

Towards a Fairer Education System

Creating the environment in which good local schools will thrive

1) For equality of opportunity for all students and against selection

- a) Give every local authority in every part of the country the duty and powers to ensure that every child has free access to a good local school.
- b) End own-control of admissions by all state-funded schools. Admissions should be managed by the elected Local Authority independently of the schools and subject to national monitoring with a nationally implemented legal framework.
- c) Legislate to end schools selecting their intake by overt or covert means by ensuring that all partially or wholly state funded schools use the same entry requirements.

2) Remove state support for all forms of selection and purchasing of privilege

- a) Remove charitable status from private schools.

3) Governance and organisation – re-establishing local accountability

- a) Reverse the process by which privatisation and commercialisation have entered state education by developing the capacity of elected Local Authorities to manage currently outsourced education services co-operatively.
- b) Enshrine balanced Stakeholder Governing Bodies in law for all state funded schools on the basis of parents, students, staff, local authority and community with no single interest having an overall majority.
- c) Replace Ofsted with local council run School Development Services that monitor and support schools and are themselves monitored and supported by a reinvigorated Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools which is both free from private sector influence and set up to facilitate sharing good practice from across the country.
- d) Legislate so that faith schools and colleges are subject to the same anti-discrimination legislation that applies to other educational institutions.
- e) Legislate to ensure that academies must comply with the Freedom of Information Act and all education law including all the rights and safeguards enjoyed by parents and pupils of Maintained Schools.

4) Standards

- a) End all national testing of individual students before the end of their school career at 16 or 18 and abolish league tables.
- b) Create a single, national examination board under public control and independent of the DCSF.
 - i) The examination system and syllabi as devised by the national examination board, shall determine the intended outcomes and standards of state education.
 - ii) The curricula taught in schools, i.e. the pathways chosen to reach the nationally approved standard shall be locally determined by the local authority and its schools.

5) Religions, ethics and morality

- a) End compulsory acts of worship in schools.
- b) A school's duty to provide ethical and moral guidance should be carried out without religious bias and subject to the same monitoring as the rest of the curriculum.
- c) Understanding about religions should be taught as part of the humanities curriculum.

6) Teacher education and training

- a) Ensure that all teachers are fully-equipped with an adequate depth of subject knowledge and professional teaching skills, noting best practice in Europe, New Zealand and Australia. In this context, 'adequate' means a level significantly higher than that of the subject matter they will be employed to communicate.