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### CASE Annual General Meeting

The CASE AGM was held by Zoom on Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, from 10.30 a.m. until 12.00 noon. Before the formal business was conducted, education journalist Warwick Mansell gave a short presentation of his research to date into the abuses of the “academies” programme.

Although the fragmentation and lack of coherence in the system made research difficult, Warwick had been able to identify with some certainty that the “academies” programme is extremely profligate in its use of public money. This was reflected in the excessive pay of senior staff, even in quite small trusts, and in the expensive bureaucracy of multi-academy trusts (MATs). Salaries for senior staff were far higher in academy trusts than in Local Authorities (LAs) and MATs had far more staff employed in administrative roles than LAs of similar size. Moreover, unlike in LAs, there was not a clear relationship between the size of the organization and the financial rewards available for senior staff. Some quite small trusts paid very large salaries to senior staff and yet these trusts were far smaller than even the smallest LAs. Indeed, the largest MAT – United Learning Trust – was still far smaller than the largest LAs.

Warwick went on to identify a number of systemic problems within the current structure and practice of academy trusts and suggested some remedies.

**Lack of proper financial control:** the system effectively gives private individuals and groups almost completely unfettered control of public money. An obvious feature of this unsatisfactory state of affairs is the complete lack of any recognised pay structure for those leading MATs, with salaries being determined by trusts without reference to any agreed norms. A possible remedy would be the introduction of a “stakeholder” model, whereby finance is controlled by a governing body which properly represents those directly affected by the work of the trust.

**Lack of transparency for taxpayers and stakeholders:** notionally, academy trusts are accountable to the Secretary of State for Education and this accountability is notionally enforced by government appointed Regional Directors (RDs). However, the work of the latter is completely undiscernible to the general public. Warwick suggested that RDs should be obliged to hold regular public meetings in which they explain the work that they have done and answer any questions from those attending.

**Lack of transparency for head teachers and staff working within MATs:** currently those administering a MAT are free to move money around within the trust without any public scrutiny and without the involvement of schools within the MAT. Schools within a MAT therefore lack proper autonomy and the trustees of a MAT are able to close a school without any proper public consultation. This ought to be a matter for public debate and the question should be raised of a school having the right to leave a MAT if staff and parents are dissatisfied.

**Lack of a proper sense of public responsibility:** just as the marketised model of schooling introduced by the 1988 Education Reform Act created a category of “unwanted pupil”, so the



academies system has created the category of “unwanted school”. There is no obvious way of remediating this under the current system.

Warwick suggested that an incoming Labour government should:

- **Democratise the school system by making it more localised and less controlled from the centre.**
- **Stop wasting money and make the system work for those it is intended to serve.**

In the ensuing discussion a number of important points were raised:

1. Any programme to restore Local Education Authorities can only be envisaged within a much broader and more radical programme of restoring the whole of local government.
2. The Labour Party needs to reflect upon the monster it has created and should abandon the pretence, first adopted by the Blair government, that educational structures are not related to standards.
3. In spite of being regularly exposed, the abuses inherent within the academy system have failed to register with parents and the public more generally. This may be because parents and other interested parties do not easily see a direct connection between abstract ideas, such as “local accountability” and their day-to-day experience of their children's schooling.

Warwick was thanked for his painstaking journalism, to continue which CASE has offered some financial support.

Following Warwick's presentation, the formal AGM was held. The detailed minutes of this will be circulated to members so this report covers only changes and significant decisions. The NEC was re-elected *en bloc* with the very welcome addition of John Galloway. However, after many years of invaluable service, Paul Martin has decided to relinquish the roles of Treasurer and Membership Secretary. CASE owes him a great debt of gratitude. Tom Pierce has accepted the role of interim Treasurer and CASE is pleased to have appointed Louise Vincent, currently pursuing post-graduate studies at the University of Oxford, to the part-time post of administrative assistant.

As CASE is in a healthy financial position, it was agreed to make a substantial donation to *Time's Up for the Test (TUFTT)* the new coalition against the 11+, which CASE has agreed to join (see below).

### Managing ‘the cost-of-living crisis’

#### Dr Tom Mann

It is a matter of public record that state education has not been well funded for some time now. Austerity hit soon after the 2010 Government was elected, and the more recent announcement that ‘Austerity is Over,’ by the then Prime Minister Boris Johnson, was swiftly followed by the disastrous mini-budget and a new wave of ‘difficult choices.’ These difficult choices always seem more difficult for certain sections of the population when analysed, public services most often



being in the firing line.

An injection of £2.3 billion new money into education for 2022-2023 for two years (The Guardian Nov 2022) has been gratefully received by educationists. This amounts to an increase of 5.8% funding per student in mainstream education ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)). How this money arrives is yet to be seen but it does coincide with the removal of the primary sector sporting premium, so how much of it is new money would be interesting to see.

An academy CEO and a primary school headteacher to whom I have recently spoken both feel that education is experiencing “death by a thousand cuts.” They cite lower SEN funding from LAs; the arrival of students with more complex needs who require unfunded support; a reduction in workforce numbers due to “efficiency savings”; decreasing numbers of students entitled to free school meals when there is no uplift in wages or living standards; the support required for new teachers entering the profession; unfunded wage increases for teachers and support staff, and the “creative accountancy” required to ensure financial viability for schools (at least on paper), described as ‘fantasy school reserves’ as money gets pushed around. These and other demands would seem to dwarf what appears to be then the flimsy sticking plaster of the new money.

At a time when students are requiring more support in the aftermath of the pandemic and when, for those in more challenging social contexts in particular, schools are having to provide more than just education to their local communities, the state education sector remains chronically underfunded. The new money may then just manage to keep the status quo in place, while the private sector still spends up to 5 times more per student, further exacerbating entrenched social inequalities.

(Tom Mann is a member of CASE NEC)

### TIME'S UP FOR THE 11+ TEST

The launch of the TUFTT Coalition took place on Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at Hamilton House. The event was introduced by Madeleine Holt (founder of *More than a Score*) with a short film, available at <https://youtu.be/gwrQyTwnOGI> in which people of widely varying ages, some of them still in their teens, spoke about the scarring effect of the 11+ test upon both themselves and their families. A notable contributor to the film was teenager Jack Deasley who, in spite of failing to gain entry to grammar school in his Lincolnshire town, achieved A\* in all his A-levels and is now a first-year undergraduate at Cambridge. Madeleine then handed over to David Taylor, the Chair for the evening, who introduced an impressive group of speakers.

***Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, and a former shadow Education Secretary, appeared via Zoom. He told the packed meeting how his father had failed the 11+ and how it had made him feel a failure for life. Burnham called the exam ‘an instrument of social immobility... in which some start halfway up the mountain, and the rest are left at the bottom without a rope.’***

Burnham went on, ‘Education is about all children of all skills and talents learning together. I

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believe in that idea as passionately as I do in the NHS.” He ended his speech with a passionate appeal to the Labour Party to “be bold and call time on the test. Let us recast comprehensive education for the 21st century. Give all children an equal chance to 18.”

Andy Burnham was followed by Steve Mastin, Chair of the Conservative Education Society, also appearing via Zoom (all the way from Australia!), who endorsed much of what his fellow speaker had just said. Grammars, said Mastin, diminish parental choice and ensure that schools select children, rather than the other way round, and so are fundamentally unconservative. Mastin concluded his speech by calling for cross-party support to phase out selection.

The first speaker in the room was Jackie Malton. Jackie “failed” the 11+ but became an extremely successful police detective, overcoming embedded misogyny and homophobia in the Metropolitan Police to rise to the rank of Detective Chief Inspector and providing the inspiration to Lynda La Plante for the character of DCI Jane Tennison in the very successful TV series *Prime Suspect*. After leaving the police, Jackie became a TV script consultant and studied successfully for two master's degrees. Jackie told the audience that “failing” the 11+ had made her determined to succeed and prove the examiners wrong (which she clearly has done) and yet at the age of 71 she still feels the stigma of that early “failure”.

Jackie was followed by Dr Tara Porter, a clinical psychologist who specialises in the problems of adolescent children, especially girls. Dr Porter's research, together with her clinical experience, had led her to conclude that the 11+ test was potentially damaging, not only for those children who “fail,” with consequent loss of self-esteem and motivation to learn, but also for some of those who “pass”, who may find themselves endlessly striving for academic perfection until their mental health is damaged.

The meeting returned to Zoom for the final speaker, Greg Dyke, former BBC Director General, who spoke of the disastrous effect that the 11+ had had on his own family and on his local community when some children, including his elder brother and some of his friends, “failed” while others, including Dyke himself, “passed”.

In addition to the main speakers there was a brief recorded input from Andreas Schleicher, Director of Education and Skills for the OECD, who pointed out that the world's most successful education systems do not have selective secondary education.

Instead of the usual Q&A session with which meetings of this kind usually conclude, those present were invited to share their experiences of the 11+ both past and present. Some of these were quite moving and there was a refreshing absence of rhetorical outbursts.

All in all, this was a very successful event, full of interest and superbly organised.

CASE is pleased to be a member of the TUFTT Coalition.

*Footnote: as recorded above in the report of the AGM, CASE paid for the costs of a short film featuring edited extracts from the launch. This is well worth seeing and can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/gnGkSuUKd9g>*



## Clyde Chitty RIP

Clyde Chitty, whose funeral took place on December 1<sup>st</sup>, was Professor of Policy and Management in Education at Goldsmiths' College until retirement in 2010. In spite of failing health, Clyde continued to write books and articles on education and continued to serve on the CASE NEC for several years, in which capacity he was a most valued colleague. CASE is grateful to Derek Gillard for permission to reprint the following tribute.

I first met Clyde in October 1986 when I began a DipEd course at the London Institute of Education. He was the Curriculum Studies tutor, and our Thursday evening sessions always began informally with coffee in the Students' Union bar. We all liked him.

Clyde became a good friend: he encouraged me to embark on an MA, and in 1989 he invited me to join the editorial board of *Forum*, of which he was then co-editor (with Nanette Whitbread).

He was always very supportive of *Education in England*. He loaned me his (very rare) copy of the 'Yellow Book' (produced by the DES for Prime Minister Jim Callaghan in 1976 but never published) and wrote an introduction to it for the website. He read - and made valuable comments on - the draft of my history of education in England.

Despite failing health, Clyde remained unremittingly cheerful and positive. In our many conversations he was always keenly interested in education and had an amazing memory for people, events, and books. He was a remarkable and generous man whose contribution to educational thinking in Britain was enormous.

It is no exaggeration to say that, without his inspiration and support over many years, it is highly unlikely that my own history of education - or even the *Education in England* website - would exist.

Rest in peace, Clyde. You will be sorely missed.

Derek Gillard

Derek Gillard is the author of *Education in England*: [www.educationengland.org.uk](http://www.educationengland.org.uk)

## COMMENT

The right-wing press has been greatly exercised by the stated intention of the Labour party, if it comes to government, to abolish the charitable status of private schools. The usual empty clichés have appeared – “an attack on aspiration,” “politics of envy” etc. – and we are once again invited to consider the nobility of parents “making sacrifices” (driving around in cars “held together by gaffer tape” - ©Nick Ferrari – and buying their clothes at jumble sales) in order to obtain for their children “a decent education.”

There are, of course, parents who struggle to pay school fees and are forced to make unpleasant choices or undertake uncongenial work in order to meet the termly bills but these are in a quite

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small minority. Moreover, private school fees have increased by well over the rate of inflation in every year since 2010 so the concerns of “struggling” parents do not seem to be of great importance to the sector.

There certainly was a time when our most famous private schools were indeed charities in a meaningful sense. The most famous example, The King's College of Our Lady of Eton beside Windsor, to give it its full title, was founded by King Henry VI<sup>th</sup> “for the education of 100 poor scholars” and Winchester, Rugby, Harrow, Shrewsbury, Westminster, St Paul's, Merchant Taylors, and Charterhouse were all endowed by their wealthy founders for similar purposes. However, this all changed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the growing wealth of the English bourgeoisie tempted these and other schools into a change of policy. Slowly the “poor scholars” became increasingly unwelcome and marginalised and subjected to a string of minor humiliations, such as being made to come in via a rear entrance. The Clarendon Commission of 1865, followed immediately by the Public Schools Act, finally gave official licence to the schools to forget about their original purpose and become what they remain to this day: a means of consolidating the power and privilege of the rich.

There is no sense in which present day private schools can be described as charities. Some of them may do charitable things but so do many of the general public without thereby accruing tax advantages. Charitable status amounts to a tax subsidy from the general public, 93% of whose children attend state schools, to the richest members of society. Labour, which generally bottles it when it comes to dealing with the educational vested interests of the privileged and powerful, has for once committed itself to the right policy.

A Happy Christmas to all our readers.