

Breakthrough Britain

Ending the costs of social breakdown

Volume 3: Educational Failure

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Policy recommendations
to the Conservative Party

Social Justice Policy Group
Chairman, Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP

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Section 1

Executive Summary

Britain's children are finding it harder than ever to escape from poverty and the effects of educational inequality are devastating to our society. Social mobility has stalled, and despite a 50% increase in education expenditure since 1997, Britain is a world leader in educational inequality.

1.1 The State of the Nation

There has been very little improvement in the educational outcomes of disadvantaged children since 1997:

- Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are five times more likely to fail academically than their peers.¹
- Children from white working-class backgrounds are the most under-achieving ethnic group; just 17% of disadvantaged white boys attain 5 or more A*-Cs at GCSE compared to a 56% national average. Only 19% of Black Caribbean boys obtain 5 or more A*- C at GCSE.²
- Children in disadvantaged schools - schools with high proportions of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) are 2.7 times more likely to underperform.³
- Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are four times more likely not to achieve 5 or more A*-Cs at GCSE.⁴
- Children in care are the lowest achieving social group with only 11% attaining 5 or more A*-Cs at GCSE.⁵

Almost every aspect of social breakdown is connected with educational failure:

- Crime - 73% of young offenders describe their academic attainment as nil.⁶

1 www.dfes.gov.uk: KS4 results by eligibility for FSM, 2005

2 www.dfes.gov.uk: KS4 results by ethnicity and eligibility for FSM, 2004

3 National Audit Office, *Improving Poorly Performing Schools in England*, 2006

4 www.dfes.gov.uk

5 Department of Education and Skills, Outcome Indicators for Looked After Children: Twelve Months to 30 September 2005, England www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR

6 A Review of Education and Supporting Arrangements within Units for Juveniles managed by HM Prison Service, 2002, www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hminprisons/thematic-reports,

- Unemployment – Two-thirds of employers believe schools do not equip young people with the practical skills that they need for employment.⁷
- Health – 32% of young people who have been excluded from school have been involved with substance abuse.⁸
- Unhappiness – People who have experienced educational failure are much more likely to be depressed, in debt, using drugs or be in trouble with the police.⁹

Our education system should help transfer opportunity and wealth across our society, and between generations, yet it is less likely today that a child with parents in a low income bracket will rise to the top income bracket than it was in 1970.¹⁰

1.2 Labour's Legacy

Children only spend 15% of their time in school and our Interim Report concluded that family background, cultural factors and material needs have the most significant impact upon their educational outcomes. Yet the Government has increasingly viewed schools as the prime agents of social cohesion and schools have been forced to become an emergency service for the wider problems of society. The Government's 'top down' approach has compelled schools to be accountable for an increasing range of services to the community. A recent report¹¹ reveals that head teachers can recall 58 externally imposed initiatives. For example, schools now need to provide 'Extended Services' – ranging from childcare to after school tuition – from 8.30am to 6pm.

We believe that this sends out a message to teachers, families and communities that education is something that is done 'to them', not 'with them and for them.' This has undermined parental responsibility and involvement with the education of their children and demotivated aspiring leaders within the teaching profession.

Leadership Crisis

Our schools need 20% more head teachers over the next five years to cope with the current 'generational time bomb' of early retirements.¹² School head retirements look likely to rise to nearly 3,500 per year by 2009 and there are over 1,200 schools without a permanent head teacher. Many leaders are leaving the profession because of the Government's 'initiative overload', inflexible and unfocussed reward packages and poor pupil behaviour.

Target Tyranny

Our education system has become obsessed with narrow academic targets

7 YouGov Survey for Edge, www.edge.co.uk, 2005

8 Ruth Kitching, *Violence, Truancy and School Exclusion in France and Britain*, 2001

9 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, November 2006

10 Jo Blanden, Paul Greg, Stephen Machin, *Changes in Educational Inequality 2004*

11 Smithers and Robinson CEER *School Headship* NUT 2007

12 Professor John Howson, *Education Data Surveys Expert Analysis & Commentary on Education Issues*, September 2005 www.educationdatasurveys.org.uk

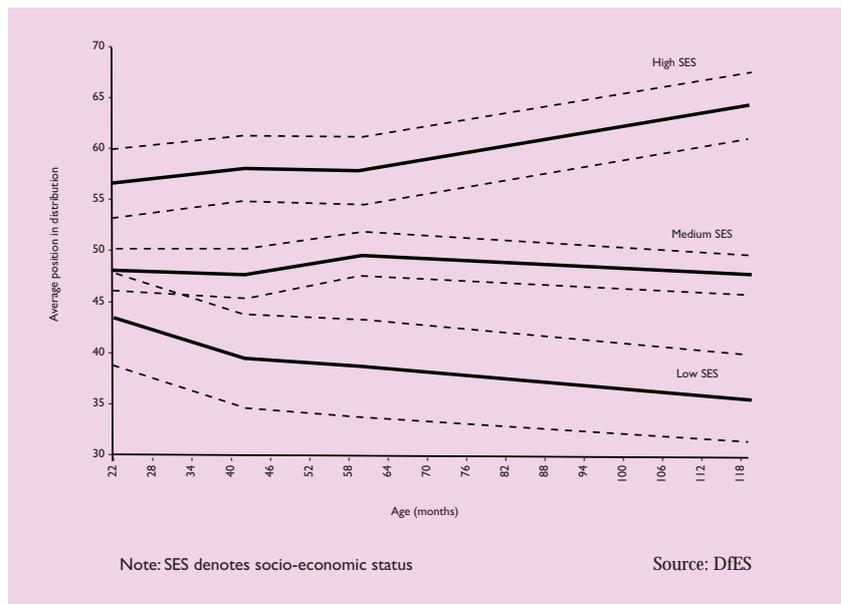
rather than encouraging pupils to develop a love of learning and an enthusiasm for their education, which will sustain them throughout their careers and life. A recent UNICEF report shows Britain comes 19th out of 21 rich countries on educational wellbeing.¹³ Thousands of young people leave school with little to show for the time and money invested in them but a sense of failure:

- More than one in ten children leave school with no qualifications¹⁴
- 44,000 school leavers each year are illiterate¹⁵
- 12% fail to achieve 5 GCSEs with basic accreditation in English and Maths¹⁶

The Government, and consequently the media, focus on hitting performance targets, which are defined by the ‘average’ attainment of schools and this means that the dire educational outcomes of some of our most disadvantaged pupils fail to get the attention that they deserve.

The Money-go-round

It is essential that support is provided as early as possible in a child’s pre-school years and further developed at primary school. Research shows that a child’s developmental score at 22 months is a predictor of educational outcomes at 26 years old.¹⁷ The graph¹⁸ opposite shows that the broad contours of educational inequality are well defined when a child is 22 months old. ‘Low socio-economic status’ children (bottom line) have a much slower development than children with medium (middle line) or high (top line) ‘socio-economic status’.¹⁹



Children fall behind before they have even reached primary school and the trend continues to accelerate throughout the course of primary education and increases significantly by the age of 10.

13 UNICEF, *Child Poverty in Perspective: An Overview of Child Well-being in Rich Countries*, 2007
 14 13% of children attained no GCSEs in 2005/6 DfES
 15 Hansard, Answer to Written Question from John Hayes, 22nd May 2006
 16 www.dfes.gov.uk, KS4 Results for Pupils 2005
 17 Dfes: *Social Mobility: Narrowing Social Class Educational Attainment Gaps* April 2006
 18 Corak, M., Social Mobility metric 2004. *Do poor children become poor adults? Lessons for public policy from a cross country comparison of general earnings mobility*. Paper presented at workshop on child poverty, UNICEF innocent research centre; Educational inequality metric from European Group of Research on Equity of the Educational Systems: A set of indicators.
 19 Feinstein, Leon, 'Very early evidence: How early can we predict future educational achievement?' August 2006

The Government's pre-school initiatives, such as Sure Start, are not holistic enough and there is inadequate support for our most disadvantaged children in the pre-school period. Furthermore, the progress disadvantaged children make in pre-school is not sustained in primary school or in the crucial transition between primary and secondary schooling.²⁰

We spend billions on supporting the adult casualties of educational failure in our prisons, job centres and hospital wards as our current system forces schools to play 'catch up'. Expenditure on the disadvantaged is not focussed well enough on the pupils and the years that really count.

Government squeezes out the third sector

One of the best ways in which funding can be focussed and schools can help disadvantaged children who are struggling to make progress is to engage the assistance of the third sector. There are voluntary groups and charities across the country committed to turning around entrenched educational failure and with a successful track record of doing so. However, the Government's centralising approach squeezes out alternative providers of education to the disadvantaged. Forecast educational spending in 2007/2008 is £64.9 billion²¹ yet the DfES gives only £283 million to the third sector.²²

1.3 The Conservative Challenge

There are a number of factors which affect educational outcomes and our Interim Report described how a range of social problems have a devastating impact on the education of our most vulnerable children. We believe that we cannot break the UK's cycle of educational under-achievement unless we tackle family breakdown, drug and alcohol abuse and welfare dependency. Our education policies are designed to have significant social impact, but they should be read in conjunction with, and implemented alongside, other policies advocated by the Social Justice Policy Group. Education is a 'pathway' out of poverty but we also recognise that stable families and communities provide the conditions for all children to flourish. Our policies therefore value the important role of families and communities and give them a stake in the education of children.

Every Parent Matters

Government should encourage parents to realise that helping their children to learn is as important as feeding and clothing them. It is not so much 'Every Child Matters' as 'Every Parent Matters'. We need to build a partnership between school and home which helps parents take responsibility for their

20 Galton M, Gray J and Ruddock J 2003

21 Department for Education and Skills, *Departmental Report 2006*

22 Department for Education and Skills, *Departmental Report 2006*

children's education, supporting them to get involved and empowering them to make the best decisions.

We believe that one of the factors driving the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers is that they often lack the individually tailored support that many other pupils take for granted. Many families spend increasing amounts of time and money on supplementary educational activities, including maths, language and music lessons, to improve the quality of their children's education. We therefore need to ensure that disadvantaged families have access to a range of educational opportunities, improving both their educational outcomes and well-being.

Moreover, when local schools are failing, more affluent parents sensibly use their resources and knowledge to find a better school by, for example, moving into a better catchment area or transporting their children to schools further away. In contrast, disadvantaged parents too often find their children trapped in schools which fail to improve over a long period. Our policies will ensure that these children are not forced to endure prolonged educational failure.



Springboard for Children

Better Leadership in Schools

Our work shows that head teachers have a critical role to play in improving schools and maintaining a steady flow of high quality leaders is very important. We need to address the reasons why so many teachers do not consider working in disadvantaged schools. Our policies will attract and retain talented head teachers leading strong teams with the training and resources to turnaround performance and improve pupil behaviour in partnership with parents.

Creating a culture of learning

Developing a partnership with parents and encouraging parental engagement in schools is part of a wider battle to place a love of learning at the centre of disadvantaged communities. The anti-schooling culture of some of our poorest neighbourhoods must be challenged and defeated and we need to use new creative methods to inspire children to learn. These must be tailored to their backgrounds and demonstrate how formal education is relevant to their communities and their own future success.

Tackling Disadvantage Early and Creating Pathways to Success

To lead a fulfilling life and sustain employment in the modern workforce, disadvantaged children need to have a love of learning fostered within them from as early an age as possible so they can build academic skills alongside vital practical and social skills. We therefore propose much more early intervention and support for children and families both at pre-school level and primary school.

We must also ensure that children are not 'blown off course' as they progress through school by managing the transition to secondary education more care-

fully. This will entail dealing effectively with poor pupil behaviour but also making learning more exciting by building strong bridges between schools, businesses and local community groups.

Champions of Social Mobility

These policy objectives are designed to build a new 'launch pad' for our nation's disadvantaged children and make the end of educational inequality a fundamental policy priority. The Conservative Party is the party of aspiration and these policies will foster a society in which where you have come from need not dictate where you are going to and where schools are powerful engines of social mobility.

1.4 YouGov Polling

The Social Justice Policy Group commissioned a YouGov polling²³ exercise in April-May 2007 to assess public opinion about educational failure which revealed the following key points:

- 74% of people think that educational failure is a "severe problem" and 57% of people believe that it is not seen as a high enough priority by politicians.
- 79% of people believe that parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that children 'work hard, behave well and attend school'. Just 7% of people say that the responsibility lies with head teachers or teachers.
- 65% believe that "parents have a vital role to play in children's education and parenting classes would help them understand their responsibility".
- 69% judge that "placing a member of staff who is not a teacher or social worker in schools to liaise with parents and make home visits to families" is a "good idea".
- 69% think that teacher training should "prioritise spending time in difficult schools to prepare them for the challenges of teaching".
- 64% agree that "teachers and head teachers should be given performance bonuses if they dramatically improve results for children".
- 79% of people think that "many children who are not academically gifted would be better off doing vocational training, rather than being forced to study academic subjects".

1.5 Summary of Policy Proposals

A. Every parent matters

Our new approach, RISE, will focus on four key areas which are crucial to partnerships between parents and schools: Responsibility, Involvement, Support and Empowerment.

23 Please see the introduction of Breakthrough Britain for a full explanation of the polling process

Responsibility – Home-School Charters (4.1.2)

Every school would have a mandatory Home-School Charter describing the rights and responsibilities of parents, teachers and children. We recommend that charters should be developed from the ‘bottom up’ and have a strong emphasis on the school’s values and aims, building on the success of similar initiatives in Australia, the United States and good schools in the UK. Parental commitment to the Charter would trigger additional incentives described later in the report.

Involvement - ‘Be a credit to your child’ courses (4.1.3)

These courses would help parents to get the best out of the education system for their children. In particular, they would show how children learn successfully and explain the ways in which parents can support their development. The courses would build on the pre-school support recommended by the Family Working Group and target parents of disadvantaged primary school children. Courses would be run by the school or accredited local alternative providers and be co-ordinated by Home-School Support Champions (see below).

Support – Home-School Support Champions (4.1.4)

Home-school links need to be improved in schools serving deprived areas. We recommend providing a full-time Home-School Support Champion to disadvantaged primary schools at a cost of £31,000 per school. The Champion would help parents to support their children’s education and therefore improve attainment, attendance and pupil behaviour.

Empowerment - £500 p.a. Educational Credits for Disadvantaged Children (4.1.5)

A major reason for the underperformance of disadvantaged children is that they do not have access to supplementary educational services, such as extra tuition, music and language lessons taken for granted by many families. These services are shown to improve the educational outcomes and well-being of children.

Our proposed £500 per annum Educational Credit would fund supplementary educational services such as a year’s extra maths tuition, six months intensive literacy support and a year’s group music lessons.

Parents of disadvantaged primary school children who have fulfilled their obligations under Charters and attended the ‘Be a Credit to your child’ course would be eligible for the Credit.

Pioneer Schools - Power to Parents (4.1.5)

Overseas research shows that parental and third sector groups can find innovative solutions to deeply entrenched educational failure by setting up new schools. However, in the UK there are big barriers hindering the creation of new schools, even under the Academy programme, and we believe that these obstacles should be removed. This would mean that organisations with a sense of mission and commitment could set up new schools in the most deprived areas.

We also believe that it is inequitable for disadvantaged children to be trapped over the long term in schools which are failing to improve. Every child has the right to attend a good, local school.

We therefore propose that parents of children in schools which are failing to improve over a three year period can move their children with the funding for that pupil to another school within the State system, including a Pioneer School.

B. Better School Leadership

An end to bureaucratic overload (4.2.2)

The Government has made schools responsible for countless interventions designed to tackle social problems. We believe that this trend should be reversed by implementing our Every Parent Matters policies and ensuring that the Secretary of State reduces bureaucracy for head teachers.

Disadvantaged Primary School Personnel Fund (4.2.3)

We want to improve the chances of challenging schools of getting the very best leaders and no longer rely upon a dwindling number of 'hero heads' who are expected to achieve miracles without adequate financial incentive.

We propose the creation of a fund for disadvantaged primary schools which trained school governors will be able to use to reduce the administrative burden on head teachers, attract new heads by increasing base pay rates by 25% and reward heads dramatically improving performance with bonuses of up to 50%.

Improved head teacher training (4.2.4)

We propose a new MA qualification specifically equipping teachers with the skills to take on the challenge of running schools in deprived areas. The course would be delivered by experienced successful heads of such schools and involve job shadowing, in-post training and the sharing of best practice.

C. Creating a Culture of Learning

Family Literacy Classes (4.3.1)

A key obstacle to parental involvement in education is low parental literacy levels. We recommend much greater use of family literacy classes both at pre-school level, using the Family Services Hubs recommended by the SJPG Family Working Group, and at primary level. Studies²⁴ show that this approach has significant impact and is good value for money.

'Booster Classes' for Pupils Falling Behind (4.3.1)

'Booster' support should be available for primary school children falling seriously behind in English and Maths. This should be provided by specialised lit-

²⁴ R.G Lynch, *Early Childhood Education and Early Adulthood Education*. Economic Policy Institute of Washington, DC 2004

eracy and numeracy teams, identifying and helping small groups of pupils. Programmes such as 'Reading Recovery', a programme that delivers intensive literacy coaching, have a track record of dramatically improving results for the most under-achieving pupils.²⁵

Improving pupil behaviour (4.3.2)

The following proposals aim to improve the prospects for those children at risk of exclusion and re-integrate those who have been excluded.

Greater use of Iceberg programmes (4.3.2)

These on-site part-time and full-time programmes provide a different but integrated and relevant timetable with separate breaks and start and end times to the school day. Work is undertaken from the main curriculum but emphasises discipline, literacy and numeracy with strong individual support.

More Alternative Provision to Pupil Referral Units (4.3.2)

OFSTED²⁶ states that Pupil Referral Units (PRU) are the 'least successful of all' provision in ensuring pupil progress. Yet excluded pupils are regularly sent to PRUs costing £228 million per annum.²⁷ Government should use a proportion of these funds to stimulate the expansion of successful alternative providers.



Courtesy of TLG (The Lighthouse Group)

Managing Transition Years more carefully (4.3.2)

Many disadvantaged pupils encounter problems in the transition between primary and secondary school and find it hard to cope with the curriculum and expectations of their new school.²⁸ Secondary schools do not always have a good understanding of the backgrounds of new pupils. We propose more structured sharing of information between schools and suggest that parental courses, home-school support and family-based learning activities could help to smooth the transition.

Pathways to Success (4.3.3)

The 14-19 Curriculum is currently undergoing fundamental reform. Government must ensure that, because every young person has different aptitudes and skills, there are more vocational and practical options available. Reform must give children better exposure to vocational options before the age of 14 and grant them parity of esteem and funding. Many countries, such as The Netherlands, recognise this and high quality vocational subjects are a key element of the secondary school curriculum for pupils.

²⁵ Reading Recovery *Annual Report 2005*

²⁶ OFSTED *Annual Report 2005/06* p.64

²⁷ www.dfes.gov.uk

²⁸ National Foundation for Educational Research 2004

Practical learning helps young people to increase their confidence, literacy and numeracy and improves levels of self reliance, communication and innovation which business value highly.

Building better links with Business and the Community(4.3.4)

Our proposals envisage a much more significant role for third sector organisations in tackling illiteracy and innumeracy and our Third Sector report describes how the third sector can be stimulated by lower regulation and more flexible funding.

Schools could also attract more investment and involvement from local businesses and individuals if there were a wider range of tax reliefs available. State schools could be given charitable status or a special position in the tax system to attract tax relief.

Conclusion

Too many young people leave school without the skills and qualifications to secure a sustainable job and lead a fulfilling life. This 'failure to launch' has corrosive effects on their fortunes and the social fabric and economic prospects of our country.

This report recommends reform which puts the education of disadvantaged children at the top of the political agenda. Our schools must be escalators of opportunity offering disadvantaged children a real chance to improve the quality of their lives, transferring wealth and happiness across the generations.

Acknowledgements

This report is the final stage of 18 months research into the extent and causes of educational failure in the UK and recommends ways in which we can help our nation's disadvantaged children to get a better education. During this period we have visited many schools and community projects around the country and overseas. We have been inspired by the dedication and good practice we observed and we owe a debt of gratitude to all the organisations that gave so freely of their time to assist us. We have also received evidence from thousands of disadvantaged individuals and families. Your powerful and direct testimony has motivated us and we thank you for your candour. We are grateful for the submissions from the representatives of the teaching profession and the national charities who took part so actively in our public hearings. Our work has only been made possible by the contribution of a large number of members of the public, private and voluntary sectors who are specialists in their field. Particular thanks go to Cecil Knight, Ray Lewis, Simon Howlett, Mike Royal, Stephen Brookes, Merrick Cockell and Ivor Frank for their commitment and critical friendship, Tom Stancliffe and Lindsey Morgan for their endeavour, enthusiasm and perseverance and Sarah Robson, Paul Brett and Future for their insights and editorial comments.

Section 2

YouGov Polling

The Social Justice Policy Group commissioned a YouGov polling²⁹ exercise in April-May 2006 to explore public opinion of social problems and the policy solutions that they believe will improve their quality of life.

There was significant support for our education policy proposals: 74% of people think that educational failure is a 'severe problem' and over 57% of people believe that educational failure is not seen as a high enough priority by politicians.

Every Parent Matters

- 79% of people regard that parents are primarily responsible for ensuring children 'work hard, behave well and attend school' with just 7% of people saying the responsibility lies with head teachers or teachers.
- 74% agree that "a lot of problems with truancy and disruptive behaviour at school are due to children's home lives, and could be helped if more support was available to parents".
- 79% of people consider that "schools need to do more to identify and deal with the emotional and behavioural problems of pupils".
- 65% believe that "parents have a vital role to play in children's education and parenting classes would help them understand their responsibility".
- 69% judge that "placing a member of staff who is not a teacher or social worker in schools to liaise with parents and make home visits to families" is a "good idea".

Leadership in Schools

- 69% think that teacher training should prioritise spending time in difficult schools to prepare them for the challenges of teaching.
- 64% judge that "teachers and head teachers should be given performance bonuses if they dramatically improve results for children".

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Please see the introduction of Breakthrough Britain for a full explanation of the polling process

- 72% of people believe that “teacher training should prioritise leadership skills and managing a class room”.
- 63% consider that “teacher training should prioritise helping teachers deal with children who have emotional and behavioural problems”.

Culture of Learning

- 79% of people think that “many children who are not academically gifted would be better off doing vocational training, rather than being forced to study academic subjects”.
- 66% of people believe that “vocational courses are a meaningful alternative to academic qualifications for all pupils and should be made part of the curriculum from the age of 11”.
- 79% of people consider that “poor discipline and disruptive pupils prevent other children from learning and head teachers should be given the power to permanently exclude disruptive pupils for the sake of other children”.
- 58% of people agree that “disruptive pupils should be kept within the school, but taught in separate social and educational programme within the school until they are ready to return to their classroom”.
- 79% of people believe that “allowing local businesses and community groups to organise extra- curricular activities would help build good relations between schools and the local community”.

Section 3

Educating the Disadvantaged: From Failure To Success

We believe that educational inequality matters and government needs to place far more emphasis on the most under-achieving pupils in our education system to improve social justice and social mobility.

Our Breakdown Britain report concluded that there were three key areas of policy to develop to address educational inequality:

- Every Parent Matters
- Better Leadership in Schools
- Creating a Culture of learning



The next section sets out our policy objectives in each of these three areas in detail.

3.1 *Every parent matters*

*'I think family is the most important help to education because they support you in your homework and they teach you how to add and take-away and divide they want you to be clever and a good student they also want you to always learn your times tables. They also teach you how the world was brought up.'*³⁰ A year 4 pupil

Parents are the primary educators of children. It is in the home that children first learn and so improving parents' involvement in, and support for, their children's education should be a key policy objective. Unfortunately, the Government has formed much policy around a child-centred agenda which

30 Witness at SJPG Hearing

uses our education system as an emergency service to tackle wider social problems. Many initiatives have a “top down” approach, such as Extended Schools, and this has had the effect of taking responsibility away from parents.

The direction of Government policy contrasts with public opinion. Our polling shows that 79% of people think that parents are primarily responsible for ensuring children “work hard, behave well and attend school” with just 7% of people believing the responsibility lies with head teachers or teachers.³¹

We believe that schools should no longer be expected to assume more and more responsibilities for children. Instead, Government should encourage some parents to see that helping their children to learn is a vital responsibility.

It is essential that this is done by families as early as possible in a child’s life. YouGov polling shows that a quarter of those experiencing educational failure suffered difficulties under eight and a further 30 per cent between eight and twelve.³² In order to maximise the chances of young people being attracted to learning and committed to it, we need to make it interesting and relevant from an early age and parents have a central role in reinforcing the message that education is important.

The Family Breakdown Working Group’s policy recommendations will provide extensive holistic support for young families in the pre-school years. Our recommendations aim to secure the gains made by disadvantaged children as they progress through primary school and make the transition to secondary school.

Our new approach, RISE, will focus on four key areas which are crucial to re-building a partnership between parents and schools: Responsibility, Involvement, Support and Empowerment.

Responsibility

The Government’s approach to education has placed too much responsibility at the door of schools. We therefore wish to establish a shared framework of values which encourage appropriate rights and responsibilities for pupils, parents and teachers. We want to facilitate a debate in every school community which will produce a clear understanding of their respective roles.

Involvement

Our policies will encourage families to be involved with their children’s education, help their children learn and enable parents to acquire the skills to do so if they themselves lack them.

Support

There are some families who require extra support and our proposals, together with those of the Family Working Group, will improve support for families

31 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, April- May 2007

32 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, November 2006

in pre-school years and create better links between school and home using the proven skills of third sector groups in this area. The ultimate goal is empowering parents to help their own children's education.

Empowerment

Our policies will give disadvantaged families the power and the means to improve their children's education. They will have more resources and will be able to deploy them quickly to help meet their children's specific needs.

Research shows (see Section 4.1.5) that the disadvantaged often go to the worst schools in the most deprived areas with little leadership. One parent at a SJPG Hearing told us that,

"We have no way out. The local school is terrible and we can't afford to, move."³³

Many families are spending increased sums of money on supplementary educational activities, such as maths, language and music lessons, to increase the variety of their children's experience of learning and improve performance. This is one of the factors that explain the significant attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. If we truly are concerned with social justice then we have to provide disadvantaged families some of the educational decisions and opportunities that other families take for granted.

Looked After Children

Breakdown Britain devoted an entire chapter to Britain's 60,000³⁴ Looked After Children because they have the lowest academic achievement in society. We showed how the state makes a rotten parent for these children and how people from a background in care are over represented in our unemployed, prison and homeless populations.

This report suggests that the Government's approach of taking more responsibilities away from parents contributes to educational failure. In the case of Looked After Children it is striking that no one person or public body is responsible for improving and monitoring the lives of these children.

The nation spends c. £2.5 billion³⁵ per annum on Looked After Children, the equivalent of £40,000 per child. This is increasing by approximately 10% per annum.³⁶ We do not believe we need an increased budget or a set of new policies for looked after children but instead we need to dramatically improve the implementation of existing policies and create better accountability.

33 SJPG parent witness

34 As of the 31st of March 2005, there were 60,900 Looked After Children in England, 4,668 in Wales, over 12,000 in Scotland and 2,531 in Northern Ireland; a total of 80,105 in the United Kingdom. The statistics in this paper focus on England due to availability of data.

35 Harriet Sergeant, *Handle with Care*, CYPS, 2006

36 Local Government Association, *The facts-looking after vulnerable children*, 2005

This is a complex and detailed area and so to ensure our research and conclusions receive the attention these children deserve, The Social Justice Policy Group has decided to release our findings later this year. This reports signposts the direction of travel.

3.2 Better School Leadership

The belief that schools are the answer to all social problems has encouraged the Government to burden schools with endless initiatives, placing more and more responsibilities onto school leadership teams. As a result, many aspiring leaders have been deterred from applying for headships. In the words of Steve Mumby, Chief Executive of The National College of School Leadership:

'I think many people would identify to some extent with this mock advert for a head's job: Required Headteacher for September – 80 hours a week; able to face up to professional loneliness; prepared to be disliked by all and be responsible for everything'

We realise that leadership does not begin and end with the head teacher. But our work shows that having a high quality head teacher can bring numerous benefits to any school. For example, they are more likely to attract and retain a better workforce which improves continuity and encourages commitment to teaching and learning in the classroom.

Unfortunately, in too many disadvantaged schools there are no permanent head teachers. There are also not enough deputy heads, assistant heads and middle managers who are applying to become head teachers. Increasing numbers of leaders are retiring early because they have simply had enough.

This is because heads feel under siege from the Government and overloaded by new initiatives. One head teacher told us that he would only just have understood and started to implement one new directive when another was announced. The desire to hold schools to account for this spiralling number of services has led to a rise in data production and increased bureaucracy. In the words of one head teacher:

*'I am so wearied with the work, so tired of the toil and overwhelmed by the care thereof that I neither can nor go on will any longer'*³⁷

Our policy recommendations therefore aim to establish a new national consensus on the role of school head teachers. We propose setting broad objectives and giving local leaders the freedom to achieve them.

We have listened to the profession and believe that the best leaders won't be attracted to schools serving deprived areas unless we radically change the way

³⁷ National Association of Head Teachers 2006

that schools and their leaders are regarded by society and given the tools they need to do a tough job.

Therefore our proposals are designed to improve the provision and increase the professionalism of leadership teacher training so that we are not sending teachers into schools where they are likely to fail.

Moreover, when they succeed, it is important that we reward them fully. We recognise that while teaching does not attract those who are primarily motivated by money, it is simply unfair and unrealistic to expect them to be philanthropic heroes, doing an excellent job in the most challenging conditions without recognising their skills and expertise. Our policy objective is to raise the status and rewards for those educating the disadvantaged.

Finally, the problems of head teacher recruitment are most acute within disadvantaged primary schools. Given that our approach is to prioritise the acquisition of learning skills at an early age as possible, our policies are designed to give our disadvantaged youngest learners the strongest leaders.



William Atkinson, Head Teacher,
Phoenix High School, London

3.3 Creating a Culture of Learning

If our country is to flourish then it must be committed to developing a generation with the character and talent to gain, sustain and develop rewarding careers and fulfilled lives. The speed of technological, economic and social change today means that it is increasingly difficult to equip learners with all the information and skills they will need for the future within the period of compulsory learning. If children are 'switched off' learning before they enter school or become resistant to it during schooling they will become less employable.

Sadly, there are too many negative influences on learning which pervade some of our deprived neighbourhoods. Parents have often had bad experiences in school and so feel alienated. Schools are sometimes not seen as relevant because what happens in them is far removed from what is happening in the local community. Education is not perceived as the answer in resolving the plight of the disadvantaged because it hasn't helped previous generations. As one youth worker from Peckham told us:

*'Fear stops people stepping out of circles of disadvantage but with help they can start to hope for something better.'*³⁸

We wish to remove the cultural obstacles to formal education. Our nation's young children should have every chance to acquire a love of learning early in

38 Rachel Hughes, the Bradfield Club, interview with SJPG

their lives and be supported as they acquire new practical, personal and academic skills.

Universal Literacy and Numeracy

To access learning children need to be literate and numerate. These are the foundation stones of education. Yet there has been no significant improvement in the last seven years in reducing the number of pupils who cannot read³⁹ and write when they leave primary schools. Furthermore, over 44,000 young people leave school every year either illiterate or innumerate.⁴⁰

We will not produce more independent and enthused learners, capable of accessing the curriculum at secondary school and prepared for work, if they have not mastered the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics by the age of 11. One community worker from Peckham, called Amy, told us that:

*'The single biggest block to ending poverty, increasing employment and social integration in our community is widespread illiteracy, closely followed by innumeracy.'*⁴¹

Our policy recommendations will address these problems before children start school and continue to support those struggling at primary level. While there has been considerable focus on pre-school initiatives, notably Sure Start, we must ensure that any improvements are secured and extended in primary school. This will involve helping parents to overcome their barriers to learning and should be seen in the context of our RISE proposals. It will also mean the creation of more specialised provision with expert tuition to give additional and individually tailored support to learners who are finding it hard to progress.

We are particularly concerned to ensure that there is enough practical support for children and families during the crucial transition years between pre-school and primary school, and between primary and secondary school. Our proposals will minimise the disruption and confusion which can occur at these times.

Improved Pupil Behaviour

Once children and families have made a commitment to learn it is essential that they are not blown off course by the bad behaviour of others. Poor discipline in schools affects the culture of learning for all pupils and makes it harder for teachers to do their job. Our policies are therefore designed to maximize the chances of learning for all pupils by improving behaviour in our schools.

We also aim to use the resources and expertise of the third sector organisations who have achieved success in engaging and re-integrating disruptive chil-

39 The number of children achieving Key Stage 1 at Level 2 has increased from 83% in 2000 to 84% in 2006. Source: www.dfes.gov.uk, KS1 Results

40 *Hansard*, Answer to Written Question from John Hayes, 22nd May 2006

41 Public submission to SJPG

dren. When schools embrace the vitality and dynamism of voluntary groups the results are inspiring.

Creating Pathways to Success

The failure of our education system to ensure all children obtain the academic, practical and social skills valued by employers has resulted in unemployment and welfare dependency for many disadvantaged young people and these 'skills shortages' impact the UK's economic and social health.

We recognise that the Government is undertaking a fundamental reform of the 14-19 curriculum. The proposals have yet to be implemented. However, we must ensure there is a relevant and engaging curriculum for young people and that there is a parity of esteem between pupils of differing skills and interests and sufficient flexibility to facilitate progress as these skills and interests develop. Our policies therefore seek to keep children on track as they leave primary school and help them find pathways to higher and further education and satisfying employment.

Polling shows public support for this approach:

- 79% of people think that 'many children who are not academically gifted would be better off doing vocational training, rather than being forced to study academic subjects.'⁴²
- 66% of people agree that 'vocational courses are a meaningful alternative to academic qualifications for all pupils and should be made part of the curriculum from the age of 11.'⁴³

We believe that the chances of success for curriculum reform could be further enhanced by building better links between schools, their communities and businesses. In other countries, strong emphasis on work experience brings numerous benefits and allows children to see the practical purpose of their vocational studies. As one 17 year old girl from Peckham, Maria, told us:

'If young people have no goals they just act however they want. I think school or college should show them what they can achieve- seeing people who are dressed smartly and stuff makes me think I could get a good job like that too'⁴⁴

Other countries, like Canada and the United States, use their tax systems imaginatively to boost businesses' investment and involvement in education. Our policy proposals will stimulate greater corporate and private giving to and collaboration with, schools.



Lloyd, James, Mary, Maria and Jon from All Saints, Peckham at a Social Justice Policy Group hearing

42 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, April- May 2007

43 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, April- May 2007

44 Witness at SJPG Hearing

Section 4

Policy Recommendations

4.1 Every Parent Matters

4.1.1 The State of the Nation

'I really love my kids and want them to do better than I did but I never knew how to help them with school'⁴⁵

This section explores the role of parents in education and suggests ways to assist them to help their children. It should be considered in the context of the Social Justice Policy Group as a whole as these recommendations will only have a lasting impact if they go hand in hand with other measures designed to tackle the wider problems of social breakdown.⁴⁶

Throughout this section we use the term 'parent' but the 'significant adult' in a child's life may not always be a parent. Therefore, these policies will also help all primary carers of children, including relatives and foster carers.

Breakdown Britain identified the following domestic factors as nurturing educational success or failure:

Success factors	Failure factors
Stable home life	Family instability
Parental support of learning	Neutral or negative attitudes to learning
Material needs satisfied	Poverty
Good cultural role models	Lack of positive role models

Sadly, too many children are growing up in families and local environments which do not encourage educational success:

45 SJPG hearing witness

46 See Volume 2 (Family Breakdown), Volume 3 (Addictions) and Volume 6 (Third Sector)

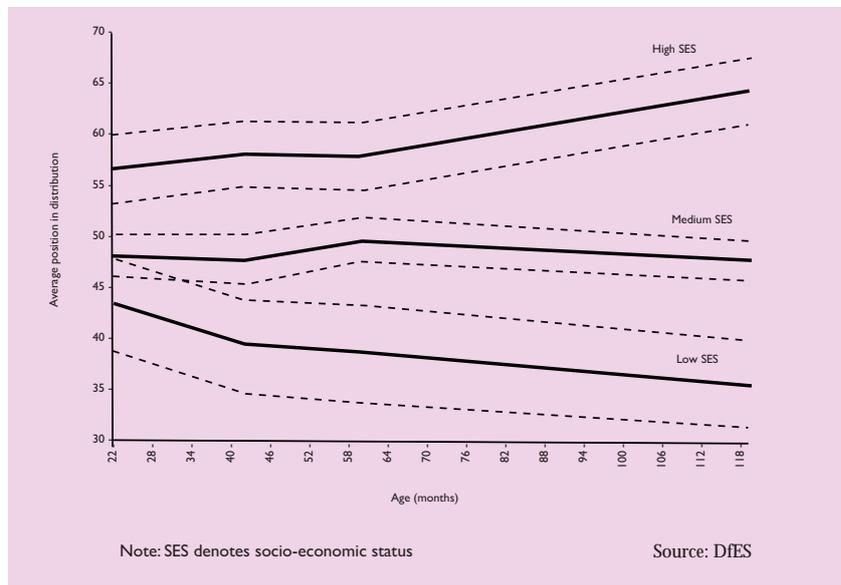
- People who have experienced family breakdown are 75% more likely to suffer educational failure⁴⁷
- Over a quarter of children lack a quiet space at home for study⁴⁸
- 1.5 million children are affected by parental substance misuse⁴⁹
- Nearly 1 million children experience domestic violence⁵⁰

There are a number of material obstacles to children participating well in education, including overcrowded housing and poor diet. If children do not eat the right food to feed their minds and have a good night's sleep, they are not in a fit state to learn when they arrive at the school gate.⁵¹

Moreover, disadvantaged children often have to cope with trauma at home including family breakdown, domestic violence and parental substance abuse. These problems frequently translate into disruptive and aggressive behaviour and under achievement at school.⁵²

Policies have so far been ineffective because there has been insufficient focus on assisting disadvantaged families to help their young children early enough to prevent long term problems arising.

It is well documented that the attainment gap between children begins to emerge at the pre-school stage. The graph opposite⁵³ shows that the broad contours of educational inequality are well-defined when a child is 22 months old. 'Low socio-eco-



47 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, November 2006
 48 Housing Corporation news release *No homework space for the MySpace generation*. (16 October 2006). <http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.8754>
 49 This is an approximation; some sources state 1.3 million while others suggest 2 million. - 1.3 million children suffering in silence - Government must act on parental alcohol misuse. (18 May 2006). <http://www.turning-point.co.uk/> - Bancroft, Angus, et al. (2004). *Parental drug and alcohol misuse: Resilience and transition among young people*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. - SCIE Research briefing 6: Parenting capacity and substance misuse. (August 2005). <http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/briefings/briefing06/index.asp>
 50 1m children face home violence: Nearly one million children in the UK could be living with domestic violence, according to a report by the United Nations Children's Fund, Unicef. 15/08/2006.
 51 Breakdown Britain Educational Failure December 2006 Chapter 5
 52 Breakdown Britain Educational Failure December 2006 Chapter 5
 53 Corak, M, Social Mobility metric 2004. *Do poor children become poor adults? Lessons for public policy from a cross country comparison of general earnings mobility*. Paper presented at workshop on child poverty, UNICEF innocent research centre; Educational inequality metric from European Group of Research on Equity of the Educational Systems: A set of indicators.

conomic status' children (bottom line) have a much slower development than children with medium (middle line) or high (top line) 'socio- economic status'.⁵⁴

This attainment gap widens throughout schooling which highlights the importance of early intervention. As in a race, certain children start first and have every opportunity to catch up if they fall behind, while disadvantaged children start far behind the rest of the field and have few opportunities to catch up. Even if a pupil from a disadvantaged background starts ahead, he or she is more likely to fall behind eventually.

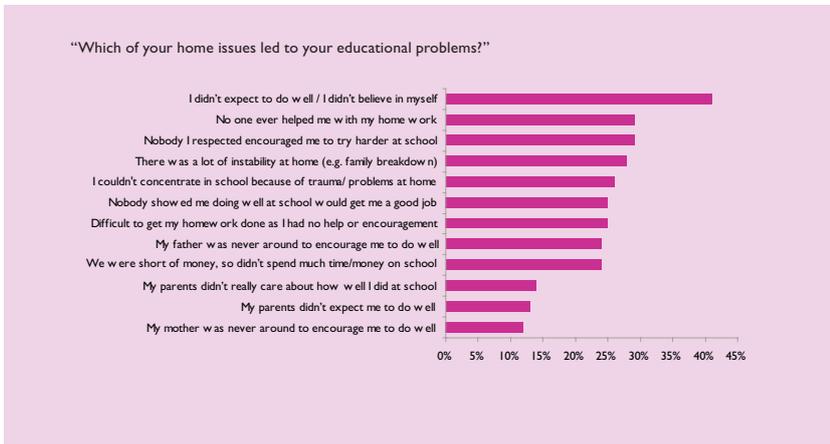
This clearly demonstrates the importance of sustained intervention throughout primary school to help disadvantaged children catch up and prepare them properly for secondary school. The challenge is to develop and implement policies that will 'close the gap' quickly before it widens too much.

Parents have a vital role to play

*'For all children and young people, the greatest factor in their future success is the quality of support from their parents while they are growing up.'*⁵⁵

If parental attitudes are actively supportive of learning and education then this translates to positive educational outcomes. As Bob Thornton, head teacher of Withywood Community School, told us:

'Every parent wants the best for their child they might just not realise they have such a key role to play.'



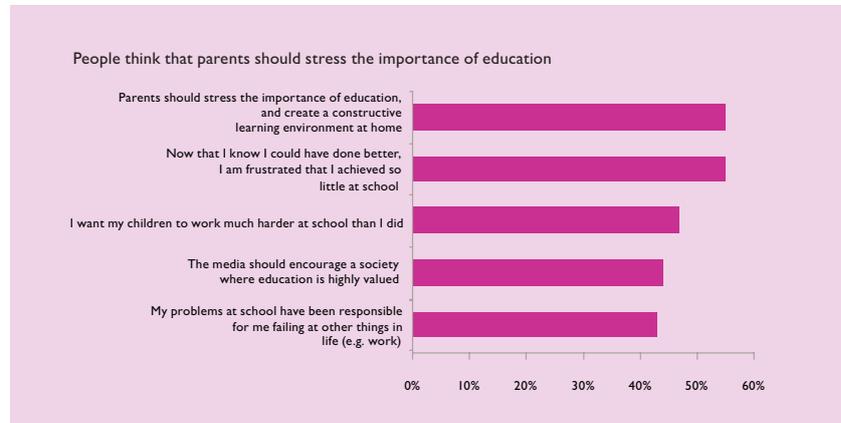
Our polling of those who have experienced educational failure shows they identify lack of parental support as a key problem⁵⁶ affecting their educational outcomes. The graph opposite shows that large numbers of people who failed at school reported that they had no encouragement from home and were never supported in their school studies.

Indeed our polling further showed that many of those who have experienced

54 Feinstein, Leon, 'Very early evidence: How early can we predict future educational achievement?', August 2006
 55 Who Cares? Trust Green Paper Response to Care Matters, January 2007
 56 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, November 2006

educational failure are often determined that their children do not have the same negative educational experiences.⁵⁷ As the graph below shows, many were keen to highlight the importance of parental attitudes to education and want their children to do better at school than they did.

There is much evidence to show that parental involvement and support, even for the most disadvantaged children, can translate into good educational outcomes.⁵⁸ These powerful exceptions show the way forward. Children from poor families where there is a strong parental commitment to learning achieve better results. For example,



69% of Chinese boys from low income families gain 5 or more GCSEs at A* - C, compared to just 17% of boys from white working class backgrounds and 19% of boys from Black-Caribbean backgrounds.⁵⁹

Moreover, research from the Effective Pre-School and Primary Education Project shows ‘...what parents do is more important than who they are.’⁶⁰ The studies demonstrate that the quality of the early years’ home learning environment is a significant factor determining a child’s attainment in reading and mathematics at Year 5. This underlines the important role of parents and other carers in providing rich home learning experiences during the sensitive pre-school period of young children’s development.

In addition, Feinstein and Symons’ work shows that parental interest in their children’s education is the single most powerful predictor of achievement at age 16 and that, if low parental interest is replaced by high interest, there is a 24% improvement in results.⁶¹

The Way Ahead

Our new approach, RISE, aims both to encourage and enable parents to support their children’s education. We will focus upon four key areas - Responsibility, Involvement, Support and Empowerment.

57 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, November 2006

58 Studies repeatedly show that parental interest in education has a greater impact on outcomes than the quality of the school Deforges, 2003, ethnic background, parental educational achievement, social class The National Child Development Study, Feinstein and Symmons 1999 and even material deprivation. Schoon and Parsons 2002.

59 www.dfes.co.uk: KS4 results by ethnicity and eligibility for FSM, 2004

60 Melhuish, E., Sylva, C., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., and Taggart, B. 2001. EPPE

61 Feinstein, L. & Symons, J. 1999. *Attainment in secondary school*. Oxford Economic Papers

- *Responsibility* - giving parents the confidence to take responsibility for their children's education.
- *Involvement* - helping parents to be involved in their children's education in partnership with schools.
- *Support* - providing holistic assistance to families and children.
- *Empowerment* - giving disadvantaged families the power and means to improve their children's education.

4.1.2. Parental Responsibility

The Government's approach to parental attitudinal problems has been to ask schools to do more. We do not believe we should give up on parents and take more responsibility for their children's education away from them. The 'Schools can fix everything approach' must end as it is not healthy or sustainable. After all, children only spend a minority of their time, around 15%, at school and as we have seen the vast majority of their early development is heavily influenced by their family background and environment.

No amount of targeted intervention by schools is as effective as good parenting. Serious improvement in educational outcomes for disadvantaged children will only take place when all parents recognise their responsibility to ensure a good education for their child and take on the key role they have to play. It is vitally important to their upbringing and future wellbeing.

This is not a question of apportioning blame. Many parents' own poor educational experiences are a source of frustration and failure in their lives. Our desire is to help parents acquire the skills and role models they often lack and to make learning a more positive experience for their children than it was for them.

We believe the following policy proposals will create an environment in which parental responsibility will flourish.

Policy Proposal: Home-School Charters

We wish to introduce mandatory Home-School Charters to every school. If parents, pupils and schools are to work in partnership, there needs to be effective communication and cooperation between them. However, there is often no common understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the education of children. We therefore need to establish a consensus in every community about what we expect of parents, pupils and schools and then give them the means to play their part and the respect they are due.

We therefore propose that every school community in the country should develop a Home-School Charter. Peter Slough, head teacher of Small Heath School in Birmingham, has developed a highly successful approach and he told a public hearing of the SJPG that:

*'... we have all built the policy ourselves, not from books. We ask people what they think will make a difference.'*⁶²

62 Witness at SJPG hearing

These Charters would be developed from the 'bottom up', with head teachers leading a full consultation with the entire learning community of parents, pupils and staff. This would result in a clear bespoke statement of each school's values and aims. At the end of the process each pupil, parent and staff member would sign up to the Charter.

It would be up to each school to develop their own Charter but advice and resources would be available to help them do so. We would like to stress that it is vital that the Charter represents the needs and values of the school community and is not dictated by the Government.

Each new parent of the school would be encouraged to attend induction events helping them to fully understand the school's values and operations and assisting them to better support their children in getting the most out of the school.

The Charter would be reviewed formally every five years to ensure it continued to be relevant and schools would be encouraged to make it a living document influencing the daily life of the school and helping the school community to achieve its objectives.

Government's role in the production of Charters would purely be to promote their adoption and ensure they were in place. It would be mandatory for each school to publish its Charter and OFSTED would be responsible for ensuring that each school has one.

All parents would be asked to commit to the Charter and this commitment would be linked to additional incentives described later in this report.

A similar approach has already been adopted in certain UK and international schools which we have reviewed. This has had a positive impact on attendance and behaviour of pupils and, as a consequence, has led to improved educational outcomes for children. For example, Charter schools in the USA place a strong emphasis on developing a clear School Charter and, as a result, schools like Cristo Rey (The Bronx, New York) and KIPP Academy (Harlem, New York), have over 97% attendance (see section 4.1.5 for case studies).⁶³

Charter Contents

Our research shows that successful charters typically cover the following areas:

A. Values – Schools produce a clear values system and a single framework dealing with such concepts as Care and Compassion, Fairness, Effort, Honesty, Responsibility, Freedom, Respect and Tolerance. The following case study gives an example of how Charters have introduced values based education in Australia.



Courtesy of the school-home support service

63 http://www.cristoreynetwork.org/news/newsletter_922a.pdf;
http://www.ed.gov/admins/comm/choice/charter/report_pg16.html

Case study: Australian values education

The Nine Values for Australian Schooling are presented below alphabetically. Individual schools develop their own approaches to values based education with students, parents, caregivers, families and teachers.

- *Care and Compassion*: Care for self and others
- *Doing Your Best* : Seek to accomplish something worthy and admirable, try hard, pursue excellence
- *Fair Go*: Pursue and protect the common good where all people are treated fairly for a just society
- *Freedom*: Enjoy all the rights and privileges of citizenship free from unnecessary interference or control and stand up for the rights of others
- *Honesty and Trustworthiness*: Be honest, sincere and seek the truth
- *Integrity*: Act in accordance with principles of moral and ethical conduct, ensure consistency between words and deeds
- *Respect*: Treat others with consideration and regard, respect another person's point of view
- *Responsibility*: Be accountable for one's own actions, resolve differences in constructive, non-violent and peaceful ways, contribute to society and to civic life, take care of the environment
- *Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion*: Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others

B. Parental Duties – Schools should create shared standards of attendance, discipline, homework cooperation and involvement.

The following case study shows how Small Heath School, which is located in a deprived area of Birmingham and has twice been judged by OFSTED to be 'outstanding', produced a 'Behaviour for Learning Framework' so that all parents know the structure and standards of the school.

Case study: Small Heath School, Birmingham

'To work with parents and our community to motivate and enable each pupil to achieve his/her highest intellectual, physical, spiritual and moral potential' Small Heath School Mission Statement

Small Heath School is a large secondary school situated in one of the most deprived areas of Birmingham. It has twice been judged by OFSTED to be 'outstanding' and much of this success is due to the leadership team's work to involve parents and the local community as much as possible in school life. From the outset, parents and the community are seen as the foundation on which the school is built. Clear guidelines are laid down in a 'Behaviour for Learning Framework' so everyone knows the school structure and what is expected of them. Parents, pupils and teachers are all given a copy of the handbook and the school's core values are placed on notice boards in every classroom.

Attendance levels are high, with improved behaviour and very few exclusions. In the past six years they have only had 5 permanent exclusions (the Birmingham average is 10/12) and, according to Ofsted, the level at which learners make progress is 'exceptionally and consistently high'.⁶⁴

64 Ofsted, *Small Heath School and Sixth Form Centre Inspection report*, November 2006

C. Pupil behaviour- Schools develop high expectations of pupil endeavour and behaviour in the interests of all of their members.

The following case study shows how American Charter Schools, like the KIPP Academy in the Bronx, New York, place strong emphasis on developing high expectations which are articulated through the school Charter:

Case study: The KIPP Academy Commitment to Excellence

Despite its location in an area of high crime, violence and almost universal social housing, the school has a very strong values system and, as a result, over 80% of the class of 2003/4/5 have graduated and enrolled in university and college.

The 'KIPP - Commitment to Excellence' is posted on the boards of corridors and in every classroom and outlines the values of the school:

Teacher's Commitment

- We will always teach in the best way we know how.
- We will always make ourselves available to students and parents and address any concerns they might have.
- We will always protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom.

Parents'/Guardians' Commitment

- We will make sure our child arrives at KIPP every day by 7:25 a.m. (Monday-Friday) or boards a KIPP bus at the scheduled time.
- We will always help our child in the best way we know how and we will do whatever it takes for him/her to learn. This also means that we will check our child's homework every night, let him/her call the teacher if there is a problem with the homework, and try to read with him/her every night.
- We will always make ourselves available to our children and the school, and address any concerns they might have. This also means that if our child is going to miss school, we will notify the teacher as soon as possible, and we will carefully read any and all papers that the school sends home to us.

Student's Commitment

- I will always work, think, and behave in the best way I know how, and I will do whatever it takes for me and my fellow students to learn. This also means that I will complete all my homework every night; I will call my teachers if I have a problem with the homework or a problem with coming to school, and I will raise my hand and ask questions in class if I do not understand something.
- I will always behave so as to protect the safety, interests, and rights of all individuals in the classroom. This also means that I will always listen to all my KIPP teammates and give everyone my respect.
- I am responsible for my own behavior, and I will follow the teachers' directions.

Charters vs Contracts

We are aware that many schools already have some form of home-school contract. However, the Government's home-school contracts are voluntary and their use is very patchy. This helps to explain why just 35% of parents recog-

nise the term home-school agreement⁶⁵ and only 75% of parents in three quarters of schools have signed one.⁶⁶

We believe that our approach will be different because we have recommended extensive local consultation, putting communities and not central Government in charge, and a system to encourage all parents to play a part. Our work demonstrates that schools work better when there is a clear and simple articulation of their values, goals and methods.

Funding

Many of the costs of drawing up the school Charters will come from existing school budgets. In particular, this would involve consultations with parents, children and teachers.

However, there needs to be a resource for all schools to provide help and support for the Charters, principally a central website and guidance for all schools. The cost of setting up values-based education was 31 million Australian Dollars for a population of 16 million in Australia. We therefore believe that the start-up costs in the UK would be in the region of £20-30 million, although this would need to be fully costed by the QCA.

In conclusion, the key features of our proposed Home-School Charters are:

- Mandatory but locally developed
- Clear rights and responsibilities for parents, teachers and parents
- OFSTED requirement – published with report
- Values based education using the Australian experience
- School induction programmes for new parents

4.1.3 Parental Involvement

Home-School Charters will help establish the importance of parental responsibility but school communities should work hard to keep parents involved.

Many head teachers agree, including William Atkinson, head teacher of Phoenix High School in West London who commented that:

*'Parental involvement is the most important thing a school can do outside teaching and learning.'*⁶⁷

We propose a new strategy to help parents get the most out of their children's education:

65 Williams et al, 2002

66 Coldwell et al, 2003

67 Witness at Social Justice Policy Group hearing, 2007

Policy Proposal: 'Be a Credit to Your Child' Courses

We recommend that schools and nationally accredited local alternative providers of education, run courses that will enable parents to become involved and supportive of their children's education. These would be run in conjunction with the school leadership team and coordinated by the Home-School Support Champions (see below).

Courses would not be strict lessons offering a 'one-size fits all' model of how to bring up children; but focus on parental relationships with children by helping them to manage their children's behaviour, support their studies and understand their children's needs.

Similar programmes which we have reviewed have the following critical success factors:

- They are run by locals who understand the specific needs of the community;
- They are led by community workers, in cooperation with teachers;
- They are genuinely accessible to parents who are educationally disadvantaged.

The following case studies demonstrate the success of existing parental involvement programmes which are locally based and resourced by the third sector in reaching the most 'hard to reach' parents.

Case study: Positive Parenting Courses in Croydon

Jane Carey provides courses for parents with children under 5.

The response is very positive and parents say the courses 'help me understand my child better' and that they really appreciate 'meeting other parents to share experiences and information'.

- Referrals come from a church based community centre
- The courses cover areas including:
 - Understanding a child's needs
 - Discipline
 - Building confidence in parents' roles as educators
 - Setting shared expectations in the home and school
 - Knowing how best to support a child's education
 - Communicating effectively
 - Dealing with challenging behaviour

A recent survey of people that took part in the course found that:

- 86% of parents said they felt more confident following the course
- 70% of mothers said their relationship with their child had improved

Case study: The Bromley Children's Project

This project works with 16 primary schools to provide an overarching structure of parental and family support. It shows how a cohesive network of provision can be established:

- Schools and partners have created a demand-led range of services for children and parents.
- Each specialist team member works with two primary schools:
 - Building relationships with parents/carers/grandparents (e.g. home visits).
 - Working with individual children on issues including special needs, transition and anger management.
 - Organising parenting groups and parenting programmes.
- The team encourages parents to be more involved in education and supports whole families rather than just addressing the children's needs.

The project has been so successful that it has won the National Training Award with partner agencies in 2004 and qualified for The Social Inclusion category of the Local Government MJ Achievement Awards in 2005.

There is clear evidence that programmes designed to improve parental involvement in education have a positive impact on children's educational outcomes. Indeed research from the Institute of Education's Review of Successful Parental Involvement Practice showed that, for the 'hard to reach' parents'⁶⁸ involvement in the education of their children is a major contributory factor in pupil attainment and policy-making should focus on programmes which recognise parent and cultural diversity, build on local knowledge and have the full backing of school leadership teams.

The Role of School Leaders in Parental Involvement

School leaders also have a very important role to play in stimulating and sustaining parental involvement. There are many highly successful examples of schools using innovative and excellent methods of getting parents involved. For example, Paul Grant, head teacher of Robert Clack School in Dagenham, described how he was able to turn around parental attitudes to education:

When I first became head I insisted on meeting personally the parents of every wayward pupil. Some were very reluctant to come into school and many were hostile – the previous war-torn atmosphere of the school had done nothing to make them feel valued or welcome.'

The following case study further illustrates the important role of head teachers.

68 Carpentier and Lall Institute of Education's 'Review of Successful Parental Involvement Practice for the 'hard to reach' May 2005

Case study: Paringdon School

In 2002, Paringdon School, a primary school in Harlow, became a Fresh Start School and was struggling with numerous issues, including poor behaviour, violence, staffing problems and a lack of trust from parents.

- Since Mrs Rosie Pepper took over as head teacher the school has set up weekly tea times for parents to come in and speak to the learning mentor about their children. These are generally well attended.
- They also has a messy workshop for parents with young children to interact and work together which have been highly successful.
- 'If you engage the parents and they become positive about their children's education, their children will invariably be more successful.' (Rosie Pepper)

Funding

We believe that this policy is a highly effective way of tackling disadvantage but we recognize that it is for the Conservative Party to make decisions on priorities, balancing the clear benefits of this policy with economic stability.

Many of the costs, for these “Be a Credit to Your Child!” courses could be found within existing school budgets but we believe that schools should receive additional budgets to cover the extra costs involved in setting up and preparing the events.

Funding for schools running “Be a Credit to Your Child!” courses will cost each school £13,000 each year. This is on the basis of the cost of similar courses currently being run for parents, such as Positive Parenting in Croydon.

A traditional way of targeting those children and parents most in need is to identify them by eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM). This accounts for approximately 15% of the school population. We have two concerns about using this method; the stigma attached to the entitlements might deter people and, following on from this, we want to maximize take up within disadvantaged communities. We therefore propose that funding is targetted at those areas most in need.

We suggest that if funding for the courses was extended to schools nationally on the basis of disadvantage, using an Index of Multiple Deprivation, then the annual costs would be as follows, if the policy was extended to:

- 2% of primary schools: £4.9 million
- 5% of primary schools: £12.3 million
- 10% of primary schools: £24.6 million
- 15% of primary schools: £36.9 million
- 20% of primary schools: £49.2 million

(NB: The DfES estimates that there 18,949 primary schools in England and Wales according to EduBase)

In conclusion, the key features of our ‘Be a Credit to Your Child!’ courses are as follows:

- Courses focussed on getting the best out of the education system for your child.
- Targeted at disadvantaged primary schools.
- Tailored to hard to reach parents and different cultural groups.
- Third Sector suppliers with local knowledge.

Overlap with Family Breakdown Working Group

The Family Working Group has also recommended a package of support for parents and families in pre-school years. In particular, they have advocated the cre-

ation of Family Services Hubs⁶⁹, extensive health visitors⁷⁰ and targeted assistance for struggling families⁷¹. We believe this policy package will have considerable benefits to parental involvement in formal education but it is vital that this level of support is to be available throughout a child's education.

“ I have never once begun work with a family who were not extremely grateful for my help. The key to success is to build a relationship with the individual, not in a corrective way but instead working with them enabling them to see the world in a different, more positive way.”

Sean Rumsey, a Home-School support worker in East London⁷²

4.1.4 Parental Support

To ensure that parental involvement is sustained, our proposals aim to use the skills of the voluntary sector to support better links between home and school.

This approach is supported by our polling which indicates:

- 74% of people think that ‘a lot of problems with truancy and disruptive behaviour at school are due to children’s home lives, and could be helped if more support was available to parents.’⁷³
- 69% consider that ‘placing a member of staff who is not a teacher or social worker in schools to liaise with parents and make home visits to families was a ‘good idea.’⁷⁴

Policy Proposal: Home-School Support Champions

Home-school links need to be improved in challenging schools where a high proportion of students have highly unstable home environments.

We therefore propose to provide full-time Home-School Support Champions in disadvantaged primary schools. The function of the Champion would be to encourage parents to support their child’s educational develop-

69 See Volume 1 (Family breakdown), Section 1.1
70 See Volume 1 (Family breakdown), Section 1.2
71 See Volume 1 (Family breakdown), Section 1.2
72 With the School-Home Support Service (see case study p.36)
73 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, April- May 2007
74 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, April- May 2007

ment in a way which fits the unique needs of each family, school and community. Jan Tallis, Chief Executive of School Home Support Service, a charity which provides a link between the home and school through trained ‘Support Workers’, told us that their job is all about empowering parents:

‘We are a child-centred organisation and that means working with parents to empower them to make a difference for their children, by helping them find the right strategies to cope better.’

The Champion would deal with the issues underlying a child’s poor behaviour, attendance and attainment, offering effective and long term solutions to support the child and family. The Champion would be a member of the local community who would be able to engage with those parents who find formal education authority figures daunting. As one parent told us:

‘School was a frightening experience for me, as is dealing with anyone in authority.’



A School-Home support worker with the School Home Support service

The Champions would work with a designated member of the school’s teaching staff. They would provide an important liaison between the school and the family and they would have flexibility to respond to each family’s needs rather than forced to meet set targets.

In the course of our work we have seen successful models based on particular aims and methods:

Aims	Methods
Parental engagement	Home visits
Enhancing the status of education	Advice sessions
Improved behaviour	Attendance and punctuality goal setting
Enhanced results	Study support

The common success factors operating an effective home school support scheme are as described below.

Early identification of specific needs

Successful home-school support schemes build close relationships with families on the ground and are thus able to spot problems such as material need quickly and help the family to access resources more rapidly to meet those needs as an effective advocate. It is essential therefore that workers have strong links with not only schools and parents but also external agencies, such as the local authority or Primary Care Trust.

Tackling the root causes of educational difficulties

Home-school support workers can identify issues such as parental illiteracy which may inhibit the educational progress of children, assisting the family to lower the barriers to success. For example, the Champion might help the family access family-based literacy programmes.

A local champion with strong links to the community

Effective home- school support schemes employ workers who are members of the community and have specialist knowledge of its local and cultural needs. It is important that the home school champion is not seen as 'part of the system' but rather an independent and powerful advocate who remains independent, and at the same time closely connected, to the schools.

Use of the third sector

Many schools with good home support networks use the third sector to build bridges with families as these groups can have the credibility within the community to perform the role. We must also ensure they have the funds to meet the needs of every local community.

The following case study describes how one existing scheme works.

Case study: The School-Home Support Service

This national charity has been seeking to build bridges between the home and school for over 20 years in schools in London and York. Working on the basis of three guiding principles: Early intervention, child-centred practice and parental empowerment, workers are equipped and trained by the service and then given the freedom and flexibility to respond to the needs of each school, family and individual. They work in schools part or full time liaising with parents, teachers, head teachers, teaching assistants and children providing links between them.

One parent said of the service, "as a parent, it has simplified my life no end to have one point of contact when things go wrong."

Funding

We believe that this policy is a highly effective way of tackling disadvantage but we recognize that it is for the Conservative Party to make decisions on spending priorities, balancing the clear benefits of this policy with economic stability.

We have estimated that each full-time Home-School Support Champion would cost £31,000 per annum. This costing has been taken from schemes such as those run by a highly successful charity, the School-Home Support Service, whose 'School Home Support Workers' have a very similar role to the proposed 'Home-School Support Champions'.

Furthermore, we believe that funding for these workers should be long- term, with at least 5-year ring- fenced funds, because their role demands relationship- building and close connections to the local community. Some schools have used

similar schemes in the past but funding has been cut due to yearly budget constraints.

A traditional way of targeting those children and parents most in need is to identify them by eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM). This accounts for approximately 15% of the school population. We have two concerns about using this method; the stigma attached to the entitlements might deter people and, following on from this, we want to maximize take up within disadvantaged communities. We therefore propose that funding is targeted at those areas most in need.

If funding for the courses was extended to schools nationally on the basis of disadvantage, using an Index of Multiple Deprivation, then the annual costs would be as follows, if the policy was extended to:

- 2% of primary schools: £11.7 million
- 5% of primary schools: £29.4 million
- 10% of primary schools: £58.7 million
- 15% of primary schools: £88.1 million
- 20% of primary schools: £117.5 million

(NB: The Dfes estimates that there 18,949 primary schools in England and Wales)

In conclusion, the key features of our proposed Home-School Support Champions proposal are:

- Home-School support workers in disadvantaged primary schools
- Improving outreach, attendance, behaviour, parents' skills, and material needs
- Third sector trust marked⁷⁵ organisations and community involvement⁷⁶

4.1.5 Parental Empowerment

Measures to support parental responsibility and involvement in the education of disadvantaged children are crucial, but there is a tension in calling for more parental responsibility at a time when parents have so little control over their children's education.

One of the important factors affecting the difference in educational outcomes between disadvantaged chil-

“Most of us want our kids to do well at school more than anything. We just thought it was the school's job and we didn't think it had anything to do with us.”⁷⁷

⁷⁵ See Volume 6 (Third Sector), Section 3.1.2 for a full explanation of the proposed trust marking of third sector organisations

⁷⁶ See Volume 6 (Third Sector), Section 3.1.5 for a full explanation of the importance of community involvement

⁷⁷ Parent at an SJPG hearing

dren and other children is that disadvantaged children do not have access to supplementary educational services, which are often taken for granted by many middle-class families.

Research shows that after school activities, such as maths coaching and language clubs, have very positive impacts on attainment. Moreover, other extra curricular activities, such as music and sport, can improve children's confidence, motivation and help to develop their social skills. Yet the education system offers very little flexibility for parents to mould or adapt services to provide an individually tailored approach for their child.

Our policies aim to give disadvantaged families the power and the means to improve their children's education. They will have more resources and will be able to deploy them quickly to meet their children's specific needs.

Policy Proposal: Education Credits for Disadvantaged Children

We propose to introduce Education Credits for children in disadvantaged schools. The Education Credit would have an annual value of £500 and could be exchanged for services provided by approved alternative education providers.

Parents would have control over where the credit was spent but the services they purchase would need to satisfy the following criteria:

- Provide lasting educational benefits
- Improve the well-being of the child
- Recognised as valuable by parents
- Provide support and intervention for the child

The following menu card shows some of the services which could benefit disadvantaged children:

- £480 pays for a weekly meeting with a mentor for a whole year⁷⁸
- £465 buys a year's KUMON Maths tuition
- £370 pays for 6 months of intensive literacy support from Springboard for Children⁷⁹
- £330 pays for a year's individual tuition with Home Teach
- £140 buys a year's group music lessons
- £130 buys a year's French classes (La Jolie Ronde)
- £119.60 is the average cost of a residential school trip
- £14.95 provides an individual subscription to Mathszone

⁷⁸ If a 'mentor' connected to a particular primary school, for one day a week, sees 5 pupils in a day costs £80 a day this would mean a cost of £480 per student per year (Catalyst coaching, Bristol)

⁷⁹ Further information available in the family literacy section of our report

There would, in addition, be a number of requirements made of parents, who would be expected to:

- Fulfil their responsibilities within the 'Home- School Charter'
- Consult with school about which services would benefit their children
- Attend the 'Be a credit to your child' courses

Alternative providers would have a significant role to play in delivering these services. The scheme would stimulate third sector involvement in the areas of deepest educational failure and assist parents to find a local effective solution that matches their child's needs.

In conclusion, the key policy features are:

- £500 per annum to spend on additional education activities.
- Disadvantaged children eligible to get the credit.
- Parents decide how they are spent.
- Activities to include academic support, sport and music.
- National 'kite marked' suppliers including third sector organisations.

Funding

We believe that this policy is a highly effective way of tackling disadvantage but we recognize that it is for the Conservative Party to make decisions on priorities, balancing the clear benefits of this policy with economic stability. The value of these credits would be £500 per child per annum.

A traditional way of targeting those children and parents most in need is to identify them by eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM). This accounts for approximately 15% of the school population. We have two concerns about using this method; the stigma attached to the entitlements might deter people and, following on from this, we want to maximize take up within disadvantaged communities. We therefore propose that funding is targeted at those areas most in need.

If funding for the courses was extended to schools nationally on the basis of disadvantage, using an Index of Multiple Deprivation, then the annual costs would be as follows, if the policy was extended to:

- 2% of primary schools: £41.9 million
- 5% of primary schools: £104.7 million
- 10% of primary schools: £209.4 million
- 15% of primary schools: £314.1 million
- 20% of primary schools: £418.8 million

(NB: The Dfes estimates that there are 4,187,630 children in primary schools. For the purposes of these calculations we have assumed that they are divided equally throughout the 18,949 primary schools.)

Extending Empowerment to all Parents

The proposals in preceding sections aim to give parents greater support to take part in the education of their children. However, we believe that it is inequitable for disadvantaged children to be trapped over the long term in schools which are failing to improve.

Disadvantaged children are more likely to attend poorly performing schools and their parents have little option but to take what is given to them:

- Schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals are on average 2.7 times more likely to be judged under-performing by Ofsted.⁸⁰
- Nearly a third of failing schools are in the most deprived 20% of communities.⁸¹
- Compared with schools nationally, almost twice as many pupils from disadvantaged areas leave without any GCSE grades A*-G at all.⁸²
- In the 10% most disadvantaged council wards 29.2% of pupils gain A*-C GCSEs (including English and Maths) while in the 10% most affluent wards 57.6% of pupils achieve these results.⁸³

At the moment, the power to decide how and where a child's educational needs are met lies with:

- Local authorities who control non selective intakes.
- Schools who control selective intakes.
- Parents with the resources to transport their child to a good school or move to a decent catchment area.
- Parents who are wealthy enough often opt entirely out of the system and place their child in an independent school.

This situation has led to educational segregation and contributes to intergenerational poverty. If you are a disadvantaged parent you have less power over school choice and your child is therefore much more likely to be compelled to attend a local school which performs poorly.

We need to give these parents the data and the resources to exercise more power. Our proposals for school charters, courses and credits will help parents make more informed decisions and put more money in their hands to leverage their children's educational opportunities.

We must also create better local schools in deprived areas. Our policy proposals concerning school leadership (see Section 4.2) and a culture of learning (see Section 4.3) in addition to those described earlier will go a long way towards doing this.

80 National Audit Office, *Improving Poorly Performing Schools in England*, 2006

81 National Audit Office, *Improving Poorly Performing Schools in England*, 2006

82 National Audit Office, *Improving Poorly Performing Schools in England*, 2006

83 The Bow Group, *Invisible children*, May 2007

Setting the third sector free

Our research shows that parental and third sector groups can find innovative solutions to deeply entrenched educational failure. Voluntary groups such as the Eastside Young Leaders Academy, the Lighthouse Group, Black Boys Can and Tabernacle School (see case studies below) bring a sense of mission and a successful track record of improving the educational outcomes of disadvantaged children. The following case studies illustrate the dynamism and innovation of alternative education providers and we believe these models could easily be replicated elsewhere.

Case study: Tabernacle School

Tabernacle school is an independent Christian school in the heart of London, catering for students of all nationalities, between the ages of 3 and 18 years. The school was set up in 1998 in response to parents from the African / Caribbean community concern about the under achievement of their children. The School started with 3 students and have grown to over 50.

The school is able to use an individualised curriculum which meets the needs of each child. According to the school leader, Derrick Wilson, individualisation produces academic excellence, because students take responsibility for their own learning, and it becomes natural for them to aspire for excellence:

‘We see the child as a whole person, and as such we seek to uphold traditional values which help to develop their character. The ability to work independently has immensely benefited our past students as we focus on what is best for each individual child. We believe this is the primary concern of education.’

Case study: Eastside Young Leaders Academy

EYLA is an organisation working in partnership with local schools as a supplement to mainstream schooling for black boys who have been referred by their head teachers as they are at risk of educational and social exclusion. The school is based on a model known as Genesis that was developed in the USA by John Littleford, a former military man and head teacher to prepare young people from disadvantaged backgrounds for corporate and community leadership. The project has had a profound impact upon the community and won two Presidential awards. Ray Lewis, a former Governor in H.M Prison Service adapted the US programme for a UK context, setting up the Eastside Young Leaders Academy to tackle the underachievement of black boys. The boys are offered tutors and mentoring, take part in community service and Saturday and holiday programmes. EYLA is a private education not for profit organisation that was set up independently of the state and continues to be funded by individual donations, fund raising events, charitable trusts and business sponsorship. The Academy does not follow the National Curriculum, but instead seeks to supplement it, tailoring its services to the local community; specifically the young African Caribbean men who attend schools in the London Borough of Newham.

Yet there are big barriers hindering the creation of new schools by these kinds of organisation:

- Central control of school development and the allocation of funding means that it is difficult for popular schools to expand and new schools to open.

- Significant physical and regulatory barriers such as planning and transport prevent new operators from providing schooling and parents from taking advantage of these services.

These obstacles should be removed so that diversity, local knowledge and commitment can flourish.

The impact of parent power overseas

Experience in other countries demonstrates that there are significant advantages in bringing in alternative providers with vision and dynamism.

The SJPG has visited the United States and the Netherlands and reviewed research from other nations such as Sweden which help parents and alternative providers to open up schools with state funding.⁸⁴ We particularly focussed on schools meeting the needs of disadvantaged communities.

There are now 3,000 Charter Schools in 7 states across the USA educating c.750,000 pupils.⁸⁵ US Charter Schools have the following key characteristics:

- They have independence from direct government control.
- They have fewer regulatory conditions than state schools.
- This enables them to tailor their services to the needs of the locality.
- They can be closed – their charter is not renewed - if they do not perform.
- Finance is provided per capita – the more pupils they have, the more funding they receive.
- The majority are newly established schools.
- They cannot charge ‘top up fees’.
- Many allocate their oversubscribed places by lottery.

The following case studies illustrate the success and innovation of some of the alternative providers we visited:

Case study: Cristo Rey School, the Bronx

Cristo Rey School is a large secondary school in the Bronx of New York and although the majority of their students come from deprived backgrounds, the school has an excellent rate of getting students employed once they leave school.

All the pupils at the school do one day of work experience each week in a company in Manhattan.

Successful links have been developed with various large city firms in Manhattan who offer the students one day per week of administrative work. The firms pay the school for the work which contributes to the school's private funding.

The placements vary from law firms, such as White and Case, to working in the Mayor of New York's office.

The programme is now in its fourth year and has been a huge success. One employer said that they had been so happy with the way that the scheme had worked that they hoped to take even more children the following year.

84 For an excellent description of the systems in these countries please see '*Hands up for school choice!*' 2005 by Policy Exchange Tony Hockley and Daniel Nieto

85 National Education Association USA, www.nea.org, Charter Schools

Case study: Montebello Elementary School, Baltimore

This school was set up in an area of very high deprivation and crime. As the head teacher told us; '*... we are constantly dealing with a number of social problems and child protection issues. If you were to ask the kids in assembly how many have parents who have been murdered then a large number would put their hands up*'

Nevertheless, the school has been a tremendous success; and its strong ethos of 'no excuses' has led to improving examination results every year. The school is now hoping to expand significantly in response to rising demand and set up a middle school. The simple reason being that much of the good work at Montebello at primary level unwinds at secondary level the poorly performing "Public" school in the area.

Case study: KIPP Academy

The KIPP Academy is located in the Bronx, New York in an area of high crime, violence and almost universal social housing.

In spite of this, the school has developed a very strong values system and positive ethos and, as a result, over 80% of the class of 2003/4/5 have enrolled in university and college.

One of the key elements of success has been a very firm disciplinary policy. The "KIPP - Commitment to Excellence" is posted on the boards of corridors and in every classroom and outlines the values of the school. The form is divided into three sections; the first describing the responsibilities of teachers, the second explaining the obligations of parents and the third outlining the obligations of students.

The school has a very positive atmosphere and as one teacher commented; 'It is a fantastic place to work!'

The common characteristics of the schools we encountered on our visits were as follows:

Mission

The founders of the organisations which we reviewed have a real sense of mission which inspires everything the schools do. This is particularly evidenced in the character and calibre of the head teachers and staff teams they recruit. Schools have a transparent passion to meet their disadvantaged pupil's needs and this commitment is infectious. This attracts pupils and parents and encourages them to do their best.

Parental Involvement

The schools we visited worked hard to engage the families of their pupils as much as possible. For example, they hold regular induction events to help new parents become familiar with the school's expectations and standards before they join.

Thereafter, tutorials are organised by the staff to explain school procedures and the respective responsibilities of parents, pupils and staff. These roles and duties are enshrined in user friendly documents which are distributed to parents and pupils and displayed prominently around the school.

In addition, schools use every opportunity to get wider families into school for example using grandparents as library assistants and parents as learning support to reinforce the message that education is a key part of family life.

Literacy and numeracy

These schools have a very strong focus on literacy and numeracy and use traditional methods to teach their children which involve regular assessment of ability and the provision of additional support for those individual students who are struggling.

Moreover, a love of reading is instilled into pupils from an early age and books are very prominent in the schools. Parents are also encouraged to take part in regular reading activities with their children both in and outside school.

Raising expectations

The schools we visited are focussed on ingraining habits of diligence, thoroughness and self-discipline in their students which encourage children to take personal responsibility for their own lives and not be trapped by their circumstances.

These schools further these messages with the display of inspirational quotes and slogans on the walls which continually challenge the children's thinking, for example, "The more you know the further you will go" and seek to spur them on to success.

Behaviour

Every school has a clear and consistent disciplinary policy which is based on common values of respect, tolerance and endeavour. Teachers reward good behaviour and give children fun and innovative awards for attendance, punctuality, teamwork and academic improvement.

Teaching

Teachers focus primarily on teaching and engage the whole class with highly interactive lessons which are delivered with pace and a sense of excitement. Meanwhile administration is largely performed by other staff members. This is particularly the case in federations or groups of schools who have well developed management and financial systems.

Good Citizenship / Employability

The schools believe it is an essential part of their role to prepare their pupils to become good citizens and suitable employees. They recognise that students come from disadvantaged neighbourhoods which often have intergenerational worklessness and a negative attitude towards formal education. They therefore invest a great deal of time and effort in preparing students for the world of work by constant engagement with local employers.

They also place great emphasis on community service and social responsibility for all students to try to create a positive gang culture and encourage students to 'put something back' into their neighbourhoods.

School autonomy and funding

These schools attribute their success largely to their autonomy rather than financial resources. The schools often receive less from the government than their traditional state funded competitors. This means they struggle particularly to finance capital costs. However, they argue that new buildings are not the key and indeed they often occupy shared and, or, old premises. More important they state is that they have clarity of purpose and the freedom to pursue it. This is encapsulated in their foundations which permit them to control their own budgets, recruit the staff they want, how they wish and adapt their schools to their local needs.

We recognise that many of these positive practices exist in the UK today in certain schools but they are far from universal. We wish to give many more disadvantaged children opportunities by breaking down barriers to the creation of new schooling models by alternative providers.



Policy Proposal - Pioneer Schools

Our RISE proposals aim to give disadvantaged families support to be active participants in the education of their children. However, if these parents fulfill their obligations to their children and society it would be inequitable for their children to be trapped over the long term in failing schools. We wish also to provide these parents with a credible alternative.

We therefore propose that parents of disadvantaged pupils in schools which are failing and fail to improve over a three year period should have the option of moving their children, together with the funding for that pupil to a new Pioneer School within the state system, or to another state school. Parents could also add to this portable sum the £500 per annum Educational Credit to which they are entitled.

Pioneer Schools

Pioneer Schools would be in some ways similar to existing Academies: they would be established by groups of parents and alternative providers within the state system and have charitable status allowing them to attract donations from individuals and companies with a commitment to tackling educational disadvantage.

Pioneer Schools, would offer free education on a non-selective basis within the state system but would not be subject to Local Authority sanction or control. They would have total freedom over the recruitment and remuneration of their employees and teachers would be free to employ imaginative teaching methods to meet the needs of their pupils.

The Department for Education and Skills role would be to monitor the results of Pioneer Schools and not the precise methods by which they are achieved. Once established, Pioneer Schools would not be inspected by Ofsted for three years to allow them time to build their systems and track record. Parents with children at Pioneer Schools would be entitled to move their children and funding to another state school if they were dissatisfied. Any oversubscription for Pioneer Schools would be allocated on a lottery basis.

Existing schools

Ofsted currently lists 352 schools⁸⁶ with 'Formal Notice to Improve' and 256 schools in 'Special Measures' which equates to over 100,000 pupils. The Government could either use these existing categories as a means of deciding which pupils were eligible for portable funding or devise a new means of assessment based on individual rates of pupil improvement or 'value added.'

If an existing school closes because parents move their children to an alternative provider then the existing school's buildings would be first offered to alternative education provider before being sold by the local authority.

A similar scheme has existed in Florida since 1999 and is described in the case study opposite.

Our Pioneer Schools proposal would have the following benefits:

- Parents of disadvantaged children would have a means within the state system of dealing with prolonged educational failure.
- It would attract alternative providers with a commitment to educate disadvantaged pupils.
- Research shows that such schemes can encourage the turnaround of existing struggling schools.
- Money would stay within the state system.

The Government's chosen path to creating more good local schools is the Academy Programme and Pioneer Schools would compliment Academies.

The Academy Programme

The Government has created forty seven academies including twenty three in London. The forty seven include five former City Technology Colleges.

The recent National Audit Office study⁸⁷ shows the following:

- The proportion of pupils getting five good GCSEs including English and Maths in Academies rose by 6.2% in one year – six times the national improvement rate.

86 Ofsted, *Press Release*, 31 May 2007

Case study: The Florida A+ Plan

The key facts of the Plan are as follows:

- The scheme is designed to encourage schools to improve their performance.
- Schools are graded on the basis of the results from student statewide tests scores.
- Pupils from schools graded 'F' two years in four are entitled to take their funding to another school.
- This may be used by parents in any school in the state.
- According to the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress, Florida again surpassed the national average in fourth-grade reading and, for the first time, bettered the national average in fourth-grade mathematics.
- Since 1999, the number of "A" schools has increased by more than 500 percent, with 1,255 schools earning an "A" in 2005.
- Florida's high school graduation rate increased to 71.9 percent in 2005, up from 60.2 percent in 1999.
- Research has shown that schools awarded an F grade one year - which could result in pupils leaving in a second year - achieved the biggest improvement.

- The proportion of pupils in Academies getting five or more good GCSE passes has doubled, compared to their predecessor schools five years ago (an increase from 21% to 42 %).

However, results were mixed in the 11 Academies fully inspected by Ofsted by October 2006:

- Leadership and management were deemed strong and governing bodies very effective, but pupil behaviour and teaching and learning did not score well.
- Pupil behaviour was only found to be good in 55% compared with 70% in all secondary schools.
- Only 36% were judged to have good or outstanding teaching and learning compared with 51% in all secondary schools.

Located in deprived areas and often taking over failing schools, Academies start in very challenging circumstances and so it is too soon to measure their performance. Further detailed research will be needed to assess their progress.

We agree with the objectives of the Academy Programme but our discussions with sponsors and potential sponsors have revealed the following concerns:

- The process for establishing an Academy is too bureaucratic and takes too long.
- Third sector groups and parents are dissuaded from setting up academies because of the financial demands placed on sponsors and the lengthy bureaucratic process.
- Too much money has been spent on buildings and consultants rather than the teaching of the disadvantaged children.⁸⁸
- Businesses which could bridge the gap have no financial incentive to invest and are dissuaded by the bureaucracy.
- Expansion of the programme will require the recruitment and training of enough highly effective leaders with the necessary skills to make academies a success.⁸⁹

The Academy programme is in its infancy and we suggest that a future Conservative Government conducts a thorough review of its progress and suggest the following questions should be considered:

- Can the process of establishment be shortened by, for example, bringing together the 'expression of interest' and feasibility stages?
- Should the requirement for a new building be removed?
- Should the financial contribution for parents and third sector organisations establishing academies be relaxed or removed?
- Could businesses have more incentives to become involved? (see Section 4.3.4)
- Would better results and value for public money be achieved through changing the DfES's role to more of an auditor of outputs rather than a controller of inputs?

We believe that together with our recommendations for bringing down the barriers preventing parents and the voluntary sector from establishing schools, Pioneer Schools and portable funding would give parents of disadvantaged children greater leverage to improve the education of their children.

88 The average spend on academies is £25m. It takes 3 years on average to establish an Academy

89 See Section 4.2

90 As of the 31st of March 2005, there were 60,900 Looked After Children in England, 4,668 in Wales, over 12,000 in Scotland and 2,531 in Northern Ireland; a total of 80,105 in the UK.

4.1.6 Looked After Children

Breakdown Britain devoted an entire chapter to the nation's 60,000⁹⁰ Looked After Children because the educational outcomes of looked after children are disturbing:

- Key Stage 2 (age 11): Only 44 % of children in care achieved a Level 4 compared with 80% of all children.⁹¹
- GCSEs (age 16): 11% of Looked After Children left school with 5 good GCSEs⁹² compared with 56% of all children and only 64% are even entered for a GCSE exam.⁹³
- Higher education: only 6% of care leavers are able to enter university.⁹⁴

“ I was never read a bedtime story. And kids deserve that growing up. A bedtime story, a cuddle from their mum. You need that love and closeness with your family so that you can go into school without anything on your mind. Those from care who do go to school don't give a damn anyway because they've got so much on their mind they can't focus on what they should be focussing on. ”

Marc, a care leaver, at a SJPG Hearing

'The state makes a rotten parent'

Local government has the title 'corporate parent' because it is responsible for Looked After Children. However, its record of parenting is poor:

- Unemployment: 22% of care leavers will be unemployed by the September after they leave school, compared with just 7% of all school leavers.⁹⁵
- Crime: 27% of the prison population has a background in care.⁹⁶
- Homelessness: One third of those living on the streets are from a care background.⁹⁷

Given that children from care are 66 times more likely to have their children taken into care; action must be taken for this cycle to be broken.⁹⁸

A number of Government initiatives have pledged to help Looked After Children yet this has created a patchwork of confusion in recent years. Each one has promised change and improvement to a different area of the care sys-

91 National Statistics; Outcome Indicators for Looked After Children: Twelve months to 30 September 2005, England

92 According to DfES statistics for the academic year ending 2006

93 These results represent a national average; there is regional variation between 16% and 83%

94 DfES, Care Matters; *Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care* October 2006

95 NCVCCO: National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations Report 2004, p4

96 Social Exclusion Unit: *Reducing Re-offending by ex-prisoners*, 2002

97 John Bird MBE, The Big Issue Foundation

98 O'Higgins, *Disruption, displacement and discontinuity: children in care and their families in Northern Ireland*, Avebury, 1996. Additional data provided by London Borough of Hackney Social Services Dept. and quoted in 'Foster Care in Crisis' by the National Foster Care Association, 1997

tem; from the Quality Protects Programme of 1999, dealing with 'consistent educational support' of children in care, to the DfES Green Paper, *Care Matters* of September 2006. There have been ten pieces of legislative reform, all attempting to resolve the problems experienced by Looked After Children but they have all failed to tackle the underlying problems faced by these children. As Alan Johnson, Minister of Education, himself admitted:

“... *It has clearly not been enough.*”⁹⁹

Our Interim Report identified systemic failure, lack of support, instability and low expectations as endemic in the treatment of Looked After Children:

Systemic failure

Despite the proliferation of guidelines, there is too little implementation and enforcement of them. For example, despite the establishment of Government Guidelines in 2000, only 25% of care homes today meet 90% or more of the minimum standards and over a third of foster settings fail to meet the minimum requirements of the Care Standards Act.¹⁰⁰

Lack of support

Children in care have inadequate support at school. For example, despite guidance from the DfES that every school should have a designated teacher for its Looked After Children, few children in care know who this member of staff is if one has been appointed.¹⁰¹

Instability

Stable relationships are vital to any child's upbringing whether it be with a parent, a carer, a teacher or a social worker, as they provide the emotional and practical support necessary for the child to succeed. But as Marc's case study (see opposite page) shows, children in care are often forced to move frequently and this has a dramatic impact on their education. Indeed, an NFER report found that 29% of children had 3 or more placements during secondary school and 25% had 6 or more placements. As the recent Green Paper comments, “high rates of turnover among social workers and staff in children's homes and a lack of stability in children's placements means that many children lack a consistent adult in their lives.”

Low expectations

Without a consistent adult actively encouraging a child and promoting their best educational interests, many Looked After Children have very low expecta-

99 Alan Johnson, *Children in Care Statement*, House of Commons, 9th October 2006.

100 O'Higgins, *Disruption, displacement and discontinuity: children in care and their families in Northern Ireland*, Avebury, 1996. Additional data provided by London Borough of Hackney Social Services Dept. and quoted in 'Foster Care in Crisis' by the National Foster Care Association, 1997

101 Barnardos, *Failed by the System 2006*

tions and in many cases this translates into poor educational outcomes. In the words of one 16 year old Looked After Child:

*'I didn't think my GCSEs results were very good but my teacher said she thought they were ok considering my background'*¹⁰²

The following case study further illustrates the low aspiration and poor levels of support offered to Looked After Children:

Case study: Marc - A Care Leaver

Marc was placed in care aged 4 but by 23 had only had 2 years of schooling.

He was frequently moved between placements without consultation: 'They just tell you to pack your bags...you don't get any notice.'

When he did attend school he felt lost and uncared for. He misbehaved because he was angry that he couldn't keep up with the other children. He was excluded and sent to special schools but these placements were unsuccessful.

Marc's poor education, lack of support and stable relationships left him with little ambition: 'When you're in the children's home you don't think about the future because of the way you've been treated.'

Policy Objectives

Earlier in this report we suggested that the Government's approach of taking more responsibilities away from parents was contributing to educational failure. In the care of Looked After Children it is striking that no one person or body in Government is responsible for monitoring and improving the lives of these children.

This report is primarily concerned with educational achievement but, as with our other policy recommendations, we believe that there needs to be holistic support for these children to maximise their chances of success.

The nation spends c. £2.5 billion¹⁰³ per annum on Looked After Children, the equivalent of £40,000 per child and this is increasing by approximately 10% per year.¹⁰⁴

Yet our research has demonstrated that there needs to be a fundamental review of the implementation of existing policies for Looked After Children and crucially the creation of better accountability for their education and care.

This is a complex and detailed area and so to ensure our research and conclusions receive the attention these children deserve, the Centre for Social Justice has decided to release our findings later this year in a special paper.

102 Barnardo's 11th January 2007.

103 Harriet Sergeant, *Handle with Care*, CYPS, 2006

104 Local Government Association, *The facts-looking after vulnerable children*, 2005

Policy direction

We believe that:

The role of the 'Corporate Parent' can be defined more clearly

Ever since Frank Dobson¹⁰⁵ urged councillors to ask of themselves 'would this be good enough for my child?' when discussing Looked After Children, there has been much debate about the respective responsibilities of central and local government.

The phrase 'corporate parent' has been used to describe collective responsibility but there is a poor understanding of what this actually means to local authorities, council members, school governors and teachers.

A unified plan can be developed for each Looked After Child

Our Interim Report showed how a Looked After Child can have as many as twelve professionals responsible for them at any one time and these personnel change frequently. Moreover, a recent survey¹⁰⁶ showed that Children's Services across twelve local authorities looking after 377 children in care could only provide a complete record of attainment for one of the children in their care.

This lack of communication between professionals often makes it very difficult to meet a Looked After Child's needs.

We will be proposing ways in which this communication between agencies, teachers and care workers can be made more effective and a unified plan developed for each individual child.

Looked After Children can receive more support through better professional training and monitoring of outcomes

To enable individual plans to be successfully implemented, professionals need proper training and support. These vital activities should be based on best practice and thorough research.

There is currently an inadequate framework for monitoring the outcomes of Looked After Children. Data is currently based on generic outcomes rather than those that matter for individual children. In the words of Barnados:

*'The majority of interventions in social care are not evaluated before they are introduced.'*¹⁰⁷

This approach contributes to variability in Local Authority performance. Our proposals will enable the sharing of best practice and help Local Authorities know where their budgets are most effectively allocated.

105 Quality Protects, 1998

106 Fletcher-Campbell and T Archer, *Achievement at key Stage 4 of Young People in Public Care*, NFER 2003

107 M. Stein, *What works in leaving care?* Barnados

Consideration should be given as to how to carry out systematic research and draw together data held by diverse Government departments from the Home Office to the DfES.

Government can more effectively co-ordinate services and be accountable

The Green paper¹⁰⁸ admits that ‘organisational structures in Local Authorities can result in responsibility for children being passed from one part of the organisation to another during their time in care.’

Government must better co-ordinate and implement current policies. For example, a future government should consider whether there should be a Minister for Looked After Children. After all, we have a designated Prisons Minister for the 80,000¹⁰⁹ incarcerated in our jails and Looked After Children who have committed no crime, need more effective attention from Government.

4.2: Leadership in Schools

4.2.1 The State of the Nation

Our Interim Report¹¹⁰ showed the importance of sustained good school leadership in disadvantaged areas. Head teachers have a number of key functions:

A. Developing a shared ethos

Successful head teachers articulate a clear and consistent vision and ethos for a school that unifies parents, teachers and pupils. Furthermore they communicate this ethos effectively and consistently to each of these groups.



B. Leading the staff team

Having established the direction of travel, it is crucial to get the right people in the right roles and travelling in the same direction. Our Interim Report¹¹¹ showed the corrosive effect of a dysfunctional staff team upon school performance. Moreover, strong head teachers improve teaching and learning through their motivation of staff and their monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching.

C. Involving the community

Good quality head teachers see the wider local community as part of the school’s team in championing learning. They recognise the impact of domestic and wider cultural settings on their pupils’ educational attainment and try to bring down the barriers to formal education which families and certain cul-

108 DfES, Care Matters; Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care October 2006

109 www.homeoffice.gov.uk National Statistics

110 Breakdown Britain: Education Failure; Chapter Six - Leadership in schools

111 Breakdown Britain: Education Failure; Chapter Six - Leadership in schools

tural groups may have. They also work hard to make schooling relevant to disadvantaged communities by building links with the wider world, particularly local businesses.

These roles are crucial to the successful development of schools serving disadvantaged areas. One recent report on 'Successful School Leadership' concluded that:

*'... as far as we are aware, there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership.'*¹¹²

We understand that 'talented leadership' of a school is not solely about head teachers and that the whole teaching staff has an important role to play. However, we think that head teachers have a fundamental role to play in the leadership team. Without a head with vision and vigour it is difficult to attract and retain other staff. The following case study shows the inspirational role of head teachers in turning around a failing school:

Case study: Phoenix High School

This school was once called a 'Hell School' by the media. Attendance was poor, behaviour appalling and staff morale extremely low.

Over the past 12 years, the Head teacher William Atkinson and his team have raised the self esteem of the whole school community. The atmosphere is calm and focussed and pupils are smartly dressed and polite. The walls are covered with photos of pupils with their GCSE results forming a 'Hall of Fame' aimed at raising the aspirations and creating a sense of shared mission.

The percentage of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs A*-C has risen from 4% to 77%.

Yet our record of hiring and keeping sufficient high quality leaders in our most challenging schools is unsatisfactory. Schools in disadvantaged areas have more vacant leadership and teaching posts than others areas and they do not readily attract the best teachers. Children find themselves being taught by a bewildering succession of supply teachers in directionless schools, and therefore lose the benefits of continuity in tuition and mentoring.

Challenging Schools are struggling to Retain and Recruit Good head teachers

There is a national head teacher recruitment crisis and our Interim Report explained how schools in disadvantaged communities are finding it harder

112 Leithwood et al, *Successful School Leadership, What it is and How It Influences Pupil Learning*, 2006

than ever to attract and retain excellent head teachers leading strong teams. Sir Cyril Taylor informed a SJPG hearing that:

*'Usually weak schools have weak head teachers with weak governing bodies. The ability to attract and retain good teaching staff is fundamental.'*¹¹³

There are currently more than 500,000 pupils in over 1,200 schools without a permanent head across the country¹¹⁴ and the following key statistics show the problems being encountered by all schools:

- Head teachers are retiring early - the number is likely to rise from 2,250 in 2004 to nearly 3,500 in 2009.¹¹⁵
- There are insufficient newcomers to fill vacancies - 43% of deputy heads and 70% of middle leaders don't want to be head teachers.
- The number of advertisements for all heads during 2006 was above the average and hit a new record in primary schools with around a third having to re-advertise the position.¹¹⁶

The leadership crisis in disadvantaged schools is a sub set of these wider problems. There are also additional external pressures faced by disadvantaged schools, including family breakdown and crime, and it is not hard to see why there is an acute shortage of talented individuals willing to fill such posts. Leading a difficult school in a disadvantaged area currently has too many drawbacks to be attractive as a career for many teachers. Recent research¹¹⁷ shows the key reasons cited by the teaching profession for the recruitment crisis:

Reasons for difficulties in Head Recruitment

Secondary	%	Primary	%
Workload	44.4	Insufficient financial incentive	63.2
Stress/pressure	30.6	Workload	52.6
Vulnerability to sacking	27.8	Accountability	31.6
Accountability	27.8	Perception of job	26.3

As can be seen in addition to the factors mentioned earlier in this report, many teachers feel that there is simply not enough room in the budgets of challenging primary schools for governors to pay top salaries to attract and retain the best leaders.

113 Witness at SJPG Hearing
 114 NAHT (National Association of Head teachers) *Education data surveys*, John Howson, 2006
 115 Professor John Howson, 'Education Data Surveys Expert Analysis & Commentary on Education Issues', September 2005 www.educationdatasurveys.org.uk
 116 EDS 22nd Annual Survey
 117 Professor John Howson, 'Education Data Surveys Expert Analysis & Commentary on Education Issues', January 2007 www.educationdatasurveys.org.uk

To improve educational outcomes, we need excellent leaders and our view is that there are enough potential and actual leaders in the system to deliver an excellent education to disadvantaged pupils.

However, we believe that we need to ensure that aspiring leaders:

- Are convinced that the job they are being asked to do is possible and highly valued.
- Have the freedom and flexibility to meet their pupils' needs.
- Are properly trained and resourced.
- Are well rewarded for quality performance.

Breakdown Britain identified three key reasons for this 'reluctance to lead': bureaucratic overload, poor pay and conditions and pupil behaviour.

The following sections describe these issues and our policy response to them.

4.2.2 An End to Bureaucratic Overload

The Government has made schools the delivery organisation for a multiplicity of interventions tackling complex social issues. This has resulted in a large number of directives for schools and also an increase in the amount of bureaucracy associated with these initiatives.

Labour has introduced over 50 new directives in the last two years and even Jim

Knight, the Schools Minister, has called for leaders to 'focus on forms that make a difference and ignore the rest'.¹¹⁸ The latest research shows that 92% of heads believe they are involved in more bureaucracy than 5 years ago while over 70% say they have a poor or very poor work life balance.¹¹⁹ Consequently head teachers' job satisfaction has diminished and the role is increasingly perceived as being administrative and unrewarding.

Mick Brooks, General Secretary of the National Association of Head teachers, recently acknowledged that the current approach is undermining the teaching profession:

'The Government appears to be in denial about a situation which is clearly evident to all of us at a ground level.'

“ Number 10 policy advisers would come up with another bright idea to which our answers would be that we hadn't implemented the last one! ”

118 TES quote May 2007

119 NUT Survey of Head teachers, January 2007

The Way Ahead

The recommendations of the Social Justice Policy Group as a whole represent a different approach and will ultimately reduce the demands placed on schools and therefore their leaders by:

- Addressing the wider problems disadvantaged families face including debt, dependency, family breakdown and addiction.
- Maximising the influence and skills of parents (Section 4.1).
- Improving pupil behaviour (Section 4.3.2).
- Utilising the skills of the third sector and business (Section 4.3.4).

However, we recognise that our policies and the cultural change required will take time to be fully effective. Therefore we believe that government should exercise restraint in issuing more directives. This could be achieved by giving the Secretary of State for Education and Skills the specific target of a year on year reduction of bureaucracy for Head teachers.

4.2.3 Changing Pay and Job Conditions for head teachers

The current system of rewarding heads is inadequate. Head teachers are paid more for working in secondary schools than primary schools and rates of pay are determined by the size of the school in which they work. This approach means that many head teachers working in smaller schools, particularly primary schools in disadvantaged areas, are not being sufficiently rewarded for a very challenging job.

“ Money cannot be spent in a more important way than to recruit a Head teacher.”¹²⁰

John Dunford, Association of School and College Leaders

While money is not the only factor affecting poor recruitment of head teachers, we rely upon the commitment of the teaching profession to accept a job that has comparatively low rewards, coupled with increasing demands and stress.

There are approximately 22,700 head teachers and 19,400 deputy heads in the country. Research¹²¹ shows that nine out of ten primary school head teachers are paid less than £60,000 compared to eight in ten secondary school heads who are paid more than £60,000. The average primary school head earns around £50,000 compared to £70,000 for a secondary school.¹²²

Moreover, there are small differentials between primary deputy heads and heads despite the big increase in responsibility for heads. Nearly 50% of

120 John Dunford, ASCL quoted in the TES

121 PWC/DfES, *Independent Study into School Leadership* January 2007

122 Ibid

deputy heads are paid over £40,000. In the words of one deputy head of an urban primary school in a recent survey:¹²³

'Deputies earn more than many heads because of enhancements. So for them pay does not provide an incentive to progress to headship.'

Given the complexity and challenges of working in primary schools in deprived areas, is it any wonder that early retirement is increasing and that there are more vacancies than ever before? Being a head teacher in such a school involves significant responsibility and greater stress. Governments state that the education of these disadvantaged children is important yet we pay these leaders less than GPs and hospital managers.

We recognise that there is some flexibility within the current guidelines and within the 'Pay and Conditions' document, which provides guidelines on teacher salaries. We have also seen examples of performance related pay and additional benefits being used by some local authorities and governing bodies.

However, their use is limited and the amounts involved tend to be too small to affect behaviour. Moreover, such schemes are often based on the size of a school and the stage of schooling rather than recognising the complex demands of the role or the progress made by the head teacher.

Head teachers also perceive there to be insufficient flexibility and consistency in the way the provisions of the pay and conditions document is applied to leadership by school governing bodies with a recent survey showing that 41% of heads think packages are inflexible or very inflexible.¹²⁴ This is in stark contrast to the results of the latest private sector retention CIPD survey 2006 which said three quarters of those companies surveyed viewed a flexible approach to salary and benefits as being fundamental to their succession planning.¹²⁵

The following policy recommendations concentrate on these issues.

Policy Proposals

We wish to put a premium on the delivery of a quality education to the disadvantaged and no longer place extreme pressure upon a dwindling number of 'hero heads'. We want to improve the chances of challenging schools getting the very best leaders.

We also wish to shake up the labour market for disadvantaged primary schools by encouraging the best heads, middle managers and deputy heads to take up headships.



XLP Assembly

¹²³ *Independent Study into School Leadership* DfES /PWC January 2007

¹²⁴ *Independent Study into School Leadership* DfES /PWC January 2007

¹²⁵ CIPD Reward management Survey 2006

We recommend two specific policies for challenging primary schools:

- Establish a Disadvantaged Primary Schools Personnel Investment Fund
- Improve training for governing bodies in disadvantaged primary schools

Alongside these measures we believe that government should encourage ways in which heads of disadvantaged schools have greater status in society. These heads are doing a complex, highly trained and specialist job, not unlike a consultant surgeon, and should be recognised as key influencers in society.

The Disadvantaged Primary Schools Personnel Investment Fund

We propose that disadvantaged primary schools should be eligible for accessing a new fund.

The fund's purpose would be threefold:

- Helping those challenging primary schools failing to attract head teachers.
- Rewarding improved performance.
- Reducing the administrative burden on head teachers.

Governing bodies would decide how schools access the Fund. Our work has revealed that head teachers and governors of many governing bodies feel ill prepared in the design and implementation of more imaginative remuneration schemes and so it is essential that appropriate training for governors is provided to help them achieve the best results.

Work by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), reveals that those schools most desperately in need of good governance are least likely to benefit from it. Professor Alan Dyson, head of the research team at JRF, said that:

“School governors carry out an important and extremely valuable role in the management of schools. But in the light of these findings we need to ask questions about whether we are asking too much of them – especially in disadvantaged areas.”

Helping those disadvantaged primary schools failing to attract head teachers

It is proposed that such schools that have had difficulty in filling vacant headships and have to re-advertise would be entitled to additional funding. This would enable schools to pay new heads up to 25% more in base pay to attract talent. Each new head teacher would be required to sign on for a minimum of three years in order to be eligible for the salary increase and the improvement bonus described below and would not receive enhanced benefits if they left the scheme early.

Rewarding improved performance

If the governing body so decides, existing heads would be eligible for a new improvement bonus of up to 50% of salary. This new improvement bonus would target rates of improvement year on year for specific pupil groups rather than absolute levels of achievement or league table results. The Government would issue guidelines to help schools collect and use appropriate data.

The Government recognises¹²⁶ that present school targets are focussed on end of key stage ‘raw averages’ of attainment. Schools do have access to information which measures pupil progress, adjusted for their starting point (value added) and social factors (contextual value added), but as has been acknowledged by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES):

“... It cannot be used to set future targets. We need something more: a measure of pupil progress, and of the improvement in rates of progress over time.”¹²⁷

The DfES is therefore piloting pupil progression measures and has floated the idea of a ‘progression premium’ that is a school-level incentive payment related to the school’s actual success in securing better rates of progress for their under-attaining pupils.

We would go much further and suggest that this data could be used by Governors to attract and directly reward the best head teachers utilising finance from the Disadvantaged Primary Schools Personnel Investment Fund.

Our polling shows that 64% of people think that ‘teachers and head teachers should be given performance bonuses if they dramatically improve results for children.’

Reducing the administrative burden on heads in disadvantaged primary schools

Governing bodies could also choose to use the additional funding to buy in additional administrative, bursarial support. This could be done in cooperation with other local schools and would reduce the impact of historic bureaucratic overload.

A recent report into school leadership,¹²⁸ described how school leaders are required to fulfil an increasing number of roles, such as accountant, architect, and human resources manager. The report recommended, inter alia, distributing leadership roles among a broader range of senior staff, and developing wider skill sets for the future, with increased expertise in areas such as finance, human resources, collaboration and project management. The Investment Fund will allow challenging schools to recruit top quality senior staff where they are most needed.

126 Dfes, *Making Good Progress*, January 2006

127 *ibid*

128 *Independent Study into School Leadership*, DfES/PWC January 2007

Funding

We believe that this policy is a highly effective way of tackling disadvantage but we recognize that it is for the Conservative Party to make decisions on priorities, balancing the clear benefits of this policy with economic stability.

We have estimated, using the figures from the recent PWC/DfES independent study into school leadership, that the costs of this proposal would be as follows.

We have assumed conservatively that if every salary was inflated by 25% and every head teacher also received their bonuses (50% of new salary) in full then new additional costs would arise. If funding is extended to schools nationally on the basis of disadvantage, using an Index of Multiple Deprivation, then the annual costs would be as follows:

- 2% of primary schools: £18 million
- 5% of primary schools: £45 million
- 10% of primary schools: £90.1 million
- 15% of primary schools: £135.2 million
- 20% of primary schools: £180.3 million

(NB: On the basis that there are 18,949 primary schools)

To put these proposals in context, these policies would take the compensation for an outstanding head in a disadvantaged primary school to £84,000 from £45,000, a level enjoyed by over 50% of existing heads of secondary schools. These costs ignore the savings which would result from lower staff churn due to more consistent and better leadership. Schools could also use this fund to finance £40,000 plus of administrative support for the head.

In addition to these financial measures, we believe the head teachers of our challenging schools need to be well prepared for the task and supported as they develop their role.

4.2.4 Improving head teacher training to help heads deal with poor pupil behaviour

Our Interim Report demonstrated that poor pupil behaviour is a key reason for poor teacher job satisfaction. In schools with a significant number of pupils who are unable to engage in the educational process, teachers are finding it very difficult to maintain control in the classroom.

Reports repeatedly show that poor pupil behaviour is a major reason teachers leave the profession. For example, a survey by the Teaching Support Network last year revealed that 84% of teachers had been verbally abused and 63% had considered quitting because of pupil aggression and unruliness.¹²⁹



129 The New Bill on pupil behaviour www.teachingtimes.co.uk

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers' findings are similar with their survey last year showing that 71% of respondents had considered leaving the profession and 78% knew a colleague who had left as a result of disruptive pupils.¹³⁰

Section 4.3.2 suggests ways in which poor pupil behaviour can be dealt with more effectively. Unless these are addressed in disadvantaged schools, teachers will continue to shy away from them, thus compounding underachievement. The following section suggests ways in which head teacher training can be improved to tackle poor behaviour.

Improved head teacher training

We need to increase and improve the training of future and existing head teachers leading challenging schools. Our policies aim to give school leaders in disadvantaged areas the skills and means to tackle issues such as poor pupil behaviour through improved training and access to the skills of some third sector organisations.¹³¹

Existing Training

The core current leadership qualification for aspiring heads is the National Professional Qualification for Headship while serving heads use the 'Head for the Future' training.

We have spoken to a cross section of teachers and trainers who have varied views on the suitability of existing training for leadership positions in disadvantaged schools.

Our research uncovered the following key observations:

- School leadership training should utilise the best in techniques from outside the sector too, including business and other public sector bodies.
- The increasing complexity of school structures and responsibilities, such as budgeting and personnel management, means that leaders could benefit from tools found in business qualifications including MBAs.
- Training for leadership should not be seen as an event or certificate but a continual process of development.
- Practical training and mentoring from those with experience of leading challenging schools is invaluable.

The following case study describes an innovative teacher and leadership training scheme:

130 ATL Survey, April 2006

131 See section 4.3.2

Case study: Future Leaders

Future Leaders is a programme working to train up leaders for challenging schools in inner city contexts. Over the course of a year, teachers are trained to contribute to school leadership within 12 months and aim for headship of a challenging school within 4 years. Participants receive mentoring from a leadership coach, attend two intensive training residentials and will then begin to work as part of the senior management team of a school during which time they are constantly mentored and trained with the view to eventually becoming head teacher. The programme has been endorsed by several key stakeholders in the education system, including the London Commissioner for Schools, the ASCL, and several highly successful head teachers.

Policy Recommendations

We applaud the aims of the Future Leaders programme and believe that it should evolve into being a high priority scheme with the support and ‘kudos’ to become a truly national resource. Although it is in its infancy, the scheme’s mix of theory and practice is an exciting framework in which to help foster excellent leadership.

We need to give more potential outstanding leaders access to the expertise and skills of successful school leaders and we are concerned that too much of this experience is leaking from the system and there is not enough structured sharing of best practice. We also need to encourage the development of additional skills within our current leaders.

We therefore propose a new qualification with the status of a MA which is designed specifically to equip our school leaders with the skills and experience to take on the challenge of managing our most difficult schools and which would lead to higher rewards for them. This qualification would contain modules dealing with the key training issues described above and be a crucial part of the professional development in schools in disadvantaged areas which would extend beyond it. It could be delivered in association with the NCSL or a new unit staffed by experienced successful heads of challenging schools and combine practical job shadowing and on the job training with sharing of best practice across the country.

Our polling shows the public is supportive of our approach:

- 72% of people think that ‘teacher training should prioritise leadership skills and managing a class room.’

Conclusion

We know that school leadership is second only to good classroom teaching in influencing pupil learning. Good heads inspire good teachers to join their schools, improve their teaching skills and build their career within a school. We need more good teachers in our disadvantaged schools and our policies will encourage more good leaders to join these schools and support them as they and their teams improve results over the long term.

4.3: Culture of Learning

Many schools have an unsatisfactory ‘culture of learning’ which is caused by poor pupil behaviour and leaves many young people disengaged from education.

This section advocates policies which will help children:

- Acquire the habit and skills of learning at a young age.
- Remove obstacles and negative influences as they extend their skills.
- Sustain development and minimise disruption at key transition points.

Our three key objectives are:

- Universal Literacy and Numeracy - basic literacy and numeracy are keys to progress in education and life
- Improved pupil behaviour - without good discipline teachers cannot teach and children cannot learn.
- An engaging curriculum which increases love of learning for all students and gives every pupil the opportunity to succeed.

4.3.1 Literacy and Numeracy

To access learning children need to be literate and numerate. These are the fundamental building blocks of education and without them children will have problems throughout their lives:

As the Gilbert Review¹³³ puts it:

‘... Functional literacy and numeracy are vital; it has become impossible to succeed without them. If pupils’ oral and literacy skills are not secure when they leave primary school, they will find it very difficult to access the secondary curriculum.’

“The number of pupils unable to meet basic standards is a scandal”

Tony Blair¹³²

There has been no significant improvement in the last seven years in reducing the number of pupils who cannot read and write when they leave primary schools.

The proportion of children reaching Basic Literacy levels at age 11 (Level 4 at Key Stage 2 in Reading) has not significantly improved since 2000¹³⁴ and over 40,000 young people leave

132 Tony Blair, quoted in the Telegraph on the 8th July 2004

133 The Gilbert Review, A Vision for teaching and learning in 2020

134 www.dfes.gov.uk, Number of Pupils achieving Level 4 at Key Stage 2 in reading

school every year either illiterate or innumerate.¹³⁵ One young man told a SJPG hearing:

*'I am at present unemployed. Due to my poor education (no GCSEs) I am struggling to get back on the job ladder... always struggling with money.'*¹³⁶

This situation has serious consequences:

- Almost 50% of young people in custody have low literacy levels.¹³⁷
- 35% of adults have low or no qualifications - over double the levels of the US, Canada, Sweden and Germany.¹³⁸
- Skills are a key driver of fairness and we have one of the highest child poverty rates in Europe.¹³⁹

We have the opportunity to create a new generation of learners who are not held back by the chains of illiteracy and innumeracy. Not only do these problems impair children's ability to learn other subjects but they are also behind the frustration and lack of confidence which is manifested in poor pupil behaviour particularly at secondary school.

Improving literacy and numeracy in primary schools will give disadvantaged young people the opportunity to benefit from a broader and more varied secondary curriculum and enhance their chances of accessing further and higher education and finding a good job.

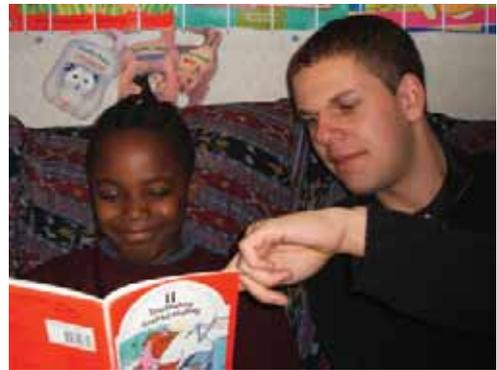
As Mike Royal, Director of the Lighthouse Group states:

'Acquiring literacy and numeracy skills can transform the lives of young people and give them the tools they need to succeed.'

The Importance of Parental Involvement in Improving Literacy and Numeracy

Section 4.1 of this report demonstrated the importance of parental involvement in education and recommended ways to encourage it further. Research has shown that by the age of four, children from disadvantaged families will have heard 32 million fewer words¹⁴⁰ than children from professional families.

However, evidence from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment shows that although social background is a powerful factor influencing performance, poor performance does not have to follow: 15-year-old



Springboard for Children

135 Hansard, Answer to Written Question from John Hayes, 22nd May 2006

136 SJPG witness

137 Ellie Roy, Chairman of Youth Justice Board, quoted in the Guardian, August 18th 2004

138 Leitch Review of Skills 2006

139 Leitch Review of Skills 2006

140 NCFE. Family literacy, Family progress, <http://www.familit.org>

pupils whose parents have the lowest occupational status, but who read regularly and feel positive about it, are better readers than students from wealthier families with weaker reading commitment.¹⁴¹

Policy Proposals

1. Family Literacy Classes

One of the key obstacles to parental involvement in education is low parental literacy levels. A family- based approach recognises that better parental literacy will have a positive impact on children’s literacy.



School Home Support Service

We therefore recommend much greater use of family literacy classes both at pre-school level and in primary schools. This means working with parents and children together to develop literacy which enables parents ultimately to support their children’s learning across a range of subject areas. A recent survey of Family Literacy programmes in the UK concluded that:

‘There is evidence that family literacy programmes lead to improved literacy for children, support parents in their parenting role, encourage them to improve their own literacy skills and go on to further training or employment...’¹⁴²

In the USA where family literacy programmes are much more widely used, studies¹⁴³ have shown that these programmes have significant impact and are good value for money.

Funding

The Family Working Group has recommended new Family Services Hubs in local communities. These involve a significant enhancement of current, community-based service provision as well as a greater degree of integration of services to maximize efficiency and coordination of professionals in the interests of the nation’s families.

We believe that family literacy classes can be delivered effectively within these centres, paid for through existing budgets.¹⁴⁴

2. Specialist Literacy and Numeracy Groups

We believe that additional ‘booster’ support should be available for children falling seriously behind in English and Maths in Primary Schools. We recom-

141 OECD, 2002
 142 *Family literacy in England: theory, practice, research and policy*, by Peter Hannon and Viv Bird, appears in B.H. Wasik (ed.) 2004 Handbook of Family Literacy
 143 R. G. Lynch; *Early Childhood Education and Early Adulthood Education*. In a report for the Economic Policy Institute of Washington, DC, 2004
 144 For a full explanation of cost and details relating to Family Service Hubs, please see Volume 2 (Family Breakdown), Section 4.1.1

mend that these are provided by specialised literacy and numeracy teams who identify and work with small groups of pupils.

Such programmes have a track record of improving literacy and numeracy levels for the most under-achieving pupils. For example, the 'Reading Recovery' scheme which is used by some UK schools and involves 'one on one' daily lessons for up to 20 weeks has demonstrated an improvement rate of 80% over 21 months or four times the normal age rate.¹⁴⁵

This approach will help ensure that all children are able to leave primary school literate and numerate, building on the success of the policies we have proposed at pre- school level.

In the words of Ofsted¹⁴⁶:

'... schools place too much emphasis on Years 5 and 6 at the expense of early intervention to help struggling pupils... Intervention programmes, especially 'booster' classes taught by teachers, help to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem.'

Research in the UK and abroad has revealed the following critical success factors present in effective literacy and numeracy schemes:

Mentoring

Our research has revealed that providing one on one mentoring or coaching¹⁴⁷ has a positive impact on motivation and behaviour by building confidence in students. Mentors can act as strong advocates for young people and address their pastoral and learning needs

The importance of family-based work and support

The Every Parent Matters section of our report (Section 4.1) shows that there is a considerable body of evidence that parental engagement and assistance with learning improves attainment. This is particularly the case with building the foundations of literacy.

“ Intensive literacy training is crucial for the most disadvantaged pupils, allowing pupils to unlock the curriculum. ”

Andrea Berkeley, former head teacher and head teacher trainer

145 Reading Recovery Annual Report 2005

146 Primary National Strategy: an evaluation of its impact in primary schools and Secondary National Strategy: an evaluation of the fifth year, are available from www.ofsted.gov.uk

147 J Hurry 2000 Institute of Education

Early intervention targeting literacy

Research shows the positive effects of putting in place systems which discover quickly which children are the weakest at reading,¹⁴⁸ targeting them with additional support and with regular assessments of their progress to get under-achieving pupils reading by the time that they leave primary school.

Smaller specialist groups for under achieving pupils

Our work¹⁴⁹ shows that once problems have been identified and progress can be monitored frequently, under achieving pupils can often benefit for a time from being involved with smaller specialist classes which focus on literacy or numeracy and give more individual support.

Expert tuition using the skills of the whole community

These specialist groups work well when they are coordinated by specialised teachers in primary schools using the skills of teaching assistants and volunteers, to support their work. Our proposals envisage a much more significant role for voluntary groups in tackling illiteracy and innumeracy and Volume six of our report describes how the third sector can be stimulated by lower regulation and more flexible funding.

The following case study demonstrates the success and innovation of third sector literacy programmes:

Case study: Springboard for Children

This is a charity based in Peckham which works to improve literacy in disadvantaged areas through individual learning.

- Children graduate from Springboard literacy programmes with:
 - Similar literacy levels to their peers and
 - Increased confidence, raised expectations and enthusiasm for learning
- Over 60% of children in Years 1-3 who were making little progress in their classroom made more than 12 months improvement in one year.
- 96% return to mainstream lessons with a reading age appropriate for their year group.
- *'We always make the programme fit the child rather than the child fit the programme.'* Janet Bristow, Hub Manager

Funding

One option for funding these specialised interventions and literacy units would be to draw from the existing personalised learning budget.

148 Hurry, J. Intervention strategies to support pupils with difficulties in literacy during key stage 1. 2000

149 See Springboard for Children Case Study below

We have estimated the cost of a Reading Recovery Programme for primary school children to be £740 per pupil¹⁵⁰ for one year. If specialised reading support is targeted at the 6% of pupils who are seriously below the expected literacy standard, the total cost will be £185 million per year. (251,257.80 children at £740 per child).

There is, within existing budgetary provision, £220 million earmarked for 'personalisation' in 2006-7 and £345 million in 2007-8 which could help fund these services.

4.3.2 Improved Pupil Behaviour

Our most challenging schools suffer from poor pupil behaviour, and the connection between truancy and educational failure is well-known. Yet the £1 billion¹⁵¹ spent on tackling poor attendance and behaviour in schools has yielded an unsatisfactory return:

- 12% of GCSE pupils are regular truants.
- 61% of all truancy involves persistent truants.
- Fixed period exclusions have increased by 13% since 2003/4.
- One third of teachers leave the profession due to disruptive pupils.¹⁵²

As these statistics and our Breakdown Britain report demonstrated,¹⁵³ there are significant groups of pupils who are frequently absent without permission from school and who cause problems for other pupils and teachers when they do attend class.

Our dialogue with groups of pupils, parents, teachers and the third sector has uncovered a common view of the causes of bad behaviour:

- Poorly behaved children are more likely to come from disadvantaged families.¹⁵⁴
- They are more likely to have unresolved emotional and behavioural needs.
- They have problems with literacy and numeracy.¹⁵⁵
- They suffer disruption in the transition between primary and secondary school.
- They are bored with academic work and lack confidence and enthusiasm.

150 Costings are taken from schemes including a Specialised Literacy Unit from Springboard for Children. Each child has a 30-45 minute session twice a week for as long as the child needs, sometimes for several weeks or months.

151 www.dfes.gov.uk

152 The GTC survey 2003

153 Breakdown Britain, volume 5, *Educational Failure*

154 NFER for NAO 2004 - I Schagen et al

155 Miles and Stipek, *Social Behaviour and Literacy Achievement*, 2006

Poor pupil behaviour makes learning more difficult for everyone and once a critical mass of disruption develops all students can suffer. As one inner city teacher said:

*'Disruptive pupils can single-handedly ruin lessons, even whole subjects, for their fellow students. Particularly during the early years of secondary school it becomes almost fashionable to argue with the teacher, purposefully refuse to follow instructions and disrupt lessons as much as possible. Once they see that they can get away with this sort of behaviour the problem escalates and becomes far harder to overcome.'*¹⁵⁶

The powers of teachers

The Government has recently introduced reforms which give teachers the right to break up fights in school, as well as to issue after-school or weekend detentions without parents' consent. These reforms have rightly won widespread backing from the teaching unions.

Our policies encouraging parental Responsibility, Involvement, Support and Empowerment will contribute to the creation of more favourable behaviour when children enter the classroom.

The following proposals aim to further help teachers in schools by improving the options available for those children at risk of exclusion and successfully reintegrating those who have been excluded.



The Lighthouse Group

Policy Proposal: Improving the options available for those children at risk of exclusion

We recognise that to meet the individual needs of a minority of badly behaved pupils and protect the education of the majority, disruptive pupils may need to be taught separately for a period. However, we consider that the current system does not do enough to keep those young people at risk of exclusion in education by providing them with alternative programmes within their existing schools.

Our polling shows that the public agrees with this approach:

- 71% of the public think that schools 'should consider alternative approaches to dealing with pupils at risk of exclusion.'¹⁵⁷

A. Greater use of Iceberg programmes in schools

These programmes are an alternative in-school provision for children who are at risk of exclusion. They are on-site programmes, which are either full-time or part-time, providing a different but integrated and relevant timetable with separate breaks and start and end times to the school day. Work is undertaken

156 Witness at SJPG Hearing

157 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, April- May 2007

from the existing curriculum but has a strong emphasis on discipline and improving literacy and numeracy with much more individual support.

The key benefits of Iceberg programmes are:

- They require a proportion of the school budget but are less costly to the community than Pupil Referral Units or permanent exclusion.
- They separate disruptive pupils from peers for a time but do not isolate them.
- They build continuity with the curriculum and school and are less disruptive than alternatives.
- They are not perceived as a soft option or 'time out' from learning.

The common success factors for Iceberg programmes we have reviewed include:

- Mentors building relationships with children and addressing their learning needs.
- Parents engaging with the school to help their children.
- Emotional and behavioural support as well as academic help.

The following case study shows the positive impact of Iceberg programmes:

Case study: Witherwood Community School's Iceberg Programme

The principles of the Iceberg Programme have been successfully applied within Witherwood Community School by head teacher Bob Thornton. The school is located in one Bristol's most deprived areas and is presently in the transition to becoming a City Academy. Over the last 3 years the school has dramatically improved its GCSE attainment figures, attendance and in class behaviour while also reducing the number of exclusions.

- The number of children achieving 5 GCSE A* - C has increased from 15% in 2001 to 37% in 2006 .
- The number of exclusions at Witherwood in 2006/7 has fallen by 30.3% on the 2005 figures .
- Exclusions from individual lessons have fallen by 60% with re-offending falling by 30% .

Behaviour problems within the classroom are often caused by a minority of pupils, whose behaviour impacts negatively on the educational experiences of all students. The Iceberg Programme addresses the issues affecting these young people and also removes them from the classroom for a fixed period of time.

The programme aims to integrate them back into the classroom and re-engage them with their own learning. In this way it provides an additional safety net for these young people at risk of exclusion, maintaining them on the school roll and within the school context.

While exclusion is often seen by young people as an additional holiday, the Iceberg avoids this perception and allows them to receive more individualised support and attention. This has included the involvement of external and third sector agencies, helping the young person re-engage with the mainstream curriculum and their school life. This has also allowed the teachers to be more able to teach and the rest of the class more able to learn. At the same time it has provided the young person with a better chance to succeed.

We understand that alternative in-school provision may not be appropriate for every disruptive pupil and it may be necessary to offer solutions outside of school.

The next section describes the track record of PRUs and suggests the adoption of a wider variety of third sector provision.

B. Greater use of alternative providers instead of Pupil Referral Units

The Latest OFSTED Annual Report¹⁵⁹ states that Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) were the least successful of all schools in ensuring the good progress of the pupils who attended, yet excluded pupils are often sent to them.

The key facts are as follows:

- The number of PRUs has increased from 309 to 449 in 1997.
- PRUs now cost £228 million per annum.
- The number of SEN pupils in PRUs has risen by 56 % since 1997.
- Only 0.4% of pupils in PRUs get five good GCSEs or equivalents.¹⁶⁰

However, there are a number of third sector organisations working effectively with pupils with either learning or behavioural and emotional difficulties which offer alternatives to PRUs.

The case studies opposite show the positive impact of this approach.

Funding

The current budget for PRUs is £228 million¹⁶¹ and we believe Government should encourage the use of a proportion of these funds to stimulate alternative provision. Although costs vary according to the needs of individual pupils, third sector provision is usually cheaper than that of PRUs.

The following case studies demonstrate the positive impact of alternative approaches by the third sector.

159 OFSTED *Annual Report 2005/06* p.64;

160 NFER, The academic performance of these institutions does not have to be published by local authorities

161 www.dfes.gov

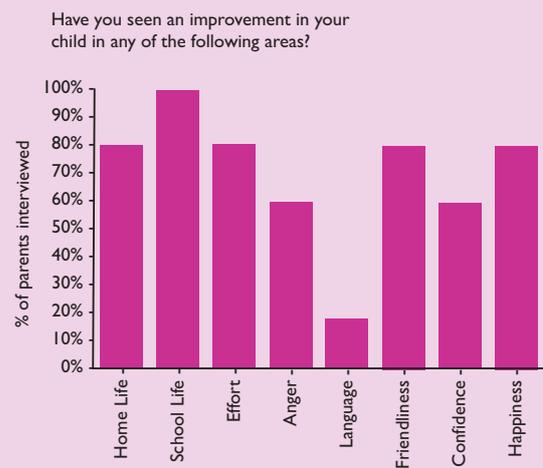
Case study: The Lighthouse Group

'By attending The Lighthouse Group and more often than not, the school part time, the aim is to address the behavioural difficulties the child is experiencing; support the family; engage the young person in attaining a qualification; and see them fully reintegrated back into school, with long term ongoing relational support'. (Mike Royal, National Director)

The Lighthouse Group is a charity that works with young people who have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream education.

- It deals with the underlying issues which drive behavioural difficulties, helping young people to develop new skills and unlock opportunities in mainstream education.
- The emphasis is on ensuring that there is a curriculum which enables all children to succeed and allows them a second chance, no matter what their circumstances. The charity uses ASDAN, which offers qualifications up to a GCSE grade B.

The graph opposite shows the results of a survey of parents with children who have been on Lighthouse Group programmes. As can be seen, the charity's work produced improvement in a wide range of areas from 'effort' to 'friendliness' at home and at school.



Case study: The Living Well Trust

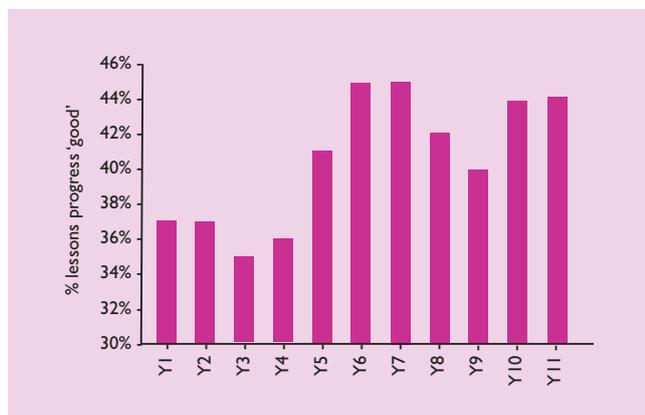
The Living Well Trust is an organisation based in Carlisle that offers ASDAN qualifications, an alternative to GCSEs, to young people at risk of exclusion from school.

- The Trust operates from its base within the local secondary school. 'The Den' is located in a previously unused wing of Morton School with whom the Trust work in partnership in managing their inclusion project.
- The Den targets those pupils that are in danger of becoming excluded from mainstream education or who are vulnerable for a range of reasons.
- The Trust covered the initial capital costs of converting the wing for their use but ongoing staffing costs are met entirely by the school.
- This education project forms part of a holistic set of support to the local community which has received praise from service users, external professionals, and the local police for the way it has helped the estate 'turn a corner'.

'The biggest problem with alternative education is that schools don't understand its long-term value. They expect a complete transformation of their pupils after two months and for them to be back on the GCSE stream without any problems. The life skills we are passing on and the way in which alternative education contributes to social inclusion are greatly undervalued.' Barrie Thomas

C. Managing the Transition and Sustaining Success

Our research has shown that the transition between primary and secondary schools is a key challenge for many disadvantaged pupils who find it hard to cope with the curriculum, expectations and environment of their new schools.¹⁶²



The graph opposite from Ofsted shows the rate in which good progress is made in lessons by year group. It is clear the progress of children dips significantly during the key transition phases in Years 8 and 9, when a child is aged 12 to 14:

As can be seen, there is a fall in progress in Years 8 and 9. Year 8 is a critical year and often marks a period where many students begin to ‘drift away from learning’.¹⁶³

If we improve the family involvement and basic literacy and numeracy skills of disadvantaged pupils but poorly manage this transition

from primary to secondary school then it is likely that there will continue to be poor pupil behavior and too many instances of children falling off the educational ladder at secondary school.

We believe that the recommendations of our work on primary schools could be applied to this crucial stage once they have been tried and tested at earlier ages:

These could include:

- Induction events and parental courses¹⁶⁴
- Home-school support workers¹⁶⁵
- Family-based learning activities¹⁶⁶

We are also concerned to ensure that secondary schools have a good understanding of the backgrounds and needs of disadvantaged pupils joining them. Our research indicates that they are not always supplied with the information they require to do their job properly and to identify those most at risk. We suggest a more proactive approach between schools which tackles problems before they accumulate.

Our next section discusses ways in which we can keep pupils better engaged with the curriculum at secondary school.

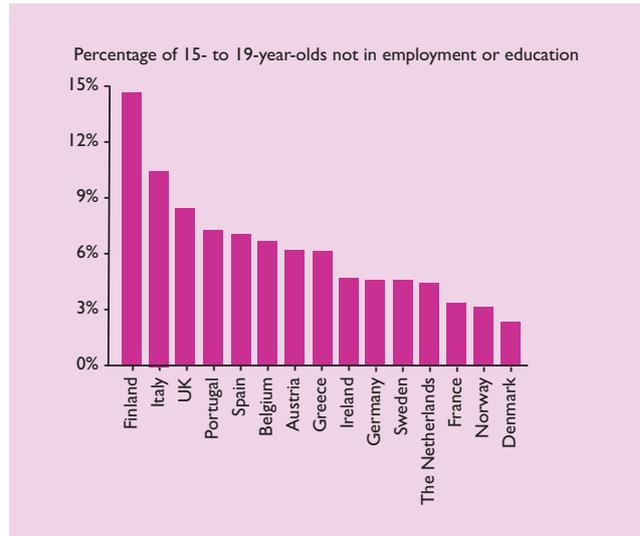
162 NFER 2004
 163 Galton, M, Gray, J and Ruddock, J 2003
 164 see section 4.1.3
 165 see section 4.1.4
 166 see section 4.3. and Volume 2 (Family Breakdown), Section 4.1.1

4.3.3 Pathways to Success

After over 10,000 hours of formal education, too many pupils are leaving school without useful qualifications:

- Over five million people of working age in the UK have no qualification at all.¹⁶⁷
- Only 70% of pupils continue in post-16 education and training, one of the lowest rates in the OECD.¹⁶⁸

The chart opposite shows that a very high proportion of young people are not in employment or education.¹⁶⁹



Shortage of Skills

Our failure to ensure all young people have appropriate skills has resulted in a severe UK skills gap. Employers frequently complain that young adults lack basic skills and statistics show that the UK has more unskilled young adults than other nations:

- Just 28 per cent of young people in the UK are qualified to apprentice, skilled craft and technician level, compared with 51 per cent in France and 65 per cent in Germany.¹⁷⁰
- Two-thirds of the employers believe schools do not equip young people with the practical skills that they need for employment.¹⁷¹
- 80% of businesses think schools should emphasise practical skills as well as literacy and numeracy.¹⁷²

*'Apart from the basic formal skills, employees should also be expected to be able to function in and adapt to a working environment and have the appropriate interpersonal skills needed in today's work environment. Employability skills (e.g. determination, willingness to learn and team-working ability) must be regarded as basic skills as well.'*¹⁷³

Young people leaving school without these skills are more likely to be unemployed and welfare dependent. Our policies seek to keep children on track as

167 Leitch *Review of Skills*, HM Treasury 2005
 168 The Prince's Trust, *The Cost of Exclusion*, April 2007
 169 The Prince's Trust, *The Cost of Exclusion*, April 2007
 170 House of Commons Hansard Debates, 12 Jan 2005
 171 YouGov Survey for The Edge, www.edge.co.uk
 172 YouGov Survey for The Edge, www.edge.co.uk
 173 The Federation of Small Business 2007

they leave primary school and help them find pathways to higher and further education and satisfying employment.

Policy Proposals

The education system should recognise that every young person has different aptitudes, skills and ambitions. No path is intrinsically superior to any other, nor does any route deserve to be resourced better.

We believe there need to be far more vocational options available to young people and our polling shows the public support this view:

- 88% of people agree that there ‘should be more vocational courses for students’.¹⁷⁴
- 79% of people believe that ‘many children who are not academically gifted would be better off doing vocational training’.¹⁷⁵
- Just 17% of people think that ‘Vocational courses... cannot be compared to academic qualifications’.¹⁷⁶

Our approach will help engage less academic pupils and improve staying-on rates at schools. It will also improve their skills and ensure they are prepared for the workplace.

14-19 Curriculum Reform

We recognise that the Government is undertaking a fundamental reform of the 14-19 curriculum. The changes have not yet been fully implemented and so it is not yet possible to assess their efficacy. However, we believe that there are problems with the proposals which mean they could represent a missed opportunity to create a world class secondary education system.

Under the current Government proposals, there will be a dual system in which some pupils will choose at age 14 to pursue one of two paths: they will either choose to study a vocational option, such as a Specialised Diploma, or they will study academic subjects along the GCSE and A-Level route.

We are concerned that:

- The perceived lack of parity between academic and vocational skills will be perpetuated by the reforms.
- Separation will result in insufficient flexibility for pupils to move between pathways.
- The Diplomas may not be practical enough to engage those who could benefit most.
- They are in danger of being ignored by higher education institutions.

174 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, April- May 2007

175 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, April- May 2007

176 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, April- May 2007

- Many schools have not had the training to understand or appreciate the full impact of the reforms.

Moreover, a number of teaching unions have voiced similar concerns:

*'We are deeply disappointed that the Government failed to take the opportunity to look at the whole of 14-19 education, including A levels, rather than introducing piecemeal changes to a system which is creaking on its foundations.'*¹⁷⁷

Instead of the proposed two-tiered system, we would prefer one with greater setting to allow pupils to gradually pursue pathways that are challenging and lead to meaningful qualifications. It is not only the least academic pupils who have narrow pathways within the education system; many academically able pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are not being adequately challenged to fulfil their full potential.

One of the answers to this problem is to increase the use of setting in schools. There needs to be a much more individual approach to learning, one that recognises that children progress faster when they are taught with pupils of a similar ability. This means that they can progress further and faster and realise their full potential.

We believe that in order to improve participation rates for pupils on vocational courses, it is vital that they make informed choices and it would be better if they could be exposed to relevant material and experiences before 14. The current proposals may actually mean that pupils may in future study less vocational subjects from the age of 11 to 14.

We consider that all pupils at age 11 should be encouraged to study vocational courses for the first three years of secondary school. However, it is vital that pupils are able to transfer easily between pathways and are constantly reassessed.

Polling supports our approach:

- 66% of people agree that vocational qualifications are a 'meaningful alternative' to academic subjects and that they 'should be taught from the age of 11'.¹⁷⁸

However, we would also recommend a re-consideration of how vocational and academic education should fit within the secondary curriculum. This should replace the planned review of 'A' and 'AS' Levels in isolation in 2008.



A bricklaying exam in a Dutch school

177 ALT response to 14-19 Curriculum, 2007

178 YouGov Survey for Social Justice Policy Group, April- May 2007

Lessons from Overseas

The Education Working Group has looked at a number of different education models around the world and we believe that our education system is, by comparison, very inflexible and has very few pathways for children to pursue.

In other countries, such as The Netherlands, vocational subjects are embedded in the secondary school curriculum.

Case study: The Dutch Model of Schooling

Key features

- 95.7% of all 17-year-olds in The Netherlands have either completed or are still attending secondary school full time.
- About 39 percent of the working population has studied vocational subjects at school
- 435,000 people choose every year to study at an institute for upper secondary vocational education (MBO).
- Holland has four streams of secondary education for children aged over 12:
 - Pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO)
 - Senior general secondary education (HAVO)
 - Pre-university education (VWO)
 - Practical Learning.

Practical learning is aimed at pupils who are realistically deemed unlikely to obtain a qualification via one of the other learning pathways, even with learning support. Practical training does not lead on to secondary vocational education but prepares pupils for direct entry to the regional labour market.

Basic secondary education is the core curriculum for the lower years of all the different types of secondary school. The emphasis is on applying knowledge, acquiring skills and delivering an integrated curriculum. Teaching is based on attainment targets indicating the knowledge, understanding and skills pupils are expected to acquire.

What is interesting in the Dutch example is that where all four streams are provided in a single school (in accordance with Dutch government policy). Children pursue a mixture of core academic subjects and vocational subjects and then begin to specialise in subjects to prepare them for further or higher education.

The notion of using practical learning methods to teach vocational subjects is not a new one, but one of the advantages of the Dutch model is that it prepares students for the world beyond school. Practical learning methods allow young people to increase their self confidence and improve their literacy and numeracy skills as they learn. For example, teachers use carpentry to teach students mathematics through measurement and the cost of materials.

Moreover, practical learning is used by the Dutch as a means of improving levels of self reliance, communication and innovation which we know business values highly. These are the same characteristics which are emphasised by the United States Charter Schools (described in Section 4.1.5).

4.3.4 Building better links with Business and the Community

We believe that the chances of success for curriculum reform could be further enhanced by building better links between schools and the business community. Schools cannot replicate the workplace so the key to good vocational education is for schools and employers to cooperate to create good work experience models with relevant and forward-looking content.

“Employers 'pick up the pieces and the bill' for the failures in our education system”¹⁷⁹

Companies see the benefits of practical learning for the disadvantaged and want to help. As the CBI in its 'Time Well Spent' 2007 report states:

'Providing a good experience of work is one way schools and employers can work together to inspire them about the future and moving into the world of work. The best work experience embeds skills such as team-working, problem-solving, customer care or communication at a formative stage in a young person's development.'

In other countries, strong emphasis on work experience brings numerous benefits and allows children to see the practical purpose of their vocational studies.

We have previously shown ways in which schools can work better with parents and voluntary groups. The responsibility for developing partnerships with business ultimately lies with school leaders but government can do more to encourage success.

The following case study illustrates the huge potential for businesses and schools working in partnership.

Case study: Playing for success

Bristol Rovers football club has over the last few years developed a study centre whereby local schools are able to refer pupils who are struggling on a part time basis, or to after school clubs. They are able to make the most of their facilities to offer classes on numerous areas of the curriculum, using innovative, practical and engaging methods of teaching. By turning each area of the curriculum into something football-related, the children are better able to engage with learning as they are able to see the relevance of what they are studying. The number of schools they are able to work with is constantly increasing and their facilities are expanding rapidly. In the last academic year, they worked with 105 primary schools as well as an increasing number of secondary schools.

The involvement of business with our schools is inconsistent. The Academy programme has not stimulated wide corporate engagement because of the

¹⁷⁹ CBI research, quoted in the *Daily Telegraph*

financial contribution required and the bureaucracy involved in the process. Moreover, businesses are concerned that they are being asked to put more of their shareholders money and their time into a system already funded by taxation and delivering poor results for them. This is particularly the case with small local businesses which make up the lion's share of UK corporations.¹⁸⁰

In some other countries, the tax system is used to encourage corporate and individual investment in education. It is not the brief of the Education Working Group to recommend specific changes to the United Kingdom's tax regime but we believe that schools could attract more investment and tangible involvement from individuals and businesses if there were a wider range of tax reliefs on their contributions. This could be achieved by making state schools eligible for charitable status or by giving them special position in the tax system to attract relief.

Our research in the USA, which has a much higher level of corporate giving,¹⁸¹ and involvement with schools by businesses, has uncovered a huge variety of local 'zoned' state and district initiatives to incentivise corporations to engage with the education sector.

In the UK local business rates form the largest part of small business's tax bills. The Federation of Small Businesses has shown¹⁸² that as a proportion of their income, small businesses pay three times as much in business rates as large businesses. A further option to increase collaboration between the largest number of schools and businesses in the UK would be to offer a specific tax relief of business rates for those small businesses giving to schools.

In addition to these ideas, the Third Sector Working Group has also outlined a series of measures to stimulate greater private giving¹⁸³ and improved Gift Aid donations to all charities.¹⁸⁴

The following Case Study on Canada¹⁸⁵ shows the diverse range of tax incentives available for educational charities in this country.

180 Over 99 percent of the 4.3m businesses in the UK are small businesses - Federation of Small Business' Budget Submission 2006

181 Breakdown Britain interim report volume 6, chapter 10, paragraphs 9-10

182 FSB 2007 Budget submission

183 See Volume 6 (Third Sector), Section 3.1

184 See Volume 6 (Third Sector), Section 3.1.1

185 See Volume 6 (Third Sector) Section 3.1.3 for more information on Charitable Remainder Trusts

Case study: Education Charitable Giving - A Canadian Contrast

In North America, charitable giving in support of education is considerably advanced. In Canada, this is in part due to the tax efficient and innovative giving structures which are available to the individual and corporate taxpayer. Many similar structures are available in the United States as well, but are not available in the United Kingdom. Examples include:

Charitable Remainder Trusts

A Charitable Remainder Trust enables the tax payer to leave a planned gift and realise tax benefits from that gift while still retaining an income stream.

A significant deferred gift is made to charity through a charitable remainder trust. The ultimate gift of capital is legally promised to the charity upon the taxpayer's death, but the taxpayer receives the income earned by the capital during their lifetime. A tax receipt for the value of the gift is issued immediately which can be applied towards current and future income. This area of giving is particularly innovative as it brings forward the tax relief through the gift of capital but allows the taxpayer, who may rely on the capital to provide ongoing support, to receive a regular income stream

Life Insurance Policies

A Canadian tax payer receives tax relief on premiums paid in respect of life insurance policies where the charity is the named beneficiary. In the UK, tax relief is not available on premiums paid where charities are beneficiaries.

Charitable Gift Annuity

Under a charitable gift annuity, the taxpayer's contribution comprises the purchase of an annuity for the taxpayer with the remainder going to the charity as a gift. The taxpayer receives a regular payment for life which is largely tax free. The taxpayer also reduces their current tax liability as the latter part of the contribution is eligible for tax relief.

Charitable Insured Annuity

Under a charitable insured annuity, a portion of the taxpayer's annuity is used to fund an insurance policy where the charity is the named owner and beneficiary. The taxpayer receives a regular payment for the rest of their life that is largely tax free. The premiums paid on the insurance policy on an ongoing basis are eligible for relief by the taxpayer.

This wide variety of tax reliefs creates an environment in which donations flourish. Canadians give more to charity than UK residents with an average annual charitable donation of c. £578¹⁸⁶ compared to £183¹⁸⁷ in the UK. At present only 9% of all UK charitable donations go to education.¹⁸⁸

186 The 2006 Fraser Institute Generosity Index - Needley Foundation

187 NVCO UK Giving 2006 survey

188 NVCO UK Giving 2006 survey

Section 5

Conclusion: From Breakdown Britain to Breakthrough Britain

Successive governments have failed to tackle the lack of aspiration and achievement which characterises the education of disadvantaged children. We have let them down.

A growing segregation exists today between children in poor schools and children whose parents can opt out of the system or move to a better neighbourhood. Britain has ghettos of educational poverty.

Our prisons are populated with young men who can't read, the ranks of the unemployed are swelled by those who can't complete a job application form and the homeless on our streets are too often 'graduates' from local authority care.

A damaging consequence of this segregation is the decline of social mobility and our record of helping those at the bottom of society to have a better life than their parents is one of the worst in the Western world.

The time has come for a new direction.

The recommendations of this report represent a combination of soft and hard measures which stimulate cultural change within the education system and our society to bring long term benefits to disadvantaged children.

This change will take time and we are concerned that, while a new generation of learners is being raised, we do not ignore the plight of the disadvantaged children in our schools today. We have therefore proposed some more tactical proposals to meet their needs more rapidly.

We want to build a new launch pad for our nation's disadvantaged children and place a premium on their education. Our policies will help develop a more socially just Britain with fewer 'casualties' from educational failure and greater social mobility.

This welfare society will address the educational problems of disadvantaged children in the context of their lives outside school. Our policies will help parents to take more responsibility for their children by supporting their involvement in education and empowering them to meet their children's needs.

Our recommendations aim to tackle problems early by front loading funding and using the motivation and skills of the third sector rooted in the community to create tailor made solutions to educational disadvantage.

This report's proposals will help teachers by developing a national consensus about their role and give them better training, resources and incentives to teach in challenging schools.

Our proposals are designed to give our nation's disadvantaged children the best start to education possible and ensure they do not fall off the ladder of learning. We wish to minimise disruption at key transition points and develop in them a fuller understanding of the world outside school.

The modern Conservative Party can draw upon the inspiration of great reformers such as Shaftesbury, Wilberforce and Butler to meet the challenges of British society today. These issues and the solutions advocated in this report are natural Tory ground. By re-capturing their reforming spirit we can encourage a society in which equality of opportunity and social mobility transfer wealth and happiness across generations.