



# Education Politics

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# **DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE EARLY YEARS... SEND... FAIRNESS... CHILDHOOD...**



Inside: Mike Newman **Stephen Gorard** Pamela Calder **Tony Rea**  
Margaret Morris **Richard Rieser** Ian Duckett

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## About *Education Politics*

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**Editors:** Louise Regan and Tom Unterrainer

**SEA General Secretary:** John Bolt

**Email:**

[secretary@socialisteducationalassociation.org](mailto:secretary@socialisteducationalassociation.org)  
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# Editorial

The ongoing political instability in Westminster poses the question of what Labour will do in government ever more sharply. Across a range of areas Shadow Ministers, policy specialists and experts will be busily working out what the immediate and long-term priorities of a future Labour government will be. Guiding these discussions will be the 2017 election manifesto and the policies debated and decided upon by the 2018 conference. Labour, as a democratic party, will build upon these things by ensuring that the voice of members continues to be heard.

The Socialist Educational Association, as the only affiliated organisation whose sole purpose is the promotion of socialist education policies, has an important role to play in this process.

“You have what you hold”, as the old saying goes, and Labour’s 2018 conference put something very important in our hands. To quote: “Conference agrees that in government, the Labour Party will bring all schools back under local democratic control including academy and Multi Academy Trusts.” This seems like a very clear instruction from Labour party members,

affiliated unions and socialist societies. Local democratic control of all schools is our policy.

The recently announced policy consultation on local accountability for a future National Education Service is an important opportunity to reassert the decision of conference and to ensure that a similar approach applies to all aspects of the NES. Wherever possible, SEA members and supporters should attend consultation meetings, submit evidence and build upon existing policy. [See page 19 for more on the National Policy Forum]

There are very many other important aspects to the NES that must be discussed before we enter government. This issue of *Education Politics* addresses some of the most important of them. Early years education and SEND are central concerns for anyone wishing to pursue social justice through education policy. With the government continuing to insist that testing 4-year-olds is essential and with continuing cuts to school budgets, the NES must – and undoubtedly will – aim to right the multiple wrongs inflicted upon our youngest and vulnerable young people.



**A NATIONAL  
EDUCATION  
SERVICE**

# Conference Policy

**The following motion, committing the Labour Party to bring all schools back under local democratic control, was passed at the 2018 conference.**

Conference notes:

1. The report in the Times Educational Supplement on 10 August that Academy heads in Kent are refusing to accept looked-after children into their schools.
2. That this is symptomatic of the regressive nature of the unaccountable, inefficient academisation programme that is continuing apace across England.
3. That the majority of secondary schools are now academies or are part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) but two thirds of primary schools still remain under Local Authority control.
4. That academisation is incompatible with an egalitarian and democratic education system serving the many, not the few.
5. The Panorama programme on 10th September exposed examples of corruption in the academies programme and the failure of the government to maintain proper control over public money. It notes the above are the consequences of a semi-privatised, market-based education system where schools compete to boost their standing in the league tables, often at the expense of the more vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Conference welcomes Labour's commitment to ensure that all schools will be taken back under local democratic control under a Labour Government; applauds those Labour controlled authorities who have resisted academisation; believes that the Labour Party should adopt a more robust policy of opposition to the continuing academisation of schools, especially our Primary schools.

Conference notes that there are many local campaigns of opposition to the academisation programme involving parents, teachers and local community activists and believes Labour should offer support and encouragement to these activists in resisting academisation in line with our commitment to community organising.

The main task in education for a Labour government will be to recreate a coherent, planned and appropriately funded national public system which is accountable to its various stakeholders and communities.

However, the principles of accountability and collaboration which are central to our NES charter cannot be implemented whilst the current fragmented and semi-privatised school system persists.

Conference agrees that in government, the Labour Party will bring all schools back under local democratic control including academy and Multi Academy Trusts. Therefore proposals to wind up MATs and turn over control and management of schools to local democratically controlled structures should be developed urgently.

Conference agrees that the Labour Party should work with the teaching unions, the SEA, academics and others to take this policy forward as a matter of urgency.

**Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CLP  
Broadland CLP  
Nottingham East CLP  
Socialist Educational Association (SEA)  
Truro and Falmouth CLP**



Angie Mindel, retired head teacher from Nottingham East CLP, moves the motion

# ***The importance of the Burston School Strike and its Legacy***

When the Burston Strike School finally closed its door to pupils in 1939 it marked the end of twenty-five years of parental boycott against the Norfolk education authorities. The school strike may have begun as just a local action in defence of two teachers, but it soon acquired national notoriety and influence (1).

Tom and Annie (Kitty) Higdon had been forced into taking a transfer to the village of Burston in January 1911. Burston was not the first time they had experienced difficulties with school management (their agitational actions had begun some eight years previously when they arrived from London to take over the running of another Norfolk Council School at Wood Dalling), but the eventual actions taken by the children and their parents was to have a resonance that was to last unlike any other school strike or any other strike at all.

## **Burston School Strike**

The Burston School strike began when they were sacked after a dispute with the area's school management committee. The schoolchildren – led by Violet Potter – went on strike in their support. Encouraged by the community, the Higdons set up an alternative school which was initially attended by 66 of their 72 former pupils. Beginning in a marquee on the village green, the school moved to a local carpenter's premises and later to a purpose-built school financed by donations from the labour movement. Burston Strike School

carried on teaching local children until shortly after Tom's death in 1939.

## **Kitty and Tom Higdon and the bigger picture**

The appointment of the Higdons to Wood Dalling School in Norfolk in 1902 coincided with publication of an Education Bill in Parliament which offered education to working class children.

There, like later in Burston, they identified themselves with the local farm labourers and –also as at Burston – ran up against almost immediate resentment from the school managers, who were mostly farmers.

## **History of Burston School Strike**

In 1913, after organising among the local agricultural labourers, Tom Higdon successfully stood for election to the parish council, topping the poll. Although The Rev. Eland (the leader of the opposition against the Higdons and a defeated parish councillor) and the farm owners had lost power on the parish council, they still had control of the school's managing body and were determined to use this power to victimise the Higdons. The strike was sparked when, looking for a pretext for action, the managers accused Kitty of lighting a fire without their permission – to dry the clothes of children who had walked three miles to school in the rain. She was also accused of gross courtesy when reprimanded for this act (2).

## **The Strike, the School and the Strike School**

The Higdons' dismissal finally took effect on 1 April 1914. After the false charges about conduct failed, they were removed from their posts for being discourteous. Of 72 pupils, 66 had gone on strike, marching around the village waving flags. None of them returned to the school and lessons took place on the village green. This alternative school was well equipped, maintained a full timetable and observed registrations with the full support of parents.

By 1917, a National Appeal supported with donations from miners' and railway workers' unions, Trades councils, Independent Labour Party branches and Co-operative Societies led to the opening of the Burston Strike School.

## **The Burston Strike Rally 2018**

As every year the rally was a celebration to commemorate the longest strike in history and to celebrate the people who continue to fight for Trade Union rights, working class education, democracy in the countryside and international solidarity. Addressing the rally on 2 September, John McDonnell spoke of the historic significance of the teachers, pupils, agricultural workers and the wider community as well as the symbolic importance of the school itself and most importantly "the enduring influence" of the strike itself (3).

# Lifelong Learning

Students aged nineteen and above in education and training may be at university, Oxbridge, Russell Group or New Universities. They may be at Further Education Colleges, 6th form colleges, Land based Colleges, Art, Design and Performing Arts Colleges, or Specialist Colleges. They study areas ranging from degrees and higher degrees to special needs access, to non-higher education academic, technical and professional courses. They also study land-based courses and art, design and performing arts. Many adults also study what used to be described as adult education, which extends from English (and Welsh) as an additional language to a range of general interest courses, provided by local authorities, the Workers' Educational Association (with 10,000 students), university continuing education courses and the university of the third age (U3A).

According to the Association

of Colleges, further education colleges enrol 712,000 students aged 16-18. With typical British compromise these students are educated in 179 Further Education Colleges and 61 Sixth Form Colleges, not to mention those educated in school sixth forms (408,066 students often in uneconomically small groups, "Schools, pupils and their characteristics", gov.uk, 23rd Aug 2018). According to the ASCL ("Funding for Post-16 education", Association of School and College Leaders, May 2017) 200 students is the minimum required for financial viability – yet more than 1,200 sixth forms are below 100. The recently instituted equality with FE provision was achieved by cutting school funding (so that 18-year olds are funded 17.5% less than younger age groups).

FE Colleges enrol 1.4 million adult students on a range of courses including 150,000 on Higher Education and 313,000 apprentices (encouraged by

successive governments but hardly comparable to an old-style AEU Green Card. They also cater for a rising number of special needs students, currently 10,642 (supported by local authority finance). Fees are lower than Universities. Yet 56% charge £6-9000 and fees are expected to rise as colleges find that demand is inelastic. Since 2005/6, 1,000,000 places have been lost in Further Education in spite of the fact that 312 institutions provide education in this sector.

Many students in FE study BTECH or equivalent. This enables progression to higher education. Yet inequality persists. 70% of A level students, compared to 50% of BTEC students, achieve a First or Upper Second-class honours degree ("Progression of College Students in England to Higher Education", [www.bis.gov.uk](http://www.bis.gov.uk)).

**Mike Newman  
(SEA Cymru)**

## The lessons of Burston

Their impact on the children of Norfolk and the story of positive action still resonates and the images of teachers taking side with their pupils and fighting for social justice and against the economically powerful are particularly important in the wake of the growing academization of our school system and the attacks on comprehensive. As well as the first new publication on the strike and its legacy for almost 30 years

(The Village Revolt by Shaun Jeffrey), a film, directed by George Moore, titled Burston, is due for release next year and portrays the lives of the Higdons and their struggles. The role of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) was pivotal with political direction and funds forthcoming from Norwich. Higdon was chair of the parish council in Wood Dalling as part of ILP strategy and his role in the agricultural workers union (interestingly not the teachers' union), becoming a

member of its executive by 1913 gave him access to support and resources through the trades council and the railway workers in particular with connections with the wider movement in London with Landsbury and other MPs and The Herald keeping the struggle alive. So Burston is far from the isolated event or fairy tale it is sometimes presented as.

**Ian Duckett, SEA NEC.**

\*\*Notes on Page 19\*\*

# Let's make education

## Report on the Caroline Benn Memorial Lecture 2018

This year's Caroline Benn lecture was delivered by Professor Stephen Gorard from Durham University. His theme was "Let's Make Education Fairer – Disadvantage, School Intakes and Outcomes". The lecture was a masterclass in showing how a rigorous analysis of data can challenge the ill-informed assumptions of many policy makers.

### **'data relating to poverty has been consistently misunderstood'**

A central claim in the lecture was that data relating to poverty has been consistently misunderstood and that this has led policy makers to draw radically wrong conclusions. So, currently, the pupil premium is allocated to pupils who have at some time been eligible for free meals. But in Wokingham children receive free meals on average for 6 months before. In Manchester, it's 3.5 years. Pupil premium allocations and much of the analysis of disadvantage that follows from it miss the essential difference between brief periods of low income and chronic, endemic levels of poverty found in some areas.

This means of course that we are distributing funding in a way that doesn't properly match needs. But it also means that we

are not properly understanding why achievement is different in different places. It is Professor Gorard's contention that once proper account is taken of long term poverty, other factors, such as ethnicity, can be seen to be far less important than we currently think.

This was one example of how looking at data in a different way can lead to radically different conclusions. Another related to summer born children. More summer born children are deemed to have special educational needs than the winter born. Once you put the data together in this way, it becomes very probable that this is not about genuine SEN but simply about the children being that bit younger. And of course this probably impacts also on things like setting and streaming especially in primary schools where the summer born are likely to be seen as lower achievers and placed accordingly.

The core of the lecture was an analysis of what factors actually make a difference to pupils' attainment levels at the end of their schooling. By following huge national cohorts through their whole school career, Professor Gorard demonstrated that:

More than half the difference in attainment at 16 can be predicted at age 5 on the basis of the pupils' backgrounds.

Who you go to school with matters – a mix of pupils educationally and socially

produces better outcomes. Clusters of disadvantaged pupils are damaging.

But the type of school (academy, selective, faith or whatever) makes no difference once you take account of the background of the pupils.

What part of the country you live in also makes almost no difference – similar pupils in schools with a similar mix of pupils do much the same wherever they are in the country. As a sidebar, this led Professor Gorard to tell this London audience that the London Challenge probably made no significant difference.

A very high proportion of Ofsted findings can be predicted by just looking at the kind of pupils who go to different schools.

The policy conclusions from this are of course radical. The constant invention of different kinds of school are a waste of time. Lower attainment in some local authorities or regions is not about the quality of the schools – it's about the social and economic background of the area.

### **'lower attainment ... is not about the quality of the schools'**

So all the "quick fix" schemes designed to address supposed weaknesses in schools in particular areas are not likely to

# fairer

make much difference.

These weren't the only sacred cows that Professor Gorard challenged. Value added analysis (including Progress 8) has been promoted as being fairer to schools because it takes some account of different intakes. But it is a zero sum exercise. Half of all schools must by definition be below average. So we learn nothing about whether overall schools are doing well or badly or what any particular value added figure really means.

**'half of all schools must by definition be below average ... we learn nothing'**

Moreover because it is based on comparing one school with another, it actually encourages schools not to collaborate – if another school improves, then my score may go down even if my pupils' achievement stays the same.

At the end of the lecture, Professor Gorard offered some pointers for more intelligent policy making. They included:

Most pupils should go to comprehensive schools where there is the best possible mix of

pupils. Schools types that lead to increased segregation – ie many academies, faith schools and selective schools – should be phased out. UK and international evidence shows there would be a modest overall gain in achievement from such a model but more importantly significant gains in terms of social mobility, equality of opportunity and social cohesion.

Probably the most important conclusion to be drawn from the lecture as a whole is that much educational analysis and policy making is based on a failure to comprehend and take proper account of hard data. This may be because too many policy makers and commentators are fundamentally innumerate. Or

More funding should go to areas of chronic disadvantage rather than being spread thinly as is the present pupil premium. A much more radical approach to intervention designed to address under-achievement is needed. But this should be accompanied by action to enhance economic opportunities and to relieve long term inequalities across the country.

It would be wrong to claim that this lecture was designed to suggest that efforts to improve the quality of teaching and of the curriculum are not important. But it did argue that our current understanding of how quality varies across the system is deeply

*A recording of the lecture can be found at  
<https://socialisteducationalassociation.org/caroline-benn-memorial-lectures/>*

*Stephen Gorard's ideas can be followed up in his recent publication "Education policy, equity and effectiveness: Evidence of equity and effectiveness"*

## The Socialist Educational Association



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# What should the NES say about the early years?

**Pamela Calder and Tony Rea**

## Introduction

We met one Saturday in November, in an airless hotel room in London. It was a meeting of the Socialist Educational Association where Mary Robertson - Head of Economic Policy in the Office of the Leader of the Opposition - was speaking about Labour's National Education Service.

Pamela spoke first. She welcomed the National Education Service, (NES) an aspiration to provide high quality education from cradle to grave<sup>1</sup> - but wondered what thought and detail had been put behind either theorising or implementing a NES for the birth (or immediately following parental leave) to compulsory school age part of the NES.

Mary had talked about 'early years' policy, but Pamela asked, "what age children was an early years policy meant to cover?" Historically in our English system early years has been the term used in the education sector to apply to children from the age of three. Child care, historically, applied to the sometimes parallel provision for those between three and five, and that provided for babies and toddlers.

The detail is not yet apparent from the Labour front-bench.

So we decided to write this paper in order to stimulate discussion.

Finding the right terminology

in language and discourse

We argue - we need to see childcare as part of education, not separate from it. In other words, we need a more holistic and integrated system.

In the Anglophone world there is no commonly agreed word or term to mean the wider view of education that includes the child's wellbeing in both the present and the future.

For example, in the UK we tend to use pedagogy to mean, something like: the study of and theory surrounding the practices of teaching and learning. Not so in many European contexts. There, pedagogy is more likely to be taken to mean the art of bringing up and nurturing the young generation. In this latter sense, pedagogy might well include parenting and family support services, childcare and early years services as well as the provision of pre-school, infant and junior education.

If we accept the view that words shape and make meaning - as in Foucault's concept of discourse, for example - then the Anglo-Saxon preference for the more limited sense of pedagogy is restraining, as it brings a phantom demarcation between child care and education - which we suggest is now entrenched through the 2006 Act.

Whereas, the latter discourse, the broader, more wide-ranging sense of pedagogy is the more useful as it crosses the demarcation. Child 'rearing' or

children's 'upbringing' as terms that integrate the concepts of care and education. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECEC), is the preferred terminology of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) when comparing the policies of different countries in this area and we have chosen to use it here.

This is particularly important when thinking critically about early years provision in England, where provision has been artificially demarcated into different funding schemes, between different versions and quality of child care and education. Consideration of the current funding for 2 - 4-year-olds illustrates the degree of confusion and inconsistency.

In the late 1990s funding was made available for all 4-year-olds and some 3-year-old children. Labour's 2006 Childcare Act extended this provision, and 15 hours of free childcare and early education was offered for all children aged 3<sup>2</sup>. One problem was that there was no defined specification of 'quality'. (Ofsted grades were used as a proxy). However, once the benefits of this provision for children were realised, the offer was extended, and 15 hours was also offered to the 2-year-old children from poorer families. This was often in families where the parents were not working, with a clear emphasis on education and children's rights. The 2010

coalition government extended the offer of free childcare and education to 30 hours for working families with 3-year-old children (but with an emphasis on child care), and only for workers mothers earning the equivalent of 16hrs per week at the minimum wage. Whilst the children who would most likely benefit the most from more time in nursery, the 3-year-olds from poorer families, are confined to the statutory 15 hours. The system is inequitable.

One problem is that whenever the term 'education' is introduced into debate, some think automatically of a narrow interpretation of schools and schooling. This need not be the case. Sure Start childrens centres piloted some good example of integrated care and education and

it is a credit to Labour – and not least to Angela Rayner, the Shadow Secretary of State for Education- that the renewal of Sure Start is a promise, although it would need elaboration to establish how it could be seamlessly integrated within the education system

### Delivery and funding

Ask anybody what they think is the most important phase in a child's education and the chances are they will say the early years. There is widespread agreement that this is so.

By whatever measure we choose, it is widely recognised that the early years are crucial, and not just in relation to attainment. Why then is this sector so poorly funded and why is it characterised by an almost

entire lack of commonality of provision?

For some of us there were problems from the very beginning of the discussion meetings chaired by Margaret Hodge, that led to the innovative National Childcare Strategy in 1998. The membership of these meetings included representatives of the Independent sector, and in addition no distinction was made between for profit providers and others. Since then the initial aim of increasing free public provision, has been almost forgotten.

The move to private providers was accelerated by the Childcare Act of 2006 which in instituting the welcome Local Authority responsibility for establishing the sufficiency of places, at the same time prevented LAs from



developing any new maintained provision, to meet need, without first going out to tender to see if any independent (for profit) operators would do so instead.

But the biggest changes for the worse came with the election of the coalition government in 2010. This began the reversal of the (admittedly, sometimes flawed) policies of New Labour which had introduced the hope of improvement in the future and many pilot projects had shown what was possible.

Thus, we are now left with over 84% of provision for children three and under three being run by for profit concerns and 60% of provision for children between 3 and 5 being run by for profit operators, (though many small private sector nurseries rely almost exclusively on the

Government 15/30 hours funding and, because the level of this funding is low, are not making profit. Some have recently closed because of this). The way in which the 15/30 hours offers have to be claimed by the parents, rather than directly funding the early years settings, has increased inequalities in a myriad of ways.

One thing is certain, there is now a reliance on outsourced providers and an increasingly fragmented system. This will be a problem for Labour in office, for it will be no less reliant on outsourced provision than the present government is, which will hamper and slow any move towards state provision in this sector.

The early years workforce: qualifications, pay and gender

Because early years/early

childhood has often been seen as an individual choice for parents, particularly mothers, rather than part of society's responsibility to bring up the next generation, through general taxation, it has led to our present predicament. where the early years sector is characterised by a heavily gendered, poorly qualified and badly paid workforce.

For example, the starting salary for a newly qualified primary school teacher educated to degree level is £23,720, whilst the average rate of pay for an experienced early years teacher – also qualified to degree level – is around £15,000. She, and it will in all likelihood be she, will receive only statutory minimum holidays and statutory sick pay. Career progression is minimal.

We see an opportunity for the



NEU possibly in conjunction with other unions in the sector, to embrace other groups of professionals to both change the nature of provision and to 'level up' pay and conditions of the early childhood workforce.

The move towards a graduate profession has worked well both in improving the status of teachers and pay in the profession, educational experiences in schools. The same is now necessary in early years, though we acknowledge this will take time. At present there is a frequently articulated desire for graduate led early years education – though this might be under the auspices of a primary teacher (ie not 0 – 3 trained) in a different building. Labour must aspire to more; to a fully graduate early childhood workforce.

Many countries in Europe already require graduate level education for those working with the youngest children. For example, Sweden and Denmark have had graduates working with children from 0-7 for many years. The differences across Europe have been documented<sup>3</sup>.

There is plenty of opportunity to access appropriate courses in England, but more needs to be done to achieve effective integration of such courses with any requirement for workers to have such a degree, for the supervision of practice to be properly funded, and as mentioned earlier, for qualifications to be linked with appropriate pay and career prospects.

From an equal opportunity perspective, there is an argument for high quality ECEC which is good for children and for those families that need it so that they can resume their careers. Being

good for children means that we need a vision of ECEC, in which every child has access to the same quality of provision, where staff are graduates, where there is continuity of relationships between the staff, parents and the children.

### Conclusion

We have not mentioned curriculum in this short paper. We feel the current early years curriculum, though in many ways uncontentious, if uninspiring in terms of NES' broader ambitions, is under regular threat from the pressure to make children 'school ready' and deserves another article to itself.'

We have argued for:

Amending legislation, if necessary, to allow for a more holistic understanding of education, recognising that it starts at birth and, incorporates aspects of care, health and wellbeing.

Providing publicly funded, integrated education and care: ECEC.

Instituting a right for children to have access to high quality ECEC from the end of parental leave.

A graduate ECEC profession, appropriately rewarded and able to provide a service characterised by an integrated view of care and education.

Adequate funding for all of the above.

This paper is not comprehensive: it is an offer of reflections on an area Labour should think more about.

We think that a NES needs more detail and planning about how it can be implemented from cradle to compulsory school age.

The position we are in with the preponderance of private sector

providers will present the biggest barrier to implementing the change of direction required and needs a further paper to explore options.

Similarly, the present inequalities and inconsistencies in the way the workforce is trained, regulated, paid, and valued, requires attention.

Labour could be in office by the time this paper has been published; if not – it might be soon afterwards. The planning needs to be done now so that Labour can, as soon as in office, introduce the NES this country's children badly need. In the long term – perhaps a second term promise - the nation needs a framework of state built and funded comprehensive nursery provision, non-compulsory, but free at the point of use.

Good ECEC is good for children, good families (for mothers, for fathers, for children), good for those who work in the sector and good for society.

### Notes

1. The term 'from cradle to grave', coined in the context of the Welfare State, has become rather a cliché. We are arguing for high quality integrated provision from the end of maternity leave or shared parental leave available to those parents who want it.

2. Anne West and Philip Noden (2016) Public funding of early years education in England: An historical perspective LSE.

3. Pamela Oberhuemer, International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy 2011, Vol. 5, No.1, 55-63 'The Early Childhood Education Workforce in Europe Between Divergencies and Emergencies'

# Who shall govern the governors?

As a local authority governor of a Welsh Foundation School, I am well aware of the need for governor training. Some governors think that nothing has changed since they were at school. Some believe everything they are told, even if they don't understand a word. Some governors come to life only for certain issues, principally school uniform and/or behaviour. Some believe that they have the right to demand action on parents' views, regardless of sense. Some wish to alert the Governing Body to controversial issues involving staff and/or pupils and act up when not allowed to do so.

**'Governors need to be train in the first instance on the limitations of their powers'**

Governors need to be trained in the first instance on the limitations of their powers. They have corporate responsibility but not individual powers. Their views do not outweigh good employment practices, nor should they. They do not have the right to view lessons, unless invited, and even so, they are there to learn, not to judge. They must learn how to seek information and who to seek it from. They must learn how to question and how to evaluate. They must learn how to set a timescale for questions and how to evaluate time spent as a function of the value of the information.

They must learn how to evaluate expertise and diversity in the senior leadership team. They must learn how to raise issues of concern to parents, and how to cope with long agendas and overripe masses of policy statements. They must learn to distinguish between issues that governors must be involved in and issues in which they may not.

Governors need sources of advice. Direct support should be provided by the Director of Education and his/her link inspectors. They should also be supported by the Human Resources department and the Governor Training Department. There should be a Local Authority trained clerk to alert them when they are in danger of stepping out of line and to give day to day advice. In my view these sources should replace Consortia, Estyn (Welsh HMI) and Private Providers.

Governors should not be expected to provide expertise themselves, as suggested in mistaken Welsh Government guidance in November 2016. Instead they should be trained to recognise when such expertise is necessary, and know how to obtain, evaluate and implement it.

Some specific expertise would be beneficial. This could include understanding of budget, staffing and curriculum issues. It should include safeguarding, inclusion, equal opportunities, additional learning needs and the needs of learners of English as an

additional language. It should also include modern approaches to behaviour management. Governors need sufficient understanding to ask the right questions and evaluate the answers.

In the past, Governors did not need expertise. But Thatcher's Education Reform Act (1988) brought in 'parental choice (for the well off)', 'local management of schools' and the 'National Curriculum'.

**'Governors should not be expected to provide expertise themselves'**

It vastly increased privatisation (especially in England); it set schools in competition rather than cooperation; it undermined Local Education Authorities. It increased the power of Governing Bodies – while taking no action to ensure that governors, untrained, unpaid and undervalued volunteers, could deliver on that power.

**Mike Newman  
(SEA Cymru)**

# The British Betrayal of Childhood

## REVIEW:

*The British Betrayal of Childhood*

by Al Aynsley-Green

Routledge 2019

**T**his book is both a heartfelt cry for compassion in our treatment of children and a blistering

indictment of our political and administrative systems. Professor Aynsley Green is a paediatrician who has served for 40 years as an advocate for children in a number of public offices, including the first Children's Commissioner for England (2005-10), and has worked with Governments and international organisations world wide on issues of children's health and well-being. He was President of the Medical Association in 2015-16.

He argues that there are 11 million children in England but their needs are seen as a lower priority when allocating public funds than those of adults. This and attitudes of public indifference, or even antagonism, to the poor have led to a situation in which outcomes for children in health, social care, education, youth justice and standards of living are poorer and more unequal than in most other developed countries. Each and every child, including those with disabilities or other disadvantages ought be provided with support and encouragement, tailored to

enable them to have a happy childhood and to lead a worthwhile life as adults.

The sections on education mirror those of the SEA in their condemnation of the concentration on testing and the pressures of Ofsted inspections on both teachers and pupils [*Maybe this is about to change?*]. The needs of a third or more of children are ignored because schools are judged only by the proportion of pupils achieving good exam results. The segregation of children into lower sets lowers their self-esteem and undermines the social cohesion that can be achieved in good comprehensive schools.

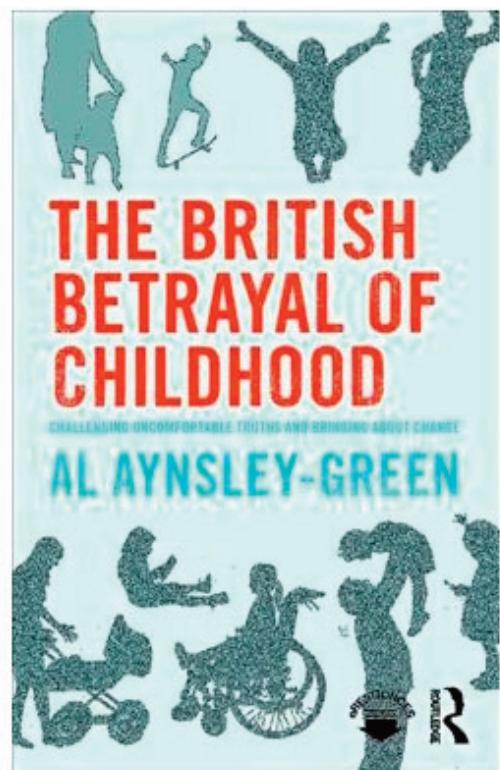
Aynsley-Green is scathing in his views of government. Politicians' whims and constant change have meant that even when good policies are adopted, such as the 2003 programme, "Every Child Matters", they are not followed through. He also blames lack of progress on poor coordination between different departments and even sections in the same department and rivalry between professional groups and organisations.

In his final chapter on bringing about change he urges that there needs to

be an "overall construct" of the outcomes we are trying to achieve for our children and a consistent will to move forward to the time when all our children are healthy, happy, resilient and educated in essential life skills.

His proposals are challenging and his book merits being widely read and discussed.

**Margaret Morris**  
**SEA Vice President**



# **The Crisis in SEND**

## *Special Education and Disability Funding in the English System*

Just before Christmas the Government added £125m to the Higher Needs SEN Budget for this year and next. This was their response to an unprecedented campaign by parents challenging local authority cuts to statutory funding for their children's SEN with successful judicial reviews; Headteachers complaining about their inability to support pupils with SEN and a big campaign from the NEU and other teachers' organisations and charities. But this will not address the structural problems that have been set up by Government cuts of school budgets in general and Government policies which increasingly reduced the possibility of schools successfully including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs (SEND). This has led to a big increase in the proportion of students in special schools, increased exclusions, off rolling and more parents being forced to home educate. What is needed is a completely different approach and only Labour have this.

"Almost every report that comes out of charities, researchers, Ofsted and the DfE's own commissioned research - many of which we have covered on SNJ - reports the same picture: , not enough SEND in , too many , too many for disabled children, heading to Tribunal, not enough in schools, too high criteria for access to insufficient , too, too many children in crisis".  
Special Needs Jungle 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

A cut of 8% in real terms

between 2015 and 2020 was predicted<sup>1</sup>. Now we have verification from Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) that total school spending in England has risen by around 1% in real terms between 2009–10 and 2017–18, but pupil numbers have risen by around 10% translating into cuts in spending per pupil in England (8%). The IFS go on to say "if you just look at money that goes directly to schools for pupils up to age 16 then school spending per pupil was protected in real terms under the coalition government and then cut by about 4% in real terms between 2015 and 2017. Our bigger estimated cut of 8% between 2009–10 and 2017–18 includes the additional effects of much larger cuts to school sixth form spending per pupil (25%) and local authority spending (55%). Local authority services include spending on home-to-school transport, additional support for pupils with special educational needs, central administration".<sup>2</sup> This cut has been increased by the Government's refusal to pay for the full 3.5% pay award, recommended by the Pay Review Board. Schools will have to find at least 1%. As pay is a very substantial part of school budgets, this effectively takes the reduction up to 9%.

A National Association of Head Teachers NAHT survey of 600 primary head teachers showed 94% found it harder to resource SEND than 2 years ago and only 2% said top up funding was sufficient to meet Education

Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).<sup>3</sup>

Showing their anger at cuts in real spend of schools, over 2000 headteachers demonstrated in Whitehall on 28<sup>th</sup> September. High among their concerns was their increasing inability to put in place the provision required by children with SEND.

One head teacher from Suffolk told how she had been bitten by a pupil this week."It wasn't his fault. It was because of a situation outside of school, and his emotional support had been cut two weeks earlier because of the cuts."She could not give her name in case the pupil was identified, but she added: "We have children who are distressed and angry and we can't help them."Another Suffolk head teacher, Kelly Head from Springfield Infants School, said: "It's head teachers here protesting because there's no one left. We are using people left, right and centre to cover all sorts of jobs in schools."

Stockport head teacher, Jim Nicholson, said he was fed up with hearing this government line."We have seen how our colleagues are having to lay off staff and our vulnerable pupils are not getting support. We'd all rather be back in school teaching. But we've had enough".<sup>4</sup>

Some statistics indicate the scale of the problem. The number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans or Statements has increased by 35% in five years.<sup>5</sup> The number of children and

young people being educated in specialist schools and colleges went up by 24% during the same period.<sup>6</sup> The number of parents taking Local Authority decisions on EHCP to SEND Tribunal has increased from 3,147 to 5,697 registered appeals from 2014/15 to 2017/18 and of those that go to a full appeal 89% are found in favour of parents.<sup>7</sup> In January 2018, 4,152 children deemed to have special needs had not been found a school place (up from 776 in 2010). Latest exclusion data for 2016/17 show 46.7% of all permanent exclusions (6x the rate for non-disabled pupils) and 44.9% of fixed term exclusions (5x the rate for non disabled pupils) are pupils with identified SEN (14.3% of school population).<sup>8</sup>

To understand how this position has been reached it is essential to understand the mechanisms of how schools are funded and how pupils with SEN are funded. Funding for schools is made up of a number of elements. The DFE give a grant to Local Authorities the Direct Schools' Grant (DSG). This is calculated on school census data from the previous year and adjusted. The DSG consists of an early years block (£3,542m.), a central services block (£ 460 m) a schools block broken into primary and secondary (£33,683m) and a higher needs block (£6,114m) for SEND. The figures in brackets are the amount distributed to Local Authorities in 2018/19 (total £43,809m). From these amounts relevant money is then recouped for money paid directly to academies and free schools. The money is then allocated to schools.

However, the Local Authority directly allocate funding to all

providers on a per pupil basis. The schools' budget is made up of amount of money per pupil and some basic money, to this is added a notional £6,000 for additional needs based on various indicators such as mobility, free school meals. This is not ring-fenced and does not have to be spent on pupils with additional needs. However, to get money from Higher Needs Budget the school is expected to have spent £10,000 (£4000 AWP and £6000 additional funding) on a pupil with SEND and show this is not meeting their needs, before the school can draw down additional funding. Local Authorities vary on how they allocate Higher Needs Funding, but for most there has to be a statutory SEN assessment of the pupil before they can access this extra funding for their provision under their Education, Health and Care Plan (until the 2014 Children and Families Act this was a Statement).

There are also extra grants such as Pupil Premium, which is based on numbers eligible for Free School Meals on the roll of the school. Special schools get place funded for a minimum of £10,000 per pupil, usually with additional bands of funding. For schools outside the Local Authority or non maintained or independent schools the LA has to pay the full fee. So though only 6% of students are on Higher Needs provision in this sector it takes 14% of the Higher Needs Budget. Overall over the last four years the switch away from mainstream inclusion has cost an additional estimated £277 million.<sup>9</sup>

The ISOS study for the LGA had returns from 93 English Local Authorities out of 150. They have

gone from a net surplus on Higher Needs in 2015/16 to an accumulated deficit of £314 million in 2018/19. If scaled up this is £470 m. Many LAs have been able to vire from other parts of DSG, but this has been largely stopped by Government, or use reserves and there are no more reserves to draw upon. The ISOS Study identifies a number of factors that will exacerbate the funding gap and project a national deficit on higher needs funding of between £1.2 billion and £1.6 billion by 2021. The £125m this year and £125 million for 2019/20 cash injection from Damien Hinds will only slow this deficit accumulation down. The underlying factors need seriously addressing.

Local Authority Higher Needs Budgets are massively overspent and leading to unlawful reductions in funding for those with statutory Education Health and Care Plans. Parents are challenging this and have already halted reductions in Bristol with a Judicial Review. Surrey and Hackney parents are awaiting the outcome of their Judicial Review. The reduction in school budgets is leading to big reductions in support staff and schools' capacity to include for example, despite secondary pupil numbers rising by 77,090 from 2014 to 2018, the number of teaching assistants (TAs) has been cut by 6,100. Reductions in support staff mean mainstream schools are less likely to effectively include SEND students.

Since the 2014 Act, there has been an increase in students with an EHC Plan and where they are educated is changing. For school age students (4-16) this has gone up from 229,390 in 2013 to

253,680 in 2018, a growth of 10%. The 2014 Act extended the age range for a statement or EHC Plan from 3-19 to 0 to-25 years old. This has led to a much larger growth in numbers on EHCPs from 237,111 in 2014 to 319,819 in 2018.<sup>10</sup> The growth in numbers with EHC Plans has been in primary education 24 %, only 3% in 11 to 15 years, but has gone up 55% in 16 to 19 years and 16% in post 19. No additional funding was added to the Higher Needs budget for the growth in post 16 funding. There has been an increase in the numbers of children with complex needs due to advances in medical science keeping disabled children alive, austerity and poverty leading to greater trauma in early childhood. The pressure on base budgets is making it more difficult for mainstream schools to support children with SEND.

Although many school staff are still committed to inclusion, national education policies have combined to create an environment where mainstream schools are not rewarded or incentivised to be inclusive. The accountability regime and the new national curriculum with more fact based learning and assessments, inspections, floor targets and Progress 8 do not reward schools that maintain a high level of inclusion. There has been a dramatic drop in secondary schools in particular where academies make up the majority. Between 2014 and 2018 the number of students on SEN Support dropped from 17% (566,120) to 12.3% (399,800). At the same time numbers with a statement or ECHP dropped from 1.9% (59,700) to 1.6% (53,025).<sup>11</sup>

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator in mainstream schools is a statutory requirement and they have to be a qualified teacher and undergo additional training within three years of appointment. In many ways they are the 'litmus test' of how well inclusion is going. Therefore the recent NEU/NASEN survey carried out by Bath Spa University is of interest.<sup>12</sup> Of the over 2000 SENCOs taking part (summer 2018) 74% said they did not have enough time to ensure those on SEN Support (1,022,535) could access provision. Only 34% thought they would still be in the role in 5 years and the main reason was lack of resources and lack of time to do the job.

Labour are committed when elected to develop an inclusive education system with special educational needs fully funded. But the pressure forcing more and more children out of mainstream must be stopped. To make this happen the high stakes testing, role of OFSTED and narrow curriculum will need to be replaced. Staff will need sufficient training, local authorities must be allowed to build and develop much more resourced provision and central support teams. All schools will need to be brought back under local democratic control. Disability bullying will need to be effectively tackled. The plethora of independent schools siphoning money out of the Local Authority system must be replaced by local provision. Most of all, schools will need to be incentivised and supported to become properly inclusive and this will be much encouraged by creating a collaborative National Education System which is fully

funded and equitable.<sup>13</sup>

Labour Members of Councils need to be coming up with shadow plans about how they will go about developing a fully inclusive education system in their area and what changes will be necessary and what it will cost. We will not be able to do everything at once when Labour form a Government so these plans should outline priorities.

### **Richard Rieser Islington North CLP Disability Officer and World of Inclusion**

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# A Hundred Years of Policy Making

Margaret Morris

## The Labour Party and the SEA

The Labour Party created its first Advisory Committee on Education Policy in 1919, headed by the historian, Christian Socialist and member of the Fabian Society, R.H.Tawney. Two key issues dominated debates about education for the next twenty years: whether all or only a selection of children should be provided with free secondary education and what should be its content.

Despite some state provision for secondary education since the 1902 Education Act, the British system was overwhelmingly class stratified: Endowed Grammar Schools were still mainly fee paying and catered for middle class children with an academic, subject based, curriculum geared to University entry demands; Local Authority Secondary/Grammar Schools followed the same pattern and mainly catered to lower middle class children although some offered free places open to working class children; and there were a number of Central Schools mainly in London and some other cities with a more science and practical syllabus. The vast majority of working class children attended elementary schools with a basic syllabus of the 3 "Rs" and left school at or before 14, although a few elementary school provided "senior" classes after 14.

The Tawney Report of 1922 was very clear on the first issue. It proposed that new schools should be built so that "all normal

children, irrespective of the income, class, or occupation of their parents, may be transferred at the age of eleven+ from the primary or preparatory school to one type or another of secondary school, and remain in the latter till sixteen".

"Secondary Education for All" has been the basis of Labour Party Policy ever since but it was not until the 1944 Education Act that the aim of raising the school leaving age to 16 for all children was accepted as national policy and not until 1972, that it took place. Until then, even the post-war Labour Governments had drawn back from committing the high outlay required. Education never had an Aneurin Bevan to fight for it !

The issue of what should be taught in secondary schools was not so clear cut. In 1917 a School Leaving Certificate and Higher Leaving Certificate had been introduced but only Grammar Schools initially offered them. Apart from this, what was taught was largely left to the initiative of teachers but there were politicians of all parties who wished to regulate the curriculum. Whereas most trade unions were founding members of the Labour Party, the main teachers' trade union, the NUT, and the smaller teacher unions were not affiliated to the Labour Party. They could and did lobby the Labour Party vigorously but were not formally entitled to participate in its discussions, a situation that has continued until the present day. Yet teachers rightly believed their experience and professional expertise was

relevant to the making of curriculum policy. This is the background to the formation in 1926 of the National Association of Labour Teachers (NALT), which soon afterwards became an affiliated Socialist Society of the Labour Party. It was renamed the Socialist Educational Association in 1959, when its membership was widened to include not only teachers but all those within the Labour Party with an interest in the development of education policy.

NALT was not formed in time to be represented on the Tawney led Committee but when formally constituted was concerned about the proposal in the Report that there would continue to be different types of secondary schools. Its members were in favour of all children having a full and rounded secondary education and were concerned that the continuation of different types of secondary school would perpetuate class inequalities. In 1930 they published a pamphlet entitled "Education: A Policy", advocating that all children should attend a "Common School" with access to a full secondary education. Thus began a controversy that has still not been resolved and is relevant to current discussions about a National Education Service.

By 1930, however, the existence of different types of school had become embedded. Only a very small minority of working class children were sitting and passing the 11+ which gave entry to schools preparing pupils to take

School Certificates – the entry to both Universities and professional or executive jobs. The Labour Party reacted by directing its energy into demanding more places in grammar schools instead of supporting NALT's call for opportunity for all children to be taught in a single type of school [the term "Comprehensive" was not used until much later].

Another problem was the influence of the leading psychologists of the period who asserted that intelligence was innate, fixed and could be measured. The Norwood Committee of 1942 recommended a rigid stratification of secondary schools to cater for different "types" of children, reflecting their supposed abilities and aptitudes. Rather than challenging this view head-on, NALT and other reformers began to argue for the creation of Multilateral schools so that there could be free movement between the different types of course as children's abilities became evident.

In the event the 1944 Act was based on a tripartite system of Grammar, Technical and "Secondary Modern" Schools, allegedly of equal standing. Realisation that this was not the case became evident with the publication of "The Nation's Schools", a pamphlet prepared by Civil Servants, containing the statement that the education of the overwhelming majority of children was to be determined "by the fact that their future employment will not demand any measure of technical skill or knowledge." The new Minister, Ellen Wilkinson defended this at

her first Labour Party Conference, which erupted and delegates voted for the deletion of the offending passage. As Max Morris later wrote," No formulation could have been more deliberately calculated by the civil service mandarins, public school alumni to a man, to raise every hackle in the Labour Movement".

Twenty years were to go by before the Labour Party was elected with a mandate to reorganise secondary education on Comprehensive lines. During these years the campaign for comprehensive reorganisation had united left wing unions, academic researchers, psychologists, many Councillors, parents in a new pressure group (CASE) and, of course, NALT. All were concerned about the divisive effect on children of the 11+ and its uneven effects in relation to both class and areas.

Michael Stewart, himself an ex teacher and active member of NALT/SEA was passionately committed to ending selection and became Minister of Education in 1964. However, a Cabinet reshuffle meant that Anthony Crosland took over. He held back from making the change compulsory, which was to prove a major lost opportunity: Acts to end selection for good in 1969 and 1979 were introduced but were not reached before elections which Labour lost.

Another problem was finding the funding needed to create and equip and find teachers for new schools and devising courses which would provide a broad curriculum to suit all children; a legacy of the past was an over emphasis on a grammar school

curriculum and Examinations. Nevertheless, the next twenty years were a period of progress in secondary education, both in the increasing number of Local Authorities adopting Comprehensive schemes and in a creative development of the curriculum including the development of a new examination, the C.S.E., alongside the advisory role of the Schools Council on which teachers were a majority. A single examination suited to all children was discussed.

Despite the continued opposition to comprehensive education from some right-wing academics and from some sections of the Civil Servants in the Education Dept. who secretly briefed Shirley Williams when she was Education Minister against the Schools Council in the notorious (in the eyes of teachers) Yellow Paper. This led to the so called "Great Debate", but the Labour Party stayed loyal in their support of completing comprehensive reorganisation and ending the 11+. The Thatcher Government, however, abolished the Schools Council and passed Education Acts which had the effect of undermining the role of both teachers organisations and that of Local Education Authorities in favour of control by politicians and the "Mandarins" in the Department.

During the long period of Conservative rule, the SEA expanded its membership to nearly 2,000 and developed a close relationship with the Shadow Cabinet Education teams. There were regular meetings at national level and local MPs were involved in

various ways in the many (145 at one point) constituencies where the SEA had a branch. At Labour Party Conferences the SEA delegates helped prepare composite resolutions and invariably moved the main Educational Resolution. One of our current Vice Chairs, Joanna Tait, was SEA Chair from 1984 to 1995 and along with Caroline Benn, our President from 1972 until 2000, was closely involved in these close relationships. The shadow Cabinet member, Ann Taylor, was a member of the SEA when she wrote "Opening Doors to a Learning Society", a statement of Labour Education Policy published in 1994.

The expectation at this point was that one of the first tasks when a Labour Government was elected would be to complete Comprehensive reorganisation and get rid of selection once and for all. Concern that this might

no longer be the view of the Shadow Cabinet after the death of John Smith first emerged at the 1995 Conference but David Blunket assured delegates "Watch my lips, there will be no more selection". The New Labour Government's "Excellence in Cities" programme and extra resources provided major assistance and helped schools, especially in poor areas, but there were no moves to end selection. On the contrary, the Government proposed setting up new Schools as Academies with private sponsors, which was a major departure from previous policy.

The method for consulting the membership was also changed with the National Policy Forum based on geographic representation taking over the preparation of policy proposals before Conference. The specialist Socialist Societies including the

## BURSTON...

### Notes

1. Shaun Jeffrey : The Burston Strike School and Norwich Labour Party: Rural Radicalism in the early 20th Century, lecture 27 September 2018, Norwich
2. In addition, Kitty was accused of beating two Barnardo girls. Despite her pacifist principles, the school managers found there was "good ground for the complaints of the Barnardo foster mother.", quoted in The Burston School Strike by The Burston Strike School Trustees
3. John McDonnell: Speech at the Burston School Strike Rally, 2 September 2018, Burston

### Further reading

*The Village Revolt: the story of the longest strike in history* by Shaun Jeffrey (2018)  
*The Burston School Strike* by The Burston Strike School Trustees (1989)  
*The Burston School Strike* by Bert Edwards (1975)  
*The Burston Rebellion* by T.G Higdon (1916)

## National Policy Forum

The Early Years, Education and Skills Policy Commission looks at issues relating to children's wellbeing, development and care, as well as education training and skills from childhood through adulthood.

It meets regularly to consider evidence and submissions, identify challenges, and develop Labour's policy in these areas. The members of the Policy Commission are drawn from the National Policy Forum, the Shadow Cabinet and the National Executive Committee. Its membership reflects all parts of our movement, including Labour party members, affiliated organisations and elected politicians.

The National Policy Forum 2019 Consultation is now live. You can read and respond to the Early Years, Education and Skills Care Policy Commission's Consultation via:

<https://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/commissions/education>

# 'A banner bright'

## Angela Rayner's Labour Conference speech

The Tories are in retreat on every issue from free schools to free school meals, which were saved by the campaigning of so many in this room and outside it ... we forced them to give up a plan to spend 20 million pounds on taxis to chauffeur a few hundred individual pupils up to thirty miles a day to get to their nearest grammar school. All while cutting transport for disabled children to get to their local school...

Our National Education Service will not only reverse the cuts but tackle the inefficiency of the Tories' school system and take power from corporations and hand it to communities.

We'll start by immediately ending the Tories' academy and free schools programmes. They neither improve standards nor empower staff or parents. Instead, they've been shut out and cut out by Tory ministers in Whitehall...

The Tories talk about devolution. But they want to hand down the blame, not the budget. Councillors are left responsible for school places but without the power to create them.

So we will allow them to build schools, create new places and take back control of admissions from academy trusts.

We'll also tackle the problem of trusts that fail, leaving schools stranded outside the system. Imagine being in an organisation facing a crisis but with no leadership or direction. You'd think Tory ministers would know the feeling.

Yet that's what they've inflicted on an ever increasing number of schools. So we'll allow academies to return to local authority control. We'll end the scandal of individuals and companies profiting from schools they are involved in, stopping fat cat pay for

bosses and restoring fair pay for staff.

And we will use our time in government to bring all publicly funded schools back into the mainstream public sector, with a common rulebook and under local democratic control...

[O]ur Shadow Children's Minister Emma Lewell-Buck will lead plans to stop those with special educational needs and disabilities from falling out of the school system. And we would back it up with a record investment in modernising school buildings to make sure they are accessible to all who could learn in them...

And to achieve that, we must start before school. Nowhere is this Conservative government's failure starker than in the early years, which make the greatest impact on a child's life...

But I know from my own life that sometimes people need a second chance later in life. So we'll provide not just free higher education but free further education...

We'll ... revise assessment and the curriculum. That includes making sure that people know how to use their rights, including joining a trade union, which changed my life...

Our National Education Service. In the words of the anthem we'll sing this week, a banner bright and symbol plain, of human right, and human gain. That is education under a Labour government. A human right, for human gain.

Abridged from the released text