curriculum at 14-19 can provide different pathways, choice and personalisation for learners. Create a curriculum, too, that reflects our 21st Century world and the skills needed to engage with it so that young people have a broader knowledge to draw on in an increasingly more flexible work environment.

See Appendix I for an analysis of the lack of flexibility MATS experience under the current system.

3) Admissions: primary and secondary

Principles underpinning policies: Fairness, equal access, equity, communities ‘taking back control’.

Potential funders for an independent commission (as described in Appendix A): Teacher professional organisations, unions, CBI.

Policy/issue and rationale	Preparatory work /Commission remit/potential policy details
<i>No school should be its own admission authority.</i> Rationale: The current system allows schools to manipulate the system to improve their intake e.g. to bias the intake towards young people likely to achieve highly in national tests so as to give the impression the teaching is better than other schools. Any potential change needs to be seen as part of a drive towards localism, taking back control, and a new role for local authorities. <i>Reception Baseline tests to continue. Key Stage 2 Year 4 Multiplication test should be internal and not time framed. Results should be private to students/parents.</i> Rationale: Key stage 2 SATS need to become more flexible utilising a menu of assessment types including teacher formative assessment, extended tasks completed in school (controlled assessment assessed internally or externally), viva-voce, and written examinations. These would then provide admission data for secondary school.	The Commission’s remit could include: • Considering proposals for a revised admissions code including LAs to set all admission criteria and a presumption that admissions systems will reduce social and educational segregation • Setting out priorities for a revised admissions code aiming at reducing socio-economic and educational segregation between schools. LEAs, or Local Area Boards • Advising on how the admissions process can be unbiased, transparent and protected from manipulation • Developing standard Admission data to be used by all schools including ways that key stage 2 data and student profiling could/should be utilised in schools.

The following changes can be implemented for little or no cost apart from staff time:

- Give admissions responsibility back to LAs: paying LA salaries from savings made from localising education school administrative back office services.
- Permanent exclusions have a costly impact on services needed to support excluded young people. In previous localised systems students excluded from one school got a second chance at a nearby school. This process has fallen down with the MAT system with excluded young people being forced to travel long distances to an alternative school. (In Italy, we are told there is no such power to permanently exclude a child).

See [The true cost of excluding a child: £370,000 - Prospect Magazine](#)

4) Curriculum

4a) Primary and secondary and teaching and learning

Principles underpinning policies: Overall aims and values focusing on 21st century skills; high standards; personalisation; choice; parity between academic, technical, vocational, options, ensuring deep teacher knowledge in pedagogy (see Section 7 for new forms of CPD, the *The Master Teacher* offer (years 3, 4, 5 in a teaching career).

Potential funders for an independent commission (as described in Appendix A): Teacher professional organisations, unions, CBI, examination boards.

Policy/issue and rationale	Preparatory work /Commission remit/potential policy details
<i>A Curriculum review is needed to provide personalisation and choice, linking subjects to provide coherent learning experiences for young people. See the Background section following this table.</i> Rationale: In order to support a new approach to education by Labour and to respond to the damaging changes implemented by Conservative led governments since 2010 (for example, too much control over the curriculum left in the hands of ministers; too little scope for creativity; too much emphasis on transmission and banking of knowledge) we propose that the next Labour government undertakes a review of the school curriculum based on principles of subsidiarity i.e. local policy making, as the norm, collaboration and stakeholder involvement at all levels of the system. These elements dovetail with assessment, examinations and teacher training.	Set up a Commission/working party with stakeholders such as subject associations and headteacher associations to review Curriculum and Assessment and teaching paradigms. Ensure there is also a link to teacher training providers. The Commission remit could include: ● Developing a broad definition of the curriculum, what needs to be taught and draw key themes from successful models—for example, Finland, Wales, Scotland and good practice in English schools. See for example Appendix H: The XP School ● Develop a new Citizenship GCSE that is statutory for all. Include: democracy, political understanding, the environment, ethics including British values which will represent an inclusive cultural and diverse agenda, etc. “IDEAS AND ISSUES ABOUT AND FOR A NEW CURRICULUM: A policy proposal from the Curriculum Working Group of the Fabian Education Policy Group, July 2022” See the OECD report on A Curriculum for Excellence which reviews the pluses and minuses of Scotland’s new(ish) aims-based system: https://www.oecd.org/education/scotland-s-curriculum-for-excellence-bf624417-en.htm

<i>Updating Teaching and Learning methodologies.</i> Rationale: All teachers should have an entitlement to accessible CPD on the evidence-based teaching and learning methodologies including SEND. Many teachers now in the education system have been trained through short course routes. The increasing use of OFSTED as a political tool has meant that universities have reduced risk of non-compliance by cutting three and four year BEd teacher training courses which had previously provided the sector with extremely well qualified teachers with deep pedagogical understanding and experience across broadly twenty schools including primary, secondary and special education. The replacement 3 year education degrees do not generally provide specialist teacher training.	The Commission could create examples of best practice (paradigms) for teachers in all subject areas by <u>working with subject associations</u> and experts who already work voluntarily in knowledge sharing and networking. Paradigms would include reference to key methodologies and processes. For example see the work of: Rosenshine, B., Principles of Instruction; Dweck, C. Growth Mindset; Claxton, G. Learning how to learn; Bloom's taxonomy; Luntzer and Gardner, DARTs; Mercer, N. Thinking together; Ebbinghaus, H. Rote Learning; Bergmann and Sam: ICT and Flipped Learning; Repko, A. Interdisciplinary learning; Bruner, J. Discovery learning; Harris, C. Rich Tasks.[PDF] The role of 'Rich Tasks' an interdisciplinary and digital approach to learning post COVID-19
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Background: As from September 2022 England becomes the only one of the four UK nations not to have an aims-based school curriculum (White, *Forum*: 64:2, 2022, Reiss and White, 2013 [An Aims-based Curriculum: The Significance of Human Flourishing for Schools - UCL Discovery](#)).

Wales is the latest country within the UK (following Northern Ireland and Scotland) in introducing an aims-based curriculum and is doing so by highlighting four broad purposes: to develop young people as: successful, capable learners; ethical, informed citizens; enterprising, creative contributors; and healthy, confident individuals.

The curriculum is currently controlled by the central government and based on a traditional approach to knowledge.

4b) Interpersonal Skills and emotional development

Principles underpinning policies: Developing the skills of the future- broadening the notion of ‘intelligence with the 4 C This means’s.

Potential funders for an independent commission (as described in Appendix A): as for curriculum above.

Policy/issue and rationale	Preparatory work
<i>The development of social and emotional skills are essential for life.</i> Rationale: Internationally it is accepted that in the future young people require, to gain meaningful employment, the skills of Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Critical thinking (4Cs), all of which require emotional and social skills. (See references in Column 2).	Labour would need to explain to the electorate why the 4Cs are important to young people, and why the Conservatives, despite being in power and supposedly wanting young people in employment, have largely ignored them as critical thinking skills encouraging challenge and collaboration. In speeches and policy documents make it clear that the development of young people's social and emotional skills are essential to education, parents and young people's future. The Commission remit could include: • Finding the best ways to integrate the 4Cs into a renewed curriculum and assessment framework <i>that is not just norm-referenced!</i> Norm-referencing means that in the English system. Examination Boards apply quotas to the number of young people gaining high grades. This means however good teaching is, the outcomes for young people are artificially and essentially fixed. See Comparable Outcomes: Scourge or Scapegoat? • Developing a curriculum content that would go beyond acquisition of facts and be reframed around pedagogic opportunities for learners to develop the 4 Cs': collaboration, critical thinking, communication and creativity (as recommended by the OECD (2021) and teamwork and creativity (as recommended by the CBI, (2019) Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)) • Developing new ideas for embedding a Citizenship strand within the curriculum by creating a new qualification with the DFE and examination boards that foster these skills alongside integrating opportunities in other areas of the curriculum • Including the Environment and Democracy as key elements of a new GCSE in Ethics, Citizenship and Democracy qualification. The following texts (Allport, 1979; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner & Christ, 2011) provide supporting evidence: contact theory research found that interpersonal contact and dialogue was an effective way of reducing prejudice between majority and minority groups. Positive outcomes included greater trust, empathy and reduced anxiety. The effects appear to be universal across cultures, gender and sexuality (Pettigrew et al., 2011).
<i>Improving behaviour and</i>	The Commission remit could include:

<i>attendance.</i> Rationale: A legacy of Covid that schools are dealing with is unusually challenging behaviour. and new strategies and support need to be developed.	Identifying best practices in repairing the negative effects of the covid pandemic for all young people but particularly: Looked after children (LAC), Children in Need (CIN), young people who qualify for the Pupil Premium Grant (including the Free School Meals (FSM) cohort), young carers, learners who belong to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cohort (who may often have difficulties accessing LA services in addition to education), young people from particular minority ethnic groups whose educational outcomes are on average below those of their peers, young people from lower income backgrounds and learners for whom outcomes can be lower generally (e.g. summer born young people). Note: Teachers are reporting that KS2-4 young people are more aggressive, rebellious, and difficult to manage than pre-covid See: Post Pandemic Education Provision: Professor Sonia Blandford. – Fabians Education Policy Group UK (edublogs.org) Schooling the Pandemic: Tony Breslin. – Fabians Education Policy Group UK (edublogs.org)
<i>Equality issues and inclusion issues e.g. ethnicity, sexuality, gender, social class, religion.</i> Rationale: existing inequalities.	The Commission remit could include: - Gathering evidence from local providers and LAs on effective practices on equity - Considering the idea that all schools should have a Student Equality Officer tasked with opening doors to opportunity for these young people and helping them set and achieve goals for themselves - Investigating how the sharing of practice between schools and agencies could be facilitated by online networking and the provision of online resources - see the example of the archived Multiverse materials supporting teachers to understand how to teach diverse groups - developed by the last Labour government - Considering whether Volunteer Mentors from local communities or online- perhaps retired teachers - may provide useful support in some areas (subject to child safety checks) - Exploring best practice in schools working with Business Mentors to provide young people with another route to developing understanding of how they can find a place in the world (subject to child safety checks) - Considering the inclusion of equity standards in OFSTED criteria e.g. might all schools identify young people at risk of having poverty blight their learning and develop risk mitigation plans to provide these young people with extra support. Multiverse Materials (closed down by M. Gove and archived in the National Archives): :https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20101007141354/http://www.multiverse.ac.uk/ViewArticle2.aspx?ContentId=15683

<i>Creating opportunities for young people to develop their unique talents and interests in a wide-ranging Extracurricular entitlement. Provide opportunities to celebrate and recognise the achievements of young people.</i> Rationale: Current opportunities for extra curricular activities have been hampered by: An overloaded curriculum and assessment model The pandemic (where schools have not yet been able to reinstate a full offer) A perceived resistance by central government and the DFE to prioritise this area.	The Commission could consider: • Ways that school can develop a high quality offer in extracurricular opportunities for young people • Ways in which the current curriculum can provide space for engaging and transformational extra curricular activities and generally ways to celebrate and recognise the achievements of young people. • Creating a number of National Challenges where students develop responses to a series of Rich tasks. Rich tasks are interdisciplinary units of work that encourage students to think creatively, communicate ideas and analyse different viewpoints and ideas. 11-14 year old students would be challenged to explore, reflect, gather data and present their findings in their chosen format e.g. through art, drama, dance, debate, film, song, stories, academic reports/presentations, physical activity, science, different media including games, ICT and other technologies such as food, design, and electronics (See Appendix H The XP school) • Research how learners have positive responses to a variety of integrated learning opportunities. Other examples of ‘rich tasks’ include the Queensland ‘rich tasks’ initiative, the Theories of Knowledge unit as well as the creativity, activity, service elements of the International Baccalaureate, and initiatives by the RSA • Establish how existing school libraries and mobile libraries can support/encourage community literacy • Consider how local businesses can invest more time/resources within primary/special/secondary/FE/HE settings to enable young people to experience work experience and possibly in- school skills-based programmes. Projects - RSA (thersa.org) Diploma Programme (DP) - International Baccalaureate® (ibo.org) Rich Tasks (ascd.org)
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The following changes can be implemented for little or no cost apart from staff time:

- Assessment:
 - Phased change of assessment styles and accompanying curriculum changes can be achieved for low cost by working with examination boards and teachers on a phased approach to change taking account of existing resourcing. Examination boards already regularly update requirements using their existing funding mechanisms.
- Qualifications:
 - Consider and encourage [Microcredentialling](https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/micro-credentials) experimentation which allows the building of qualifications over time and personalised learning. See EU developments(2022:<https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/micro-credentials>)
 - If it isn't broken don't spend funds on change eg keep BTecs/scrap T levels.
- Curriculum enrichment:
 - Consider encouraging curriculum enrichment/innovation e.g. [the Da Vinci d-levels approach](#) to building microcredentials in Food, Enterprise, Production, Gaming and PEPs (Personal Exploration Projects) led by Guy Claxton, the [IBac](#) or an English equivalent of the [Scottish Highers](#).
- Mental Health
 - Following the mental health concerns raised elsewhere, FEPG members who experienced for themselves, Forest School and gardening experiences in primary school talk about the lifelong positive impact of outdoor nature and gardening activities. All schools can provide such experiences for little cost using local facilities owned by councils or charities. See for example the [RHS Campaign for school gardening](#) and [Garden Organic's School Gardening Resources](#). With encouragement from the Government, these charities may find that collaboration with the Big Lottery would enable widespread uptake. The 1997 Labour Administration worked with the Big Lottery to fund the New Opportunities Fund for teachers which paid for teachers to be trained in the use of computers. See [The New Opportunities Fund \(Specification of Initiatives\) Order 1998](#).
- Attendance
 - Improved attendance can be expected where young people experience a curriculum and assessment relevant to their aspirations e.g. car/bike mechanics, art, music, creative subjects.
- Working with headteachers and teachers (See Appendix I for ideas)
 - on levelling up/tutoring: Trust headteachers to organise catch-up tutoring: Funds allocated (£25M) by the DfE to be used for a catch-up tutoring scheme have [been acknowledged a disaster](#); a 5:1 intervention has been found to be more effective than 1-1 tutoring see [Sir John Rowling's work with Pixl arising from the London Challenge](#). Incidentally this is the University of Oxford model of tutoring: small groups.
 - Work with subject associations, unions, to ensure there are subject specialist networks for sharing and building knowledge and research. The 1997-2010 Labour government did this for the local government sector. See the now sustainably self-funding [Knowledge Hub](https://khub.net). <https://khub.net>.

5) Assessment: primary and secondary

Principles underpinning policies: Fairness, differential forms of assessment reflecting learners' aptitudes, skills and abilities.

Potential funders for an independent commission (as described in Appendix A): Teacher professional organisations, unions, CBI, examination boards

Policy/issue and rationale	Preparatory work /Commission remit/potential policy details
<i>Assessment reform is needed as currently young people's abilities and skills are assessed by a predominantly summative exam system.</i> Rationale: Assessment can have a massive negative impact on mental health and wellbeing and can impact on self esteem. End of course examinations at Key Stage 4 are unreliable and do not test the full range of skills and knowledge. Students are not aware of how unreliable assessment outcomes can be.	The Commission on Assessment's remit could include: • Consulting widely with staff, unions, parents, young people, employers, governors and other stakeholders on ways to tackle assessment at the end of key stage 2, key stage 4 and 5 • Making proposals for modular 14 to 19 curriculum and assessment through a range of methods (not excluding exams) spaced through the 14 to 19 phase • Creating proposals for the reporting of assessment data and support of students • Considering ways in which data is reported to stakeholders including the review of league tables • Considering revising the key stage 2 Year 4 Multiplication test to make it internal and not time framed • Considering revising key stage 2 SATS and formative assessment at KS3 to be more flexible utilising a menu of assessment tools including: teacher formative assessment, extended tasks completed in school (controlled assessment assessed internally or externally), viva-voce, and examination. See: Times Commission https://www.thetimes.co.uk/society/education/education-commission Rethinking Assessment https://rethinkingassessment.com/ The Independent Commission on Assessment in Primary Education report provides more detail.

The following changes can be implemented for little or no cost apart from staff time:

- A move away from summative exams towards some varieties of formative assessment could be cost-effective for schools and institutions and save money.

6) Technology strategy including online resources

Principles underpinning policies:

- Building on skills and new ways of working teachers and students have learnt during the pandemic in a truly blended approach;
- Ensuring schools have access to functioning equipment and technical support services;
- Equipping young people with life and work skills; enabling lifelong learning;
- Making up-to-date CPD universally accessible linked with [micro-credentialing](#) and *The Master Teacher* offer (years 3,4,5 in a teaching career) in Section 7;
- Providing information to parents about how young people learn and are taught.

Potential funders for an independent commission (as described in Appendix A): The organisations listed below: UCET, NASBTT, CfSA, unions. One potential outcome is the establishing of a national umbrella body overseeing open online educational resources which will benefit teachers and parents. Such a body may include the BBC and specialist research centres.

Policy/issue and rationale	Preparatory work /Commission remit/potential policy details
<i>A national Ed Tech strategy (England) to include: school equipment upgrades, pupil access and a national home connectivity strategy.</i> Rationale: Teaching online during the covid lockdown showed the shortcomings of the system in the above areas.	The Education Technology Commission remit could include: ● Consultation with subject, teacher and HT associations on equipment including on the reinstatement of BECTA type organisation to take responsibility for advice on school equipment upgrades, young people's access, national home connectivity, developing budgets and processes ● Consulting with telecom companies and schools to map gaps in access for home connections to the internet ● Working with LGA and councils to identify connectivity solutions. ● Reviewing the Data Protection and Digital information bill particularly in relation to the Tech giants being responsible for the content they place on their sites. Examples of one set of a group of resources created under Labour by BECTA and closed down by Gove. which may be able to be updated include: BECTA (2011) https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110130161923/http://www.becta.org.uk/
<i>Teacher CPD: provision & accessibility: national leadership from the government is needed to provide online curriculum resources supporting improvements in teaching and learning for all teachers and young people across England.</i> Rationale: Tory reliance on the market	The Education Technology Commission could: ● Explore options for providing educational materials of public interest which could also be used by teachers, parents and children becoming part of the BBC's remit (being mindful of existing provision by commercial providers and the BBC's Bitesize work.) The BBC's Learning zone and Schools programming needs reinstating. ● Explore options for supporting specialist teaching and learning CPD, online Master provision and 'CPD points' options e.g. through partnerships to provide a sustainable CPD offer. The BBC and the Open University (which have an immense store of relevant resources), subject associations, research institutes, charities business and perhaps using FutureLearn could assist in this development. (ask

Policy/issue and rationale	Preparatory work /Commission remit/potential policy details
having closed down Labour govt initiated resources has not been successful. Provision of CPD is patchy, non-existent and inequitable through the perceived privatisation of knowledge within MATS. Opportunities for teacher updating are haphazard.	David Blunkett for info. about FutureLearn). • Work with stakeholders, to explore options/value of bringing back/updating online existing Becta, QCDA, TDA, National Strategies, Teachers TV, National College of School Leadership resources archived by Gove. • Give flexibility within the curriculum for colleagues in Junior and Secondary schools to create links between subjects and utilise remote learning/blended learning to provide different pathways for learner outcomes and experience. See the background note on Labour's legacy below this table. • Provide advice on supporting networks sharing knowledge and school and HEI research. See the example of the independent and sustainable MESHGuide research summary strategy (www.meshguides.org) supporting research-based knowledge mobilisation developed from Labour Govt. initiatives (1997-2010). Note: Online resources have a particular role to play in supporting the professional development of teachers who are required to teach outside their specialism. See the Master Teacher idea (see also pp.11, 32) which provides a route for developing second subject specialisms and deepening pedagogic knowledge in years 3-5 of a career. (p.23, 24)
<i>Using EdTech to support Lifelong learning provision:</i> Rationale: This provision would support those who missed out on schooling, adults who want to learn, students of school age who cannot thrive in the conventional classroom who need to access specialist teaching.	The Educational Technology Commission could • Explore options for a National virtual Open School and FE College (see Section 2) which would use technology to deliver live teaching and a high-quality education. Such provision exists in other countries. Work on this concept has been driven by two colleagues: Marilyn Leask and Mark Williams over the last two years. See Also: Tim Brighouse's View of the Open School Like the Open University, we now need an Open School for the whole country Tim Brighouse and Bob Moon The Guardian Leask, and Williams, M. (2022)  OSCON - A NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL - for ENGLAND

Background - An approach to online support for teachers developed during the covid period and now funded by government is called the 'Oak Academy.' The materials typically appear based on a model of static knowledge and instructional teaching following a recipe conveying discrete knowledge. This may suit some teachers and particular assessments which depend on retention of specific facts. However, many teachers enjoy the creativity involved in developing lessons which build on emerging new knowledge in their discipline and the life experience of their students. These lessons respond to current developments and new research. There is clearly a place for an online compendium of teaching materials but 'Oak Academy' needs significant review and development. It is worth noting at this point that the qualifications required of teachers have been dumbed down by successive Conservative governments: they introduced the Qualified Teacher Status in the early 1990s the requirements for which are far below the previously existing qualifications of four year BEd, or one year PGCE plus a degree courses which often prepared teachers to teach a second subject thus providing variety in the teacher's interactions with young people and colleagues. This also provided flexibility in school timetabling and gave greater assurance that young people would be taught by

teachers with specialist knowledge than the current system.

Labour's legacy from 2010: The 1997-2010 Labour Government invested in creating online lesson plans but this approach was not found as productive as supporting the development of online resources which allow the teachers to apply and adapt and share new pedagogic and content knowledge to the particular classrooms and young people they teach. For example, a science teacher working in a fishing community might teach biology using current examples from the environment to build on what the children know and experience day to day. A teacher working in a rural community might draw on different examples to teach the same concepts. Both teachers would take account of any local, national and international events and recent research which have a bearing on what is being taught.

The Labour administration of 1997-2010 invested in online libraries for teachers about teaching strategies including extensive work on [SEND, on teaching students from diverse backgrounds etc](#) via the [TDA](#). See also the TDA Teacher Training Resource Bank: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101021152907/http://www.ttrb.ac.uk/>.

Such resources could, for minimal cost, be reviewed and updated and made publicly available again possibly under the governance of an independent body with the remit to keep the advice updated. Representatives from organisations with a stake in updating teacher knowledge such as schools, research establishments, subject associations, the inspectorate might be engaged in the enterprise. Labour also invested in advice for schools about the use of technologies in learning (via [Becta](#)). David Blunkett, Jim Knight and Estelle Morris may well recall some of this investment during their time in the DfE. Much of this work was archived by the coalition government in 2010 on the National archives at Kew or at the UCL IOE, or by the individuals contracted to prepare the materials. Some spinoff work has continued by those involved under the Labour Administration such as the [SENCO/SEND forums run by NASEN](#) and the Mapping Educational Specialist knowhow 'MESHGuide' research summaries initiative. [Teaching – a self-improving profession? Together we can do it. Here's how: Professor Marilyn Leask. – Fabians Education Policy Group UK \(edublogs.org\)](#).

There are of course commercial providers but the disadvantage is that materials are not available to all teachers. Some accommodation with the commercial sector could be sought.

The following changes can be implemented for little or no cost apart from staff time:

- Work with the BBC, the National Archives, subject associations, charities and businesses with Corporate Social Responsibility funds. This would include co-operatives and those holding freely available resources in addition to those commissioned under the previously Labour Government to collate existing freely available resources. This will provide the foundations of a lifelong learning resource library for teachers which is structured to accommodate regular updating by experts nominated through validation by professional/subject associations to provide a quality assurance check.
- Work with stakeholders to establish a management structure independent of government and sustainable funding streams to ensure longevity of the resource banks developed - beyond the life of a Labour Government - and to fund updating.

Note: The Oak Academy replicates work on lesson plans online initiated by Labour after 1997 and have been found not productive or high quality by many practitioners. The funds could be better used.

7) Staffing: recruitment, retention, teacher initial training and continuing/lifelong professional development (See also Appendix F(ii) and Section 6 Technology Strategy and Online resources.)

Principles underpinning policies: Creating a long term recruitment strategy to bring in the talent that we need nationally to build the workforce and future citizens and which is established in such a way

that it has the chance of lasting beyond the lifetime of one Labour Government. Recognition that training to teach is in the public interest and that teachers are part of the national infrastructure for a successful economy and society. Consultation with, and respect for, those doing the job. The development of *The Master Teacher* offer (see below: years 3,4,5 in a teaching career) in addition to the current ECT, ECF and NPQs.

Potential funders for an independent commission (as described in Appendix A): the organisations listed below: UCET, NASBTT, CfSA, unions.

Policy/issue and rationale	Preparatory work /Commission remit/potential policy details
<i>Recruitment and retention of teachers.</i> Rationale: Shortage of teachers and teachers teaching outside their specialism. (See also Appendix Fii)	The Teacher Education Commission remit could include addressing issues in initial education/training and recruitment by : • Working in positive partnership with ITT/ITE providers and reviewing the experience and impact of the ITT review • Reviewing and benchmarking international practice in ITE and reviewing OFSTED criteria • Building on the Early Career Framework to lead on to <i>The Master Teacher</i> opportunities in years 3-5 to develop deep pedagogic knowledge, school exchange and visits, nationally and locally networked reflective practitioner research opportunities linked with microcredentials/Masters qualifications • Reviewing initial teacher and career-long CPD qualification including the option for a CPD points system as for other professions (See also Section 6) • Lifelong learning: Liaising with the EDTech Commission (Section 6) on online resource provision • Accountability: Reviewing the potential of replacing ITE OFSTED with peer review, challenge and benchmarking and, for HEI provision, aligning ITE accountability with QAA's international standards to foster the creation of BEd degrees for primary and secondary teaching with dual specialisms designed to attract sixth formers to teaching • Financial matters: Advising on providing a basic subsistence model for all ITT applicants including through selective bursaries: developing models of financial support for when people are training that are sufficient to ensure that we can draw on talent from across our communities to train to be teachers, providing loans to train, in return for commitment to work in the public sector. For example, tuition fee loan amounts could be frozen and reduced by 10% per year that someone works within the public sector. Alternatively, the Government accepts its responsibility, as an employer, to pay for training of the public sector workforce thus opening access to public sector jobs to all. • Clarifying teacher qualifications • Considering if teachers in all schools receiving state funding should at least have the QTS status. (Currently the "Use of [the QTS] standards in academies and free schools depends on the specific establishment arrangement of the schools"(p.9) • Considering a proposal for a national register of teachers and

	their qualifications as for health professionals. Is there any reason parents shouldn't have the right to know the qualifications of their children's teachers? Names of qualified medical and paramedical staff in the public domain (see footnote 1). See Do bursaries change who applies to teacher training? - NFER See: We need to recognise the real role of the teacher: Lisa Vickerage Goddard. – Fabians Education Policy Group UK (edublogs.org) Worth referring to are: REFORMING TEACHER TRAINING: EXPERT PERSPECTIVES Gatsby Foundation; Also from Gatsby/NFER Assessing the impact of pay and financial incentives in improving shortage subject teacher supply Qualified teacher status (QTS): qualify to teach in England - GOV.UK Footnote 1 Check the Register and find a registered health and care professional
<i>Lifelong Professional Learning opportunities for teachers and TAs.</i> Rationale: Updating is essential. See Section 6 for options for building open access online resources.	The Teacher Education Commission remit could include: • Developing a strategy for including a CPD points system for teachers as for other professions: See Section 6) Technology, strategy and online resources • Advising on a TA training and development programme with tiered pay and career pathways • Exploring the opportunity for <u>enhanced apprenticeships</u> to enable specialist development pathways for TA/ISA/HLTA to support learning of young people • Establishing whether pathways could be delivered for Teaching Assistants both within mainstream and specialist settings to reflect the differing complexities of the types of roles across the sector. Optional and supplementary modules could be developed to train supporting staff to meet specific needs such as hearing impairment, SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) and other additional needs. NASEN, BATOD, the specialist subject associations and charities, specialist schools and Multi-Academy Trusts/other types of schools that have specialist provisions would be valuable in developing these pathways • Assessing the impact of the current NPQ suite of qualifications, building upon the work undertaken by UCET (UCET 2022) • Advising on subject specific CPD as an important vehicle to raise standards. Background reading includes these blogs from our members: Dr Deborah Outhwaite and Derek Boyle Not Learning from Experience: the decline of a masterly-led teaching profession: Deborah Outhwaite. – Fabians Education Policy Group UK (edublogs.org) The marketisation of Initial Teacher Training – a view from inside the

	system: Derek Boyle – Fabians Education Policy Group UK (edublogs.org)
<i>Workforce projections including local demand/supply planning is needed.</i> Rationale: There is no regionally sensitive coherent strategy in this area at the moment. Potential recruitment possibilities could be identified in all LAs.	The Teacher Education Commission remit could include: • Advising on the establishment of a unit to undertake regionally and locally sensitive workforce projections and to work with local providers to maximise opportunities for local recruitment and training • Drawing upon work undertaken in this area already by the DfE and NFER, specifically Jack Worth, to develop policy proposals and delivery strategies against known issues. See Appendix Fii for a Case Study showing the importance of local provision in providing a stable local workforce.
<i>Ensure staff wellbeing is front and centre of school decision making and process.</i> Rationale- Despite initiatives like the DfE Education staff wellbeing charter - GOV.UK a third of teachers leave after 5 years citing workload and stress as contributory factors.	The Teacher Education Commission remit could include: • Establishing how initiatives like the Wellbeing Charter and the six pillars of employee wellbeing: Job security, financial security, health, support, protection, and work/life balance can be initiated for all employees in schools • Exploring options for instigating Labour’s idea of a mental health professional working in school to assist staff and young people as soon as possible • Establishing how the current educational system currently creates overload and creating recommendations to feed into other commissions.
<i>BAME male staff representation to be improved.</i> Rationale- BAME male numbers are low in many areas. This is not helpful to BAME students’ development.	The Teacher Education Commission remit could include: • Focusing on building positive role models across the educational settings from early years to HE. This can be achieved by employing and attracting more male employees BAME [African/ African-Caribbean and mixed black heritage] particularly in Primary Education. 46% of all schools in England have no BAME teachers IOE - Faculty of Education and Society - UCL – University College London “Between 2010 and 2020, the proportion of leadership positions held by Ethnic minority teachers has steadily increased (from 5% to 7% for headteachers in primary schools, and from 7% to 9% for headteachers in secondary schools. The proportion of Ethnic minority teachers in the overall workforce has also increased (from 9% to 12% in primary schools and from 14% to 19% in secondary schools).” P81 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-leadership-in-england-2010-to-2020-characteristics-and-trends

	“Male teachers are more likely to work in secondary schools than nurseries and primary schools: 14.1% of nursery and primary school teachers are male, up from 12.7% in 2010/11. 35.3% of secondary school teachers are male, down from 37.8% in 2010/11.” Latest School Workforce data (2021 data set) https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england
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The following changes can be implemented for little or no cost apart from staff time:

- Recruitment and retention: Explore options for flexible working: consult with NAHT and ASCL on models for flexible working that would work within timetabling constraints for specialist subjects in secondary. Ask the Commissions to come up with ideas e.g. the Teachers Maternity Leave project found 10 day timetables cause additional expenses in child care. Models for shared parental leave are needed. In Sweden we hear takeup is a third, but 3% in the UK. Schools implement 10 days/2 week timetables because of the number of timetabled subjects for secondary young people.
- Consult with UCET, NASBTT and headteacher unions on how to continue to support teacher recruitment and develop the ECF framework to provide an attractive CPD entitlement in years 3, 4 and 5 including opportunities for second subject, additional academic and pedagogic research qualifications called *The Master Teacher Opportunity* (see Section 7). The second subject specialism was common in the past on 3-4 year BEd and PGCE degrees and gives schools timetable flexibility, supports cross-curricular working, staff variety and interest and means young people have trained teachers.

Background notes:

For an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of ECF and CPD current provision see UCET (2022) [Golden Thread or Gilded Cage? An analysis of Department for Education support for the continuing professional development of teachers | UCET](#)

Suggestion for policy development consultation: Detailed and regionally sensitive ideas of how to ensure a supply of qualified teachers can be gained through an online consultation involving the two national organisations representing teacher trainers: [The Universities Council for the Education of Teachers](#) (UCET) and the [National Association of School-based teacher trainers](#) (NASBTT) as well as the teacher training members of subject associations who are members of the Council for Subject Associations (CfSA)- see <https://www.subjectassociations.org.uk>. (CfSA was established by the 1997-2010 administration to facilitate collaboration between government and the subject specialists. (Stephen Morgan, Shadow Minister for Schools is addressing them in March 2023). FEPG members include members of these organisations and could facilitate such an event.

The previous Labour administration supported the establishment of the [Council for Subject Associations](#) to facilitate communication between government and subject specialists. The CfSA is independent of government. They produce a [Directory of Subject Associations](#) and provide a route to access specialists. .

Re-training opportunities need to be maximised to attract career changers. We need to face certain realities, the pool of graduates in some subjects is relatively small, and salaries for those graduates outside of teaching are also attractive, and so recruiting onto ITT is challenging. Conversion programmes, recognised by the DFE, can provide a practical route to address shortages in some areas. DFE does fund this in Physics but greater funds, and across multiple subjects (possibly including Computing, Design and Technology and MFL) are needed - such routes can provide cost effective ways to increase the number of teachers in shortage subjects. The salaried employment route and those subjects with large bursaries do attract career changers, but these are not for every subject. Teacher training programmes need sufficient time to develop both confidence and competence in the classroom. Tuition fees are a barrier to career changers.

Changing CPD into Lifelong Professional Learning, the former is often perceived as a sticking plaster to address a deficit in knowledge/skills which requires immediate remedy. We suggest the term 'Lifelong Professional Learning' is used to describe professional development which is longer term, sustainable and genuinely developmental. Whilst we have the NPQ suite ([National professional qualifications \(NPQs\) - GOV.UK](#)), we do not have a coherent national plan for developing classroom teachers - *throughout* their career - particularly within the first five years so as to improve teaching, and learning outcomes for students. Embedding subject-specific professional learning would be a good start (see IOP's Subjects Matter report <https://www.iop.org/about/publications/subjects-matter#gref>). We suggest Labour consults to establish and share good practice in developing high quality training days for staff.

8) SEND

Principles underpinning policies: Equity, ensuring SEND provision is high quality in mainstream schools, ensuring access to training and knowledge sharing is supported for teachers in all schools and parents/carers whilst placing the child at the centre of the decision-making process.

Potential funders for an independent commission (as described in Appendix A): Equipment suppliers, publishers, professional organisations.

Current State of play: A significant number of young people with SEND cannot access learning in a mainstream environment. Hence they cannot access education due to limited or inadequate places in specialist provision.

- Early intervention and support are unavailable, resulting in young people falling further behind their peers. Shortages of educational psychologists and extensive rounds of the assess, plan, do, and review cycle negates timely and appropriate support.
- Lack of cohesion between policy and practice results in a subjective approach to SEND registers and who receives support thus creating a postcode lottery.
- Funding shortages. The notional budget for SEND students is not ring-fenced hence being swallowed up by whole school funding, and young people's needs are not being met in a meaningful way if they are met at all. Without adequate funding, local authorities and schools are unable to meet their statutory needs, and, once again, young people's education, wellbeing and future are impacted; parents/carers are left to pick up the pieces and the state to fund NEET and economic inactivity in later years,

Policy/ issue and rationale	Preparatory work /Commission remit/potential policy details
<i>Create a coherent policy around all areas of SEND provision.</i> Rationale: SEND provision in England is underfunded and there are significant issues around equity and accountability in this area that have been exacerbated by local school systems now populated by different types of schools with different funding streams and SEND protocols.	The SEND Commission remit could include: • Evaluating existing practice and making recommendations on best practice for SEND in educational institutions • Giving examples of best practice for administering the SEND system by LAs - including embedding best practice for SEND • Reviewing the curriculum so that all students, including SEND can gain meaningful qualifications that they can access • Reviewing accountability structures so that school Progress 8 figures are not hindered by welcoming students with SEND • Considering ringfencing CPD time and creating a teachers' curriculum on inclusive practice with strategies to welcome SEND learners and embed progress, as a continuation of high quality ITT training. This could be included in the Master Teacher offer (years 3-5 of a teacher's career) as mentioned previously. "All teachers are teachers of SEND" • Reviewing the considerable SEND materials created by the Labour Government and archived by Gove and proposing updating and republishing as appropriate. This would be like the Warnock Review of the 1970s, aiming to create a complete culture change around SEND to meet 21st century demands. The review would acknowledge that young people who once would

	have not survived infancy are now living long lives with some having SEND not included in the 1970s review. Inclusive practice in institutions should address all protected characteristics in the Equality Act. SEND should be embedded in Initial Teacher Education. SEND should also be given adequate and consistent coverage as part of CPD within schools and colleges. Bringing SEND to Centre Stage: Mark Williams – Fabians Education Policy Group UK (edublogs.org) Training and Development Agency sites archived by Gove: behaviour, diversity, SEND, and all major subject areas - https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101012095315/http://www.ttrb.ac.uk/links.aspx
<i>Regularly reviewing and supporting Local Authorities and schools in meeting Statutory obligations.</i> Rationale: The current responsibility for SEND at a local level needs coherence and a structure that promotes good practice and accountability.	The SEND commission remit could include: • Establishing structures and ways to support LAs in meeting statutory obligations and SEND needs across the authority including developing processes for transferring first level accountability for SEND from RSCs to LAs • Considering how SEND is given coverage across local and regional schools' partnerships and similar networks allowing Special Schools to take the lead in working with researchers in delivering CPD and sharing best practice with their mainstream counterparts • Considering ways that SEND entitlement reviews are informed by the following: All parents and families having access to an impartial 'guide', working apart from LAs, and who is there to act as a point of reference, becoming in effect (and possibly in job title) a case manager • Considering the ways of empowering the role of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) by ring fencing notional SEND budget to the SEND students so it can be implemented in a manner that meets the child's needs. Finding ways that SENCO's are placed in a leadership role so that they can guide whole school policy • Considering how the recommendations of the Bath Spa report can be implemented SENCO report 2021 – Bath Spa University.

<i>Education resources for this vulnerable group need proper investment based on actual levels of need.</i> Rationale: There is an almost universal shortfall in SEND spending in LAs and other school institutions. Review protocols are not consistent.	The SEND Commission remit could include: • Developing a process where all LAs submit a full audit of current local SEND provision and spending carried out by representatives of teaching staff and unions, parent groups, local authority members and knowledgeable others. This will enable gaps in funding and provision to be identified, realistic budgets to be drawn up, and spending to be properly targeted and subsequently monitored for effective meeting of need • Considering ways to ring fence SEND funding to tackle the almost universal shortfall in SEND spending in LAs. Treating SEND funding as a separate stream from the mainstream schools' budget will avoid the awkward trade-offs that many LAs currently find themselves having to make • Considering ways that SEND entitlement reviews are informed by the following: All parents and families should have access to an impartial 'guide', working apart from LAs, and who is there to act as a point of reference, becoming in effect (and possibly in job title) a case manager.
<i>Ensure existing DFE funded SEND materials are updated and available to all teachers alongside online specialist CPD SEND courses.</i> Rationale: Current SEND Inset in schools is organisation-specific. Mainstream teachers need quality ongoing CPD in SEND related knowledge and practice.	The SEND Commission's remit could include: • Advising on the development high quality SEND guidance materials for teachers and update and making public the extensive online and printed SEND resources commissioned by the previous Labour Administration and then archived by the Conservative/Lib Dem coalition • Considering to what extent the recommendations of all relevant reviews are being implemented (e.g. NAO [2019], Commons Education Select Committee [2020].) • Considering whether to require LAs to adhere to a common model for Educational Healthcare Plans (EHCPs) that puts the emphasis on clarity. Seven years on from the Children and Families Act 2014, bad practice and inconsistencies remain.
<i>In any accountability measures ensure high quality SEND provision is a prerequisite of schools deemed 'outstanding'</i> Rationale: This is not a prerequisite of achieving outstanding currently.	The SEND Commission could: • Begin liaison with OFSTED, HMI, LAs, MATs and schools to establish what an outstanding practice in SEND looks like. <u>"It might be best if you looked elsewhere" : Max Fishel – Fabians Education Policy Group UK (edublogs.org)</u>

The following changes can be implemented for little or no cost apart from staff time:

- Investment in SEND as detailed above will utilise money designated for this area more effectively and with greater impact and entitlement for SEND students. However the area needs to be funded effectively: it is an area of concern currently. Significant investment is needed.

9) Higher Education

Principles underpinning policies: Universities shape Britain's future providing the skills for the 21st century. Funding is fair and equitable. Acknowledge the power of the QAA and external examining processes in ensuring high standards are universal. Responsiveness to regional needs. Efficient use and dissemination of research to meet the needs for teaching to be evidence-based.

Potential funders for an independent commission (as described in Appendix A): UUK and similar organisations, CBI.

Policy/issue and rationale	Preparatory work /Commission remit/potential policy details
<i>Work with FE and HE leaders to develop a comprehensive system meeting national and local needs and to identify barriers and ways of overcoming them.</i> Rationale: Ensure a match with society's needs. Universities should be intellectual and physical resources for the local, regional and national community.	The HEI Commission remit could include: - Engaging the HEI sector in planning policy changes to include the role of universities in shaping Britain's future. - Undertaking a root and branch analysis of current provision at FE and making recommendations - Advising on models for local partnerships between FE/HE leaders with the remit to meet local/regional needs - Identifying models of best practice for links with local community and Adult/FE provision and not just global outreach and research income.
<i>Review funding of universities, ways of working and the student contribution.</i> Rationale: Ensure public money is used to meet local and national needs.	The HEI Commission remit could include: - Review funding (House of Commons Library, 2020) including funding for research to ensure public money is used to meet local and national needs by FE and university sectors working together at the local level - Examining reintroduction of the student grant system – any loans that are required should be interest free and limited to a 25 year repayment period - Identifying creative funding solutions to the student fees and maintenance grant challenge via discussions at the Treasury level - Identifying cost-effective networking of researchers and academics to work on shared problems and this way of working across institutions of different types could be prioritised in the national allocations of research funding. The Erasmus model for collaborative research between institutions shows how research networks can draw on and build knowledge and expertise available in different locations. It provides a model to replicate. The MESHGuides initiative demonstrates a model of 'translational research' i.e. conversion of theory to practical applications.

	British Universities: Inclusive to Exclusive? A financial breakdown: Dr Patricia Walker. – Fabians Education Policy Group UK (edublogs.org) The charity initiative creating the MESHGuides research knowledge mobilisation initiative provides a model for translational research - from theory to practical applications. See www.meshguides.org
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The following changes can be implemented for little or no cost apart from staff time:

- Restoring the Erasmus scheme for low cost will create considerable benefits for students, institutions and society as a whole as young people learn from other cultures and make what for some will be lifelong connections in their field of study.

10) Inspection and accountability

Principles underpinning policies: Support, accountability, critical friendship, respect and challenge.

Potential funders for an independent commission (as described in Appendix A): all professional associations.

Policy/issue and rationale	Preparatory work /Commission remit/potential policy details
<i>Review fitness for purpose of OFSTED in monitoring young people's experience/school quality.</i> Rationale: Develop an accountability system coupled with a knowledgeable and experienced support service which leads to school improvement unlike the current Ofsted system.	The Commission remit could include: • Re-defining what successful schools will be like e.g. include SEND successes/ provision /inclusion • Advising on whether Ofsted might be replaced by some form of school improvement partner model (as for GP accountability) with critical mentoring as a key component and focusing on the benefits to school leaders and parent consumers • Advising on the value of a name change • Providing an initial framework for consultation and arranging a discussion with the unions and all stakeholders to mitigate media misplaced narratives aimed at constituting the accountability change as ‘losing rigour’. • Advising on renewing accountability “outstanding” descriptors should include SEND and Tutor Time provision • Creating proposals for training, recruitment and retention of inspectors Advising on changing the tone and language used by- and about- Ofsted, using terms that reflect positivity, progress, co-working, and a growth mindset. The current ‘punishment and reward’ rhetoric is divisive, and reflects a simplistic, world view. See the three asks from Square Peg: end truancy laws, revise the attendance code of practice , establish a mental absence code. 3 ASKS Not Fine in School See the National Audit Office report on: Ofsted's inspection of schools. The NAO publishes reports of its findings and reports to ministers on the effectiveness of services: “This[NAO] report examines whether Ofsted’s approach to inspecting schools is providing value for money.” (p.5) “Ofsted seeks to be “a force for improvement through intelligent, responsible and focused inspection and regulation”. “In 2017-18, Ofsted spent £151 million...” (p.6). The NAO’s Findings include: “Ofsted does not know whether its school inspections are having the intended impact: to raise the standards of education and improve the quality of children’s and young people’s lives. “ p.9.

Notes for the remit of the Commission: Rather than continue as just an ‘accountability measure’, Ofsted might develop its role and remit, offering proper support and structured help for schools. In this way it can become the motor for further improvement.

A reimagined Ofsted or its successor should be more like a ‘critical friend’ rather than simply ‘judge and jury’. Indeed, this judge and jury model has not led to school improvement. Those judging schools need to be able to propose remedies, drawn on best practices from around the country and around the world. In short, our inspectors need to be our most knowledgeable educators.

To achieve this new and improved function for Ofsted, a national specialist training programme for

inspectors will need to be established, which would also be open to headteachers and middle managers.

Consider splitting Ofsted into three clear specialist branches: An office for schools, an office for nurseries and early years providers, and one for FE. Consider collaboration with QAA which provides quality assurance for the tertiary sector to remove the load of university teacher training providers facing dual accountability measures. .

Consider making Ofsted entirely independent of government (as with the Bank of England) to end political interference with regulatory roles.

Reconsider the purpose of the Ofsted grading system. Consider replacement or abolition.

The following changes can be implemented for little or no cost apart from staff time:

- Reframing Ofsted's remit as one of a SIP (school improvement partner) alongside LEA Support (Quality Assurance). This will create higher standards and in the long run less need for costly Quality Control accountability structures.

11) Systems: national, regional, local - developing the take back control concept

This section pulls together ideas about system reform from sections 1 to 10 above as well as including ideas not mentioned elsewhere.

Principles underpinning policies: Critical friendship, respect and challenge. There is a role for the national government to lead and coordinate actions which cannot be completed cost effectively solely at a regional or local level. (This is the opposite of the Tory policy that the system can be run efficiently by the market).

Potential funders for an independent commission (as described in Appendix A): All professional associations, unions, CBI.

Policy/issue	Preparatory work /Commission remit/potential policy details
<i>Education as a local responsibility and resources for all.</i> <i>Structures are needed that allow for local ownership and control.</i> Rationale: Local collaboration has been inhibited as there are so many different types of schools. Schools want local connections and the ability to share best practice and ideas. MATs have not been able to provide cost or time effective solutions to replicate previously successful LA networks see the local collaboration across academics of the Bedford Borough Learning Exchange. Coherence in CPD provision has been lost, privatisation of knowledge in academies is not in the best interests of all young people, there is a lack of local scrutiny and responsiveness to local issues. Off rolling and discrimination against SEND young people are unacceptable results of the current system. Schools rebuilding programmes (SRB) are not at the scale and forward thinking of Building Schools For the Future which created forward-thinking 21st century learning environments.	The Commission would draw together findings relevant to the structure of the system from the other commissions. The remit could focus on structural issues relating to: • Governance that is accountable and democratic. • Local/regional/national responsibilities • Admissions: primary and secondary: Starting a process for considering what the role of the local authority should be in future - role in admissions would be part of that. Consider proposals for transferring first level accountability and intervention from RSCs to LAs • Local/regional teacher supply/training /professional development • ITT/ITE provision and quality assurance • School funding including salaries at all levels: an enhanced settlement to schools to enable higher pay for TA within the workforce • Use of community facilities to benefit all • OFSTED • Efficiencies/salaries/value for money: Local public sector workforce to include apprenticeships, opportunities for less able/building social capital in communities through keeping skills local (see Take Back Control Case Studies Appendix F) • An equivalent to 'Building Schools for the Future' (BSF) initiative that would transform our existing schools into world-class learning environments that enable generations of young people to reach their full potential. See further information on: BSF Introductory Guide 2008.pdf (partnershipsforschools.org.uk) Why the way the school system is structured really does matter. – Fabians Education Policy Group UK (edublogs.org). Membership of this Commission would include representation

	from the other commissions so as to avoid duplication and ensure a cohesive policy offer.
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The following changes can be implemented for little or no cost apart from staff time:

Structures and values

- Repurpose uses of existing money:
 - Numbers of young people are going down in some places, thus freeing up funds
 - Localising the management of schools saves money:
 - Set standards for salaries of MAT CEOs - typically these are double or four times the equivalent of those paid previously to local authority directors of education who typically had many more responsibilities
 - Local purchasing power
 - Local school services
 - Removes the need for extensive travel and accompanying accommodation and subsistence expenses.
- Rework funding mechanisms - using existing funding - to incentivise schools to change (this has been used previously by national governments).
- Consult on the structure of the school day and the school year: call for evidence about whether mental health and attainment can be improved in certain structures e.g. spaced learning. The current expectation that 5 year olds should follow a formal curriculum and sit still for long periods is damaging to young people whose bodies yearn for physical activity to build the muscle mass and memory that will sustain them through life.
- New KPIs reflecting Labour aims for education are needed. Current KPIs for schools such as formal assessments on a narrow range of criteria and a narrow choice of subjects are considered to have a damaging effect on the mental health of young people, young people and teachers and to suppress achievement for those with abilities outside those assessed.
- Rigid policies such as zero tolerance of different behaviours and inappropriate sanctions take no account of young people's development needs. A shift to a focus on care and relationships is needed..

See Appendix I for ideas about the current MAT system and the risks involved in this current system.

Appendices

Appendix A: The independent commission process providing policy blueprints:

Example - The 1996/7 Stephenson Report process - Professor Stephen Heppell (Note: Prof. Heppell has agreed this can be circulated)

Preamble

In 1997 the Stevenson Report was a key policy blueprint for an incoming Blair government. It comprised a detailed set of policies which were, largely, immediately acted on by the new government. Education, education, education needed substance and our report delivered that.

This brief note explores the potential for an incoming Labour administration to once again hit the ground running, carrying broad support for the changes outlined, through the first 100 days.

What did we do?, how did we do it?, what didn't we do?, what would be different this time around?

Prof Stephen Heppell. January 2023

What did we do?

- The report was independently produced although we were all sympathetic to the incoming government. We were a small team but representative of the sector (local authority, headteacher, industry, ex civil service. 3 from the private sector, 4 from public service. Very senior, highly respected folk.
- It took around a year to complete from first steps to publication.
- In parallel we had a team from McKinsey for 6 months gathering detailed data in constant consultation with, and direction from, us. Having helped President Clinton's NII Commission they had an appetite for the insights gained and did their work pro bono. They didn't hold back: *"the state of ICT in our schools is primitive and not improving. Much of the hardware in schools is technologically behind the times"*
- We didn't produce a detailed menu of actions, rather:
"Making it plain to the main national agencies and organisations in the education service (including the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority [SCAA], the Teacher Training Agency [TTA], the Office for Standards in Education [OFSTED], examination bodies, the National Council for Educational Technology [NCET], the Scottish Council for Educational Technology [SCET], etc and also the teacher associations, governors' organisations and the local authorities) that they need to co-operate in realising a strategy..." which we spelt out to all parties in a coherent way. We effectively asked "this is where we are going; how can you play your part and help" so that everyone had some agency in the changes. But their leadership and indeed future existence would depend on them playing their part. Many felt that a post '97 mistake was not to close OFSTED when they failed to join in and "play their part".
- We invoked some new vocabulary. For example we introduced ICT, talking of Information and Communication Technologies. New and precisely used vocabulary mattered in signalling a fresh approach, but a coherent one.

- We emphasised that this was less about fresh money and more about fresh approaches. A phrase we used often was that “*central government cannot afford not to do it*” (forgive the double negative).
- We were very clear that this was a ten year plan; we would begin immediately, but the ripples of change would roll into the distance with profound and enduring change resulting. An aggregation of marginal gains, as we would say today. The point was to keep everyone on track with doing their bit to move forwards.
- We produced a pdf document, much downloaded, a properly printed booklet, an interactive website, a website attracting “post it note” style annotations and other online versions (bear in mind this was 1997, these were very, very cutting edge); it gave a powerful lift to the document. Demonstrably, we walked the talk.

How did we do it?

- We met often. Probably only two or three of us were the principal architects of various sections of the document, but each step needed initial group discussion and then validation of the final draft.
- After each event a black cab took us directly home to our front doors (100+ miles in my case), meter paid, and we felt valued.
- The document took each insight that we had commissioned from McKinseys and suggested an action or portfolio of actions. Reading the document, each policy area was highlighted but each one was preceded with the facts of the current situation. To paraphrase: “*This is what we are intending, but first, this is why it is imperative*”
- We maintained a high level of secrecy. The total document was only revealed when it was finished and although there were many voices guiding it, very little “leaked” - because of the “agency” involved and the ownership that that evoked.
- The finished document had various levels of summary for the hurried reader, and detail for the scholarly ones.

What didn’t we do?

We did well. The report gave education a real global lead, it garnered widespread support, it redirected much of the effort of commercial players which had a multiplier effect, and within the civil service much new activity resulted - not just in education but initiatives like the museum-wide Culture onLine. And we did all that very affordably.

However, one or two of the biggest ideas didn’t get followed through fully. In particular the proposal that every child would be issued with their own email identity (and think of the 2023 problems which that would have eliminated!) was not implemented although we did a huge amount of work actually specifying and building the “millennium mail” identity (MillieMail) with Oracle’s support. As I recall, Microsoft lobbied to say that kind of thing was their role and Tony capitulated. Then, it didn’t happen at all. We should have been more brutal on insisting. I think that one or two of these “big item” changes are absolutely needed to carry momentum through into second and third Labour terms. An aggregation of marginal gains but with one or two headline items.

Also, where organisations were reluctant to respond to our challenge we should have shut or reconfigured them rapidly. For example, OFSTED was led aggressively by Chris Woodhead and arguably his approach was less than helpful. His model seemed to be one of “a right way to do things” rather than “an agreed vision but with multiple pathways to achieve it”. In retrospect, we should have shut them down and reconfigured inspection in line with the vision (probably back to the model of Her Majesty’s Inspectors pollinating effective and varied ideas throughout the system) very quickly.

What would be different this time around?

The primary focus back then was to move technology forwards in education - not quite Wilson's "White Heat of Technology" speech, but a clear view of a new and changing world that education had fallen out of step with.

Personally, I think today that the focus needs to be Lifelong Learning - giving absolutely everyone the opportunity to be their very best selves. Regardless of age, at the point of need, free. That would require some "joining up" of delivery sectors; acknowledging once again a changing world, but this time the portfolio careers, practice based qualifications, WFH, the widening attainment gap, supporting emerging new skills, rescuing lost old capabilities, the number of people that education has failed, the need for "all hands on deck" as we battle our way back from BREXIT, and more. Just looking at the huge gap in nurse training vs vacancies for example - it is a Learning problem not a Health problem. Lifelong learning for all tackles this.

Given that subtle change in focus it would be easy to do it all over again (count me in!) but it will take a full year. So, to be ready and fully embraced ahead of the next election... it all needs to start very soon!

Professor Stephen Heppell

January 2023

Appendix B: Using Contracting processes and changes to funding formulae to accelerate change

Principles underpinning policies: Governments have a long history of changing funding formulae to stimulate change – so for example new school structures don't need to be imposed as if the new ideas are advantageous for teachers, young people and local communities then voluntary switching to a new structure is likely.

Policy/issue	Preparatory work
As Conservatives have done, use money to make it financially advantageous for schools to implement Labour's ideas e.g. in recognition of a lower carbon footprint and contribution to creating locally responsive schools, financially incentivise local MATS and penalise dispersed MATS requiring staff to travel across county boundaries. Creativity Hubs could be created in areas where more than half the schools are locally networked for the use of those schools	Have plans ready and costed. Have timing worked out. Budgets for the next financial year are likely to be drawn up in the autumn after the election ready for implementation in April. Require implementation to be built into the next funding rounds. See Appendix I for ideas.
Include in all government tendering documents a requirement to spell out potential contractors' policies on 1) limiting carbon footprint 2) equitable recruitment policies 3) opportunities for local young people to have apprenticeships. The long term goal being to ensure a wide range of skills are held by members in all communities and that the maintenance of public buildings is undertaken by local tradespeople.	Get contractual guidance for the civil servants to ensure implementation from day one.
Restoration of national salary scales including for CEOs of MATS who may now earn four times the previous LA salary for equivalent work	Create a briefing paper for new national salary scales and protocols for spending public money.

Appendix C: Structures

Principles underpinning policies: Transparency, equal access, consistency, partnerships.

One MAT CEO suggests: . "Consolidation and simplification of the system is essential. But there is no money left to affect it. So please don't plan big structural reform without the budget to support. Boring incremental change with greater transparency may be the only option."

Policy/issue	Preparatory work	White paper
MATs have given excessive power to small unaccountable groups often with political connections. Current structures are a mess and get in the way of accountability and local collaboration Local authorities have responsibilities but inadequate powers and resources.	Commission academic/ legal advice on how best to reform the system while minimising upheaval.	Proposals to redefine local authority roles and to establish a consistent framework for the relationships between all schools, local authorities and the DfE.

Appendix D: Advice from a retired senior civil servant, on using ‘Commissions’ to prepare for government

“As to what preparation can be undertaken beforehand by an incoming administration, it would indeed be helpful to have the membership of an expert group in a particular area already prepared. Further steps would need to be taken to reach agreement on such a group, but it would make a good start.

If the group is already established, with a clear remit, then the membership of that group would need to be reviewed in government, by the parts of the machinery that normally agree with these processes. That will often involve any new ministers, who may not be the same as shadow ministers, and possibly the Cabinet office.

I recall that one new secretary of state assumed that the civil service had all read recent speeches by Opposition shadow ministers. It was also a given that, if in opposition black papers had been prepared and produced, then these will also have been studied. In other words, a certain level of information about the policies is assumed.

At the top level, the process and timeline for turning policy proposals from an incoming administration into action would depend very much upon the policy concerned.

The Secretary of State would normally delegate many of the policies to his responsible ministers, who would then deal directly with the senior civil servants or through special advisers. That would then trickle down to the teams to produce a submission backed with implementation proposals. The Secretary of State him or herself is involved in only major policy decisions or those involving significant finance.

As to the form of policy proposal paperwork that the civil service would find most helpful in implementing new policies, my guess is that a set of headings would best be the same as for the formal submissions that go to ministers internally. That used to include a brief summary of the issue and decision required (which was brought in when David Blunkett became the secretary of state); a background section; an issues section; a section on clearances and any media or financial implications; a section which indicated who supported or opposed the policy proposal; timing; and an itemised series of decisions that were needed.”

Appendix E: Real Community Schools

Curriculum ('Learning'?): primary and secondary

Principles underpinning policies:

'Real Community Schools' - a renewed Labour Education Policy prospect proposal for the C21st

Among the many curriculum babies thrown out with the political bathwater at the end of the last century was the principle and practice of lifelong learning as exemplified in 'real' Community Schools.

The Labour Party should commit itself to a radical re-launch of real Community Schools. We can and should have schools as the beating hearts of learning for life in each community. This means schools as places providing an integrated curriculum focused on academic learning, health and social services, youth and community development, and as places for community engagement. We need schools as places of learning for the whole person and which recognise how successfully meeting human needs and development is dependent on strong families and healthy communities. Real community schools are open to everyone as partners in these endeavours. When families are involved with their young people and their own learning and development those families, and their communities, demonstrably thrive.

We have had Community Schools, Extended Schools, and Village Schools/ Colleges exemplifying lifelong learning, all to no avail and sacrificed to the political agendas of reputation seeking, here today, gone tomorrow, politicians perpetrating the misconceived ideals of an anachronistic education system.

Learning (and the curriculum) in schools today must not serve the single purpose of a chalk and talk classroom. Schools and communities are interconnected and they must be seen to be collaborating and creating together. Communities and schools can leverage their shared physical and human assets to help all young people succeed and provide a platform for learning for life.

Community schools that have successfully extended service provision to encompass wider community needs can retain a clear focus on their primary stakeholders.- the young people in their classrooms. They can benefit their students and find a richer and more productive relationship with their partners and the communities that they represent. One of the key factors in such development is the practical reality concerning the design of school buildings which must be such to enhance and facilitate community use and be able to host the wide and varied set of community relationships so essential to sustain lifelong learning. All proposals for new schools must have a building specification that includes the fullest possible criteria for access to community based lifelong learning facilities.

Community schools should offer a varied and flexible curriculum menu of learning activities such as study support, sports, musical tuition, dance, drama, art and crafts, parenting support and family learning. They should have clear procedures Page 1 Curriculum ('Learning'?): primary and secondary Principles underpinning policies: for swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialist support services such as speech and language therapy, child and adolescent mental health services,

intensive behaviour support and sexual health services. And key to lifelong learning opportunities is the wider community entitlement to access to ICT, sports and arts facilities.

Labour Policy should recognise the achievements of ‘Every Child Matters’ and ‘Sure Start’ (since dismantled by successive Tory regimes). Community Schools can address some of the significant causes concerning a lack of involvement in education. 1. Young people and parents who do not think education and learning are for them. The school ‘curriculum’ can reach out beyond the school into families and communities so as to raise aspiration and ambition and to equip all young people from all backgrounds to want to make the most of their education. 2. Young people and parents who disengage from education at some point during their schooling - often doing so because education seems less relevant or rewarding to them. We need Community Schools that establish collaborative learning plans focused on engagement with families setting their own goals and targets. Community Schools can encourage young people and their parents to invest more in learning from an early age and enable them to sustain that involvement over a longer period by investing in schools - which self-evidently belong to them (and not just as business oriented trusts).

The Labour party should extol an education policy that envisions 21st century extended Community School services and relationships within education as a coordinated, lifelong, person centred enterprise. Community Schools in the 21stC need to be empowered and designed to operate as networks that address the multiple emotional, social and health needs of young people and their families along a lifelong ‘wellness’ continuity. These ideals are best implemented and extended throughout the Local Authority system. The bounded, stand alone school, as a factory of learning should become a glaring anomaly of the 21st-century organisational landscape. There have been a series of initiatives over the last 50 years that recognised the needs and potential in our schools; too many of these gestating initiatives (such as ECM and Extended schools) were cruelly and unnecessarily aborted.

There is an opportunity now for the Labour Party to learn from these experiences, rebuild, and aspire to a real Community Schooling system that can prepare all for the lifelong learning and democratic community development demands of the 21st-century.

Frank Newhofer January 2023

Appendix F: Take back control case studies

Appendix Fi: Take back control case study 1: Refining criteria for the awarding of public sector contracts to include local apprenticeship provision and employment opportunities for young people with particular mental/physical needs

Policies often have unintended consequences. In this section we include examples of unacceptable consequences of the Thatcher government forcing “compulsory competitive tendering (CCT)” on local authorities supposedly to cut costs and improve value for money. The concept of “Best Value” was then introduced by Labour. Prior to this Local Authorities typically had direct labour forces with the remit of repair and maintenance of public sector buildings and often new build for council houses/flats. Direct labour forces provided local apprenticeships and ensured community members held knowledge and skills which allowed them to provide services and support for the wider community and friendship and family networks.

Unintended consequences: Example 1: Before CCT, a local authority Parks Department employed a young man who was physically strong but had been deprived of oxygen at birth so suffered mental impairment. After CCT this type of opportunity disappeared. This person has spent the last 40 years unemployed.

Unintended consequences: Example 2: Before CCT, local authority direct labour forces employed and trained a local building workforce. We have evidence that after CCT, as contracts are won by national firms, their workers who are now ‘self-employed’ (so no sick or holiday pay or agreed working conditions) are required to travel for hours to reach the building site they are allocated to (typically leaving at 4am to get to a site several hours away) thus being away from family for extended periods with negative consequences for young people and partners wellbeing and for the carbon footprint of the contracted work.

Refining criteria for the awarding of public sector contracts may reverse these unintended consequences. The 1997-2010 Labour administration required those bidding for central government contracts to provide evidence of their commitment to sustainability and to diversity. Criteria for the award of public sector contracts could in future include employment of local people rather than bussing in workers, local apprenticeship provision and employment opportunities for neuro-divergent people along with a requirement for workers to have sick and holiday pay and decent working conditions. CCT has resulted in loss of job security and lower quality of life for workers along with presumably personal profits for those owning the firms bidding for public sector contracts. Such money would once have stayed in the local community.

The references below show the political controversies associated with local authority direct labour workforces (such workers are lazy/expensive - Hansard 1968) and recent calls from the construction industry for companies to bring back direct labour forces, following Brexit and the loss of skilled workers from the EU

References:

Association for Public Service Excellence <https://www.apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/> (previously until 1999 the Association of Direct Labour Organisations (ADLO))

APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) is a not for profit unincorporated association working with over 300 councils throughout the UK. Promoting excellence in public services, APSE is the foremost specialist in local authority frontline services, hosting a network for frontline service providers in areas such as waste and refuse collection, parks and environmental services, cemeteries and crematorium, environmental health, leisure, school meals, cleaning, housing and building maintenance.

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Appendix Fii: Take back control case study 2: Local provision to boost teacher supply

- contribution from Prof Marilyn Leask. Previously Dean of Education in Bedford at the University of Bedfordshire she spent 15 years in teacher training across the Eastern Region and three years as a researcher and student at the University of Cambridge and the Cambridge Institute of Education (now merged).

Key points to consider in boosting teacher supply based on experience across the East of England:

- **Local access:** Typically, I found around half of a cohort of primary student teachers were mothers returning to work and retraining: so ensuring local access to training will capture that market. The loss of Open University provision is likely to have denied many people in rural and remote areas the chance to retrain as teachers. It should not be beyond the capabilities of the government and the Open University to develop models which provide teacher training by hybrid courses (face to face and distance) to those unable to access closest teacher training provision. OFSTED requirements however have to be realistic. Funding at the level of the expensive Teach First model may be necessary.
- **Bursaries:** Incentives for mothers returning to work and career changers ensures a supply of mature adults with existing experience of working with young people and with wide experience of the world of work. However both groups are probably less likely to take on debt in order to retrain so providing bursaries may help capture that market.
- **Provision of Undergraduate programmes** leading to Qualified Teacher status and providing curriculum specialists with in depth knowledge have largely disappeared in England because it is easier to demonstrate OFSTED criteria are being met on a short course such as the PGCE. Bedfordshire headteachers reported to me that the aspirations of sixth formers who wish to become teachers are unmet because undergraduate courses are rarely available. The Finnish system provides examples of such programmes. They used to be common in England but as it is easier to demonstrate OFSTED compliance through short courses they were cut. Government endorsement of undergraduate programs may help capture the sixth formers market, provide opportunities for those without degrees to become teachers and produce teachers with in depth specialist knowledge which cannot be achieved with short courses.
- **Local supply:** Head teachers across the Eastern region have told me that they found that many of the teachers they recruited from other regions were just waiting for jobs to come up in those regions so they could return home. Local provision of teacher training was seen by them as essential in boosting teacher supply.

Suggestion for policy development consultation: Detailed and regionally sensitive ideas of how to ensure a supply of qualified teachers can be gained through an online consultation of a few hours involving the two national organisations representing teacher trainers: [The Universities Council for the Education of Teachers](#) and the [National Association of School-based teacher trainers](#) as well as the teacher training members of subject associations - see <https://www.subjectassociations.org.uk>. FEPPG members include members of these organisations and could facilitate such an event.

Note: The previous Labour administration established the Council for Subject Associations to facilitate communication between government and subject specialists. It is now independent of government.

Background Note: The University of Bedfordshire's centre for teacher training based in Bedford was established in the 19th century. Initially qualifications were validated by the University of Cambridge, 25 miles away. Prior to the introduction of school-based teacher training in schools, 1990 onwards, the centre was the fourth largest provider of teachers (primary, secondary and FE) in England covering an area from Aylesbury in the west to the Norfolk coast in the east and south to the edges of London and north to Peterborough. From the late 1980s onwards, large teacher training colleges like this had existed around the country but then were merged with universities.

Appendix G: Media Sound bites suggested for Labour regarding an education offer

- Take back control in education.
- The Master teacher offer.
- ‘Choice’ gone mad.
- Education for personal growth, skills and living.
- Early years provision is the bedrock of a successful education system.
- An education that develops the skills needed for 21st century living and work.
- Unleashing creativity and expertise through student choice and personalisation.
- Rebuilding educational partnerships.
- A curriculum that provides personal, academic, and vocational growth.
- To build a future where young people come first.

Appendix H: The XP school example - Delivering a learning-for-life Curriculum and Skills Development

This Appendix was written by Dr Brian Lighthill following a visit to XP School, has two recommendations for the Shadow Secretary of State for Education and Shadow Early Years Minister, Bridget Phillipson (MP): *Skills Development*; Delivering a learning-for-life curriculum in Secondary Schools

I want every child to leave school ready for work and ready for life. (Comments in italics are quotes from Keir Starmer, *The Road Ahead* (2021).)

Introduction:

Based on my research and observations at the *XP School* in Doncaster I propose *seven* small steps away from the universal delivery of Secondary education in isolated subject silos, and toward a more integrated system which develops in learners both the ability to join up the dots between subjects on the curriculum and develop much needed learning-for-life skills.

Encapsulated by the ‘values’ of the XP School this template will develop in young learners:

- ‘Curiosity’ - which stimulates the habit of ‘working hard, getting smart and being kind’
- ‘Character development’ - which stimulates ‘courage, respect, craftsmanship and quality, compassion, and integrity’.

This seven-step template - actioned annually during the Spring Term, in Ys 7-9 - has been developed to boost student engagement and developing the 4Cs - Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Critical Reflection - all skills which increase both academic attainment and help learners become [ready for work and ready for life](#).

The Seven steps are:

ONE. Towards the end of the first term in Secondary school a local Company Director or Human Resource representative is invited to talk about what soft skills are needed to gain employment. This would prime the students on the aims and objectives of the approach to learning in the Spring term, help the students care about the purpose and quality of their school work, and introduce them to life outside the school bubble.

Our education system should be working with employers to make education and training ready for a world of work.

TWO. All the Teachers and Teaching Assistants (or as the XP School refer to them as ‘Learning Coaches’) who are involved in the student’s second term decide on a ‘guiding question’ - an Expedition title e.g.

- ‘Industry - what does our school community owe to our local industry?’ The students would take trips with relevant teachers and learning coaches to museums in order to explore what local life was like throughout time (History, Sociology, Literature); study the industrial and demography

changes over time (Maths, Geography, Social Geography, Sociology), and develop ideas about what is a community (PSHE, Citizenship, Comparative Religions).

- ‘Being Human - the body’ The students would take trips to art galleries in order to explore how figurative art has developed through time (Art and TD teachers and learning coaches will be involved), how Science, History, Art and Literature convey what makes a human, a study of the human skeleton (Biology, life-drawing, Drama, PE), a wider investigation of the history of eugenics and stereotyping (History, PSHE, Citizenship, Comparative Religions), the issues around current face recognition (Law), segregation and the civil rights movement (Sociology, History, Literature).
- ‘Stormy seas - climate change’ (the students would take trips to science museums in order to explore how the climate has changed through time (Science, Maths and Geography teachers and learning coaches would be involved), explore climate change (Science) through geographical data (Geography, Statistics, Graphs/IT), explore the real-life ramifications of climate change through the issues of migration, immigration and survival (Sociology, Economics, History, Literature, Citizenship, PSHE), explore how we can influence climate change (Citizenship, Politics) (see [Our Expeditions | XP School](#)).

THREE. Hold meetings with all the teachers and learning coaches involved in the Spring term to think how the statutory content of the Spring term’s syllabus can contribute to the chosen Expedition title - and what are the gaps in knowledge that the statutory syllabus does not cover.

FOUR. In the Spring term:

(a) There are *regular* out of school visits (see above) which can inform, give real-life meaning to the *Expedition* and increase student’s curiosity.

(b) The timetable stays the same. *Half of each lesson* will be based on clear and concise transmission teaching which follows the National curriculum but *emphasises topics* which contribute to the *Expedition* title. Teachers also cross reference other teacher’s lessons in order to enhance the concept of an integrated syllabus – in other words: one subject *can* contribute to the understanding of another. (This cross referencing can easily be achieved: teachers ‘A’ shared with their peers, *the bullet points* being discussed in each of their lessons then Teacher ‘B’, ‘C’, ‘D’ etc. can cross-reference those *bullet points* in their own lessons so that students will start to make connections across the curriculum.) Students will then start to gain both cultural capital and powerful knowledge.

In the other half of the lesson student-groups present and share their discoveries on ‘teacher-set’ or ‘student-inspired’ topics in order to fill in the gaps in knowledge that the National Curriculum does not cover.

Initial research into these presentations would be by individual students via: teacher recommended textbooks, the internet, the school library, talking to experts etc. but teachers should also encourage students to offer relevant topics that *they* want to explore. Student curiosity *is* always to be encouraged.

Then, in teacher designated groups - say five students per group - turn the discoveries into a five/ten-minute PowerPoint presentation to which *all* members of the group must contribute

...fewer than half of British employers believe young people are leaving full time education with sufficiently advanced digital skills.

After these presentations respectful peer-on-peer discussions are held on the contribution the presentations made to the *Expedition* title. And through this *modus operandi* the students will gain key life skills like oracy, critical thinking, and the confidence and resilience to be able to argue a point and communicate that point to others.

(If possible, external experts in the Expedition field provide added guidance on the Expedition's development - and support authentic research by critiquing student's work.)

FIVE. Weekly checks are made by the Learning Coaches to ensure that students update their 'Personal Portfolios', responding to the questions: "What have I learned from this Expedition from an academic, personal, and social perspective?" Writing in the Personal Portfolios is a time for self-reflection – a skill which is not currently developed on the curriculum.

SIX. Develop, with the TD department and the Drama and Music teachers, a whole-year, end- of-term presentation for the students' families, so that knowledge gained can be shared and made visible. After all, a school is not just *in* the community it *is* the community.

SEVEN and finally, at the end of the Spring term teachers jointly set one whole year examination in order to discover how successfully the students' integrated learning has been. (This could be a verbal/practical examination if this is deemed more appropriate.)

I know there is extra work for the teachers and extra responsibility for the Learning Coaches - but think what a journey the students will take. What a journey the teachers/coaches will take.

And when it comes to studying *individual* subjects for the GCSE examinations in Ys10-11 students will have discovered how to join up the dots between various subjects being explored. Over the Spring terms in Ys 7, 8 and 9 they will have done extensive group work; they will have developed the skill of problem solving: resilience, good communication, effective leadership, planning and research skills, teamwork and interpersonal skills. They will have become computer savvy, be adept at typing, be able to present an effective powerpoint or graph during a presentation and, if they have experienced a talk from Management, HR and/or Experts, their learning in school will tie-up with learning for life - just as employers want and just what students need.

A Labour government would focus not simply on grades and qualifications, but the so-called 'soft skills' that help develop and round young people.

Dr Brian Lighthill

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[1]The *XP School* in Doncaster have mixed ability classes because, ‘we all need to get to the top of the mountain’ – *no* child should be left behind.

[2] I want to again reference the *XP School* in Doncaster. Truly an inspirational example of an enlightened approach to delivering the curricula. But their *modus operandi* was enabled by the *XP School* being a new school – a clean slate. I think that in order to facilitate a *speedy* and *no cost* change in delivering an integrated syllabus which stimulates ‘personal development’ and ‘learning-for-life skills’ a more pragmatic approach is needed – we move forward adapting current pedagogy.

[3] This can be easily achieved: teachers ‘A’ shared with their peers, *the bullet points* being discussed in each of their lessons then Teacher ‘B’, ‘C’, ‘D’ etc. can cross-reference those *bullet points* in their own lessons so that students will start to make connections across the curriculum and understand how discoveries made in one subject can inform another. Students will then start to develop abstract thinking...thinking ‘outside the box’ of subject specificity.

A SECOND recommendation for the Shadow Secretary of State for Education and Shadow Early Years Minister, Bridget Phillipson (MP) :

we are ‘Crew’

we all need to get to the top of the mountain we call school

I discussed the idea of Crew with Andy Sprakes, Executive Principal of XP school. My comments are in italics.

Crew takes place every morning at XP School for forty-five minutes. It consists of a group of twelve to thirteen students who are led by a Crew Leader.

I suggest that thirty minutes might be a more realistic length of time, and one which could be easily incorporated into current school timetables. ‘Form time’/‘Registration’/‘Tutor Time’ – whatever the schools call it – is a ‘missed opportunity’ for deep social development.

I also suggest that, as well as Teachers leading Crew, the much underused and undervalued, T.A.s (or as the XP School prefer to call them, ‘Learning Coaches’) could well become Crew Leaders too.

This group of often disparate and different students ‘circle up’ together to reflect on our habits of work and learning and character traits - and are allowed to develop their individuality through using their voice and finding who they are. They get to know each other in Crew and this becomes the central support mechanism for students in school. Crew is where XP school hold each other to account if something isn’t going well, either in terms of academic progress or behaviour.

Crew offers a safe place where students can be themselves and ask either implicitly or explicitly for help and guidance from their peers. From simple check-ins to sharing stories about their lives, Crew offers students a place where they can be who they are and allows them to grow into the best versions of themselves. Through these intimate and sometimes brutally honest interactions students grow their characters in a way that is unique. In many secondary schools, students might have Tutor Time (...) where a register is taken,, have a homework planner signed, and then they are ‘dismissed’ to start their day. *What a missed opportunity.*

My emphasis. And yes, truly a 'missed opportunity', a waste of valuable school time.

In Crew, students share who they are outside of school, what makes them tick and what makes them stop. For example, on Monday students check-in and share what they have been doing over the weekend or over the holidays.

This is time well spent on developing a unique bond between each other in Crew that will be invaluable when stuff doesn't go to plan. Often students make mistakes. Students reflect on these mistakes and make pledges about how they can put them right. Who holds the students to account for those pledges?

Crew

And why? Because they trust their Crew and their Crew Leader. Because they have developed strong bonds starting from day one and continuing with the mountain we all climb called 'school'.

From Y7 the students are in the same Crew community. They mature together. They support each other throughout all their schooling. They learn to trust each other.

It should be noted that at the XP School in Doncaster the use of the word 'we' is omni-present. 'We' all climb that 'mountain called school' - students, teachers, learning coaches, secretaries etc. etc. 'We' all want to get to the top of our mountain to see the view, to see the possibilities in life. The guiding question, and challenge is: 'How can we get everyone to the top of their mountain?'

Crew activities include: (equipment) checks; reflections, academic support and mentoring; reading independently; study groups; focusing on and discussing our habits of work and learning; making academic and character pledges; team building and problem solving; (...) focus on topical issues...to name just a few. These all contribute to the academic and character growth of students.

I would like to add to that extensive list a suggestion that in each week, at least two of the crew meetings could involve exploring one PSHE or Citizenship topics on the curriculum. 'Circle up' is a perfect opportunity for students to have meaningful communication on topics as diverse, and as relevant to their lives as: personal responsibility, respect, bullying, gender issues, politics, friendships, relationships, parental control, society, the law etc.

A sensitive Crew Leader might well pick up on a personal and social development issue one of the Crew might have consciously or subconsciously aired. But it is also easy to come fore-armed with topics to discuss...there are any number of them on the PSHFE and Citizenship syllabi to stimulate deep peer-on-peer discussions.

In Crew students learn the purpose, meaning and reward of working hard.

In Crew students learn how to get smart.

In Crew students learn to be kind to each other.

As the students say, 'Crew is our family'.

Nothing is more important than Crew. If we get Crew right, we get everything right.'

Ms. Phillipson, I offer this document for your consideration.

It will cost nothing to implement...

...and it will develop communitarianism in schools throughout England. As Kurt Hahn wrote, ‘We are crew, not passengers.’ Crew ensures that each student has a sense of being part of a close-knit team, it is the hub which joins all their learning experiences together, and it is a safe space for self-reflection on both their and their fellow crew members’ development.

In short, Crew greatly contributes to the academic and character growth of students.

Dr Brian Lighthill

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Appendix I: Follow the Money: Spin the Wool into Gold - tell our own positive stories

Contributed by Dr Caroline Whalley CBE

Founder The Elliot Foundation (2011-present) and chair of the Elliot Foundation multi-Academy Trust (2011-April 2023), Building Schools for the Future with Babcock International (2005-2008), then DfE (2008-2011) consultant setting up Free Schools and Academies and previously Executive Director Children's Services, London Borough of Ealing (2002-2005).

Positive actions for now: through Parliamentary Questions and that an incoming government could do immediately

Think large and not mistake the edge of any policy rut for the horizon.

I suggest the Labour Party positions us - the education sector - nationally and globally as education thought and evidence-based practice leaders.

I suggest the use of Parliamentary Question to obtain data in advance of taking office to answer many of the questions below.

A key role for an incoming government is to spin/tell positive stories about the education sector and so create a positive climate which supports local solutions to the challenges and stakeholders experience on the ground. The sections below follow provide suggestions.

1. Assume no new money is available. So start now to focus on 'following the existing money'

How is the money spent now? Some consultants are being paid at least £750 per day by the DfE to broker the bringing of schools into multi-academy trusts. .

ACTION: Undertake a forensic audit of how current funds are spent now in the following areas: SPADS and consultants; Early years; Primary; Secondary; Special; FE; HE; Local authority and MAT (system costs); Education oversight (OFSTED); Financial and government oversight (EFA-ESFA); DfE central, policy work and 'gifts'; Any others? For example, "Academies are paying school heads more than in maintained schools, but classroom teachers less. That finding comes from Department for Education workforce data, based on average figures."

School workforce in England: November 2018 - GOV.UK

ACTION: Identify what options there are for funds to be re-allocated /re-assigned

ACTION: Stop forced academisation: schools and their communities should be allowed to choose.

ACTION: Review efficiency of [EFSA education spending](#) in this country. (See EFSA REVIEW January 2022, DfE team led by Sir David Bell KCB DL.) ESFA costs have grown over time to include the regional Directors and Head Teacher Boards brokerage costs and DfE brokerage costs. ESFA costs point to 50% increase in real terms between 2000 and today of the school budget share.

2. Appreciate and appreciate some more

ACTION: Be careful with language. It creates a world we all have to live in. Change our language and go upbeat. Our teachers are marvellous, our schools are havens for many and we continue to strive for even better.

ACTION: Scan language across our systems and change to a positive outlook, eg: re think the Ofsted categorisations of outstanding, good straight to unsatisfactory and failing. Deficit models are easy to create and sell politically but we break the psychological contract between educationalists and government by careless language. We need to make teachers and school leaders feel more valued and included and able to make changes within parameters.

ACTION: Find the excellence in every school.

3. Sustain our world-class reputation as an educational leader. It brings £25 billion from HE alone into our economy.

We created the systems that are emulated across the globe. We need to reinforce this position, and in the Labour Party and this paper are mentioned the people and the organisations who are and could be creating that positive future.

ACTION: Celebrate our national reputation and guard it well on the international stage. Contrary to the naysayers, our education reputation is held in high international regard. It brings wealth £25 billion in HE alone into the economy, through our skill base as educationalists, engineers and constructors our people are employed all over the developing and developed world.

4. Secure our national knowledge base: retain our tacit knowledge

ACTION: We should be explicit that we are a Labour Party that is planning for the long term - not just this year or the remaining political cycle and we can take the moral high ground. As a flourishing system we need to continue to learn, reflect and learn some more and add to global knowledge.

ACTION: Our place as international leaders in education should be secured by our contribution to the expansion of the knowledge base across the globe -this knowledge should be our global gift, an international resource announced with a fanfare.

ACTION: Our legacy, our existing knowledge base, has already been developed and paid for. It was archived by the Tories but could be reviewed, updated and made publicly available. *See Section 6 on Technology Strategy and online resources for links to the existing legacy of online resources.*

All knowledge can be placed in a virtual accessible space and accessed by academics and others around the globe. There are four options for the financing of web resources: altruism, advertising, subscription and grants. A plan for resources to be available long term should be part of any expenditure of funds to start up knowledge repositories for teachers. A nominal retrieval fee could cover further costs but options need to be explored.

5. The Fragmented System is a ‘Wicked Problem’

Our current problems of a fragmented educational system were entirely predictable - born out of a political ‘first past the post’ 4 year re-election cycle driven system. Approaching from the long term with time taken to work through consequences and unintended outcomes of policy, much effort and money would have been saved. Many other system failures have come from partial implementation of change. The system problem is a ‘wicked problem’ - there are no easy solutions.

ACTION: My advice is: Stop tinkering: leave the system alone, let the system find the solutions to remedy the problems. Start with the evidence about what needs changing not the policy and then have the courage to see the innovations created by the system when you allow those on the ground to solve the problems best suited to local solutions.

6. There is expensive over-regulation currently

The lack of trust in our educationalists and the system itself, leads to the blame game: who can the government blame for the present state of affairs? Defensive approaches including over regulation are adopted to cover any PR exposure of government.

The DfE itself through its blog indicates the over-regulation of academies:

“ What is an academy and what are the benefits? If they have all this freedom, how are they accountable?...This freedom does not mean academies are not regulated. The department’s National and Regional Schools Commissioners and their teams, together with the Education and Skills Funding Agency, provide robust educational and financial oversight of all academy trusts...Individual academies are still subject to Ofsted inspections and ratings in exactly the same way as council-run schools...In fact, academies are subject to greater accountability than council-run schools because of increased financial regulation.” See this DfE blog: [What is an academy and what are the benefits?](#)

Academies are audited as three entities firstly as a company, secondly as a charity and thirdly by their financial auditor. Schools then are regulated through the EFSA and also OFSTED.

Not only is this expensive but it indicates that academies are not as free as the current government presents them.

7. Academy freedoms are a myth - a new government should call this out.

Education policy changes should maintain the systems that keep schools safe, solvent, structurally sound, legally compliant and educationally improving.

Just like Brexit there are no advantages to the academy initiative, there are just risks of wide system failure as Academy Trusts with their self built infrastructures attempt to keep their separate shows on the road.

In addition, the government has had to create expensive additional regulatory systems to oversee academy trusts.

The shadow Secretary of State and the shadow team may benefit from talking to more knowledgeable CEO’s of Trusts : Jonathon Coles, CEO of united learning and former DG for education standards at DfE.

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/archive/meet-boss-englands-biggest-academy-trust>

and Hugh Greenway CEO The Elliot Foundation
<https://arbor-education.com/blog-my-guide-to-running-a-successful-mat-part-i/>
 both of whom have a secure grasp of the wider system issues.

When a school becomes an academy it ceases to exist as a legal entity. An academy is simply a location in an outsourcing contract between government and a limited company with charitable objects. When a school becomes an academy it closes. What replaces it are a complicated set of contractual obligations.

- The government determines what 'education' looks like and what is and isn't good.
- It determines how much it will pay for each academy
- It changes the rules whenever it chooses by adding additional responsibilities to the contract (see 'The Academy Handbook') which a MAT cannot refuse.

Academy Trust handbook 2022 - GOV.UK

The only thing that MAT can do if it doesn't like the changes in its contract is that it can give the school back to the government as long as it provides seven years notice.

The LA still has to make provision to educate the children in their borough, for example if asbestos was found in an academy and the children had to be placed elsewhere, the LA would be responsible for educating the children. It is not clear where the funding comes from in this type of eventuality.

8. The Fragmented English system as of 2023

The English system has been turned from one where there were 152 Local Education Authorities to a multi-provider system where the biggest MAT is smaller than the smallest LA

Table I.1 The English system including numbers of Academies March 2019

Overall % of state-funded schools:			
Type of establishment	Primary	Secondary	Total
Academies	31.4%	67.4%	37.5%
Free Schools (including studio schools and UTCs)	1.0%	8.0%	2.2%
LA Maintained	67.6%	24.6%	60.3%

Academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools in trusts and size of trusts:				
Trust Size -entity	Academies, free schools, studio schools and UTCs	% Academies	Trusts	% Trusts
1	1,630	19.2%	1,630	58.3%

2	604	7.1%	302	10.8%
3-5	1,848	21.8%	491	17.6%
6-10	1,710	20.1%	231	8.3%
11-20	1,383	16.3%	101	3.6%
21-30	572	6.7%	23	0.8%
31-40	377	4.4%	11	0.4%
41	366	4.3%	7	0.3%
Total	8,490	100%	2,796	100%

The data above show the following:

- 80% of secondary pupils are educated in academies
- MATs aren't big enough to survive and LAs are left with the least viable schools so will get even weaker.
- LAs have almost no school improvement capacity left
- Regional Directors have an impossible job to manage an average of 90 MATs and 200 stand alone academies each, whilst working with roughly 20 LAs. They do not have the capacity to 'know' the system they run. We have lost much of our tacit knowledge.
- The 1630 single academies represent significant risk to the system if they fail in terms of keeping schools safe, solvent, structurally sound, legally compliant and educationally improving. eg roofs need replacing. This is leading to a situation where the national school estates are increasingly in a poor state of repair as it is beyond the capacity of small and single academy trusts to maintain their school sites.

Newer data is available. See February 2023: [Open academies, free schools, studio schools and UTCs - GOV.UK](#)

/end

Contributors

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Further Reading

This document provides a compression of key ideas referenced in FEPG's recent papers:

- FEPG blogs (fabianeducation.com)
- [Urgent Priorities Future Plans paper](#)
- [FEPG Policy Summary \(the Bridget Phillipson paper, June 2022\)](#)
- [FEPG Skills Group](#)
- [FEPG Ideas and issues about and for a new curriculum in England](#)
- [REPORT- Early Years-A Fresh Start? Issues and Solutions: Mark Williams. – Fabians Education Policy Group UK \(edublogs.org\)](#)