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Parents and Teachers for Excellence (PTE) is a movement to spread good practice to help to ensure educational excellence for every child

Supported by some of the most respected people in education, we believe that schools should use their freedom to ensure every child benefits from effective behaviour practices, a knowledge-rich curriculum, ambitious exams and qualifications, and cultural enrichment. These are characteristics of some of the top performing schools in the country.

Our website is regularly updated with content designed to help parents and teachers promote effective practice in the schools they engage with. Please visit **www.parentsandteachers.org.uk** for more information.

(Please note: The views and opinions expressed in articles throughout this publication are those of the authors alone and are not necessarily shared by PTE.)

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Foreword – Mark Lehain

Director, Parents & Teachers for Excellence

It's fair to say that education has seen a fair bit of reform since 2010.

Universities aside, this has happened without significant additional money going into the system. Indeed, post-16 education has put up with massive cuts, and schools have faced cuts in per pupil spending of around 8% since 2015.

Most institutions have managed these unfunded changes well, and the system is in better shape as a result, but some have really struggled. The incredibly effective union-backed "School Cuts" campaign made this issue politically pertinent. It led to more money being found to keep per pupil funding level in real terms, but with staffing costs rising and increasing expectations on schools, the calls for even more cash have kept coming and grown louder and louder over time.

Ministers – correctly in my view – held the line that things were tight, but overall there was enough money in the system, just maybe not in the right places or spent as effectively as it could be.

And then Theresa May resigned and everything changed.

The Conservative Party leadership election saw candidates attempt to outbid one another in terms of being the most generous towards schools. A figure of £4.6 billion is bandied about as the kind of extra money that will be made available. **We don't know yet how much there will be, but one-way-or-another, the financial taps are about to be turned on.** Whether it will be a trickle or a gush, and for a short burst or ongoing, we don't yet know. Some will say it's not enough, however much it is; most will just be relieved there's more coming.

What's motivated this series of essays is the belief that this additional cash must be spent carefully and effectively.

The massive increase in funding under Labour between 1997 and 2010 achieved much good. But no one sensible can deny that it got out of hand, and a huge part of this ended up wasted on vanity projects, huge leadership teams, gimmicky pedagogy, and other things that made exactly zero impact on pupils and probably fuelled the workload crisis for teachers too.

Government finances are still tight; **if education is to benefit, morally we must be sure that we will achieve greater bang for buck than if it had gone to elderly care, the NHS, or elsewhere**.

With this in mind, as part of PTE's advocacy work, we asked sector experts to share their personal views regarding where the new Education Secretary should prioritise any extra cash. It's not an exhaustive list. **The brief was very open-ended, so their pieces are all very different in length, style, and focus – think of this pamphlet as a Wu Tang Clan album, and you'll get the idea.**

Overall, we hope it contributes to the conversation as to where the education system goes from here, and encourages a more thoughtful consideration as to what we do with the public's money along the way. Enjoy!

Behaviour - Tom Bennett

Independent Behaviour Advisor, Department for Education

Behaviour in classrooms has been avoided by policy makers for decades, preferring that the profession self regulates in this area. Unfortunately, this has led to a lack of coherence in how we train teachers to run classrooms, and a diminishing skill base in the school system to pass on the crucial skills and knowledge of this vital component of teaching. Everything we hope to achieve in education hinges on how well students behave, so it needs to be a top tier priority that government guarantees that good school conduct, and the resources necessary to achieve this, are features of every school wherever possible.

In order to achieve this, policy makers need to:

1. Build on existing innovations. The new Behaviour Hub program, which I have the honour to lead, should be trialled and scaled up nationally, in order to partner schools that exhibit exemplary behaviour (and have the capacity to show others how to do it), with schools in need of support. This will act as a fast and coherent way to spread the best strategies and programs throughout the system.

2. Rebuild how we train teachers and leaders in classroom management. It would shock most people outside the school sector, how little instruction in directing behaviour most teachers get. Just as concerning is that there is currently no statutory requirement that teachers receive training beyond some vague aspirations that it should occur. This has to end immediately. Leaving such a crucial skill set to chance is intolerable and wouldn't be permitted in any other career that aspired to call itself a profession. We cannot rely on fortune to provide new teachers with the right experiences and structured training to improve in this area. To that end, I propose that we revisit the recommendations made in the recent ITT behaviour review and consider ways in which behaviour management training guidelines can be developed and made mandatory as part of teacher training. This should focus heavily on practical aspects of behaviour management, and involve a strong emphasis on craft as well as theory. Training providers who do not provide this in accordance with the envisaged guidelines, would not be permitted to train or certify teachers, and their courses should be deemed unsatisfactory by Ofsted.

3. Renew how leaders are trained. Currently there is no statutory requirement for new school leaders to be conscious of how behaviour is managed at a systematic level, which means that even capable teachers, upon promotion, often proceed in an amateur way in this area. Courses- from middle-leadership to MAT head- should be devised, provided and funded for all schools that require them. These should be evidence informed, DfE approved, and form part of all future leadership qualifications. As part of this training, leaders (and schools) should be required to demonstrate how all of their staff have been trained to administer the whole school behaviour systems they choose to implement. Ofsted should also administer the inspection of this adherence.

4. Reset standards. Often we get so used to misbehaviour that we accept it as inevitable. The DfE should publish guidelines about what acceptable conduct in a classroom or school should look like, and offer clearer guidelines for schools about what acceptable and unacceptable conduct in multiple areas eg smart phones (with a strong emphasis on banning phones except in very extraordinary circumstances, or where an overwhelming case can be made for their adoption) and sanctions and rewards.

5. Recognise that the best schools attempt everything to try to keep students in school, while acknowledging that in order to keep students and staff safe, and preserve their education a minority will need to be excluded as a last resort. To make this work, schools need to be confident that exclusions will be upheld if correct processes have been followed, while accepting that they must demonstrate that they have made credible attempts to avoid reaching this part of the process. More high quality alternative provision must be funded, especially in areas where geographically it is harder to access. Training must be provided to schools to do everything possible within their resources to prevent the need to exclude unless necessary, eg by supporting schools with internal inclusion units where high challenge students can receive support outside of mainstream classes but within the school community

6. Generate an accurate behaviour map of UK schools. Ofsted should conduct regular national surveys of behaviour, including qualitative work. Government should use this data to establish targets for the reduction of disruptive behaviour, and report on success against these targets in response to the Ofsted survey. In its inspection of individual schools, Ofsted should also survey students and teachers on their experiences of low-level disruptive behaviour over the previous academic year, and – regardless of wider judgements made by Ofsted – these figures should be released to parents.

Behaviour is the low-hanging fruit of education in the UK. Where it is good or exemplary, learners and teachers can flourish in unimaginable ways. Where it is poor, it strangles opportunity before it can occur. There are costs attached to its improvement, but this is far outweighed by the cost of not doing so- a cost we have suffered for many, many years now. In the UK we have started to see a serious level of attention paid to the conduct within our schools, and I believe that we stand at the threshold of a world-class system of education if we have the willpower and nerve to carry these reforms to their conclusion.

AP & Exclusions - Cath Murray

Alternative Provision Programme Lead, Centre for Social Justice

If I had fifteen minutes to brief the Education Secretary on alternative provision and school exclusions, it would run like this.

Everyone's clear on what needs to be done.

The DfE's policy programme has already been sketched out. Excellent research reports have been commissioned and published. Teams of civil servants and educationalists have been deployed to local authorities and AP settings all over the country. The resulting Timpson review of school exclusions contained a class set of solid recommendations.

The government immediately accepted all 30. Education commentators were somewhat sceptical of the weak wording of some parts of the government response - specifically on funding and empowering local authorities. But Edward Timpson is holding faith, and recently told the education committee he is acting on the assumption that the government will follow through with the lot.

The Secretary of State would be well advised to do just that. Not only are school exclusions a high-profile issue right now, the recommendations are good, and it's rare that a government report manages to so delicately walk the tightrope between opposing sides of the ideological spectrum. The Timpson review wasn't perfect: two areas in which it fell short were on the tricky question of how to regulate unregistered provision, and for failing to adequately address the issue of race and exclusions, which was one of its main mandates. However, implementing the changes it recommends would be a legacy achievement for any education secretary determined to make their mark.

The review somehow managed to unite APs and mainstream schools behind a common purpose, which is surprising because some of the recommendations are tough for schools.

The DfE's response to Timpson promised a consultation in the autumn on holding schools accountable for the results of excluded pupils, and difficult conversations will be needed to thrash out the detail.

The reason there's such buy-in right now is not only because school leaders and teachers want to do the best for the children in their care, although that's an essential piece of the puzzle. It's also because the profile of exclusions and AP has been raised by a series of research reports, policy papers, Commons inquiries, TV reports and stories in the media. It's because many great minds in education are well-versed in the issues and are discussing them at education events, in meetings, and on social media.

There is not only theoretical buy-in, there's real action - whether through the AP innovation fund or the multitude of similar ventures being funded by philanthropists all over the country. Everywhere I go, schools, local authorities, and charitable foundations are pondering how they can contribute to improving the prospects of children at risk of exclusion. While the AP sector is rightly wary of media reports linking school exclusion to knife crime and county lines, the upshot has been to galvanise the country around a social issue that has too long been ignored.

This means that senior leaders in schools across the country are interrogating themselves over whether they are being sufficiently inclusive of vulnerable children who might need additional support to stay in mainstream.

In many cases, this is no doubt driven by a healthy dose of fear - and there's plenty to be mindful of: from Ofsted's crack-down on off-rolling, to high-profile research such as the Education Policy Institute's drive to name schools who can't justify their high rates of unexplained exits from schools.

So here is where the balance needs to be struck. While the fear can press schools into action, it can also be counter-productive, if

they are not clear on what steps to take. The Department must provide two things: clear guidance on what good practice looks like, and funding for the early intervention they are being asked to do to reduce exclusions.

Nuance is often lost in the media, and the go-to conclusion tends to be to demonise schools for excluding children. While this has performed the vital function of shining a light on poor practice, it isn't always helpful for the majority of school leaders who are genuinely trying to do the right thing, and achieve a balance between meeting the individual needs of struggling children and maintaining a calm, orderly learning environment. Condemnation of high exclusion rates can also have the perverse effect of driving exclusions underground.

So here is where the DfE's interventions will be crucial.

Rather than a crude drive to reduce exclusion rates, the whole system must be set up to encourage decision-making on the basis of what is best for the child - not the school's results or financial health.

Mainstream schools must be resourced to work preventatively with children exhibiting challenging behaviour - including early assessments of needs that affect their ability to learn, such as speech and language difficulties, and social, emotional and mental health needs.

After a child is excluded - and there will be times when this is necessary - the provision needs to be top quality.

Exclusion is a pivotal moment for a child. Less than 2% of children educated in alternative provision get a good pass in English and Maths GCSE. Almost half of the prison population was excluded from school. But through excellent AP, some children are able to turn their life around - as the education select committee heard in their inquiry last year.

Excluded children must have access to specialist assessments and support, as well as high quality instruction and facilities. The best APs are expert in de-escalation techniques, managing behaviour, identifying SEN, re-engaging disengaged children and getting the right balance between unconditional positive regard and high expectations (akin to a "warm-strict" approach to behaviour).

But the quality of AP is patchy across the country: there are cold spots - places where mainstream school heads feel it is ethically problematic to exclude a child, given the available alternatives. These schools need access to the funds to invest in prevention instead. Currently high needs funding becomes available only after a child is excluded.

Changing the funding structure to make more available for preventative work in mainstream is possibly the most widely-discussed recommendation from the Timpson review - and has in fact been proposed by previous governments and never implemented centrally, although a quarter of local authorities operate some kind of devolved funding model. This carrot comes with a stick, however: the requirement that schools should be held accountable for the results of excluded children. The government response to Timpson promised a consultation for the autumn, and how this is handled will be crucial to ensuring buy-in from schools.

Thirty recommendations is a lot - even for the DfE's newly beefed-up division dealing with behaviour, attendance, exclusion, alternative provision and serious violence. So which are the key areas the government should focus on immediately?

The spending review is imminent, and the Secretary of State can make a strong case about the need for more investment in AP. The size of the pupil population - about 50,000 children - means a relatively small investment could make a big difference. Here

are three areas where the money should be channelled.

Spending priorities

1. Invest in the workforce

Timpson was right to say that AP must be an attractive career choice, where staff are well-equipped to provide the best possible academic and pastoral support for the children who need it most. The review recommended creating new teacher training placement opportunities in AP and investment in high-quality inspirational leaders with the capacity to drive improvement across the school network.

As well as investing in recruitment, the DfE needs to encourage creative moves to improve retention, such as high-quality CPD to deal with the specific challenges of AP, part-time and flexible working, on-site childcare, or clinical supervision for teachers.

2. Practice improvement fund

If you read the research reports into exclusions and AP from the last fifteen years, you'll notice that one theme comes up over and over again: partnership working. There is no consensus on what the ideal system looks like - researchers admit that different systems work well in different places - but communication and collaboration between local authorities, APs and schools is consistently linked to good outcomes.

If the Education Secretary wants to achieve lasting change in improving outcomes for children at risk of exclusion, some ambitious cross-agency - and cross-departmental - partnerships are the way to go.

Timpson recommended establishing a practice improvement fund to support effective partnership working between LAs, mainstream, special and AP schools, in order to target support effectively and share best practice.

In education we have a good recent model for this, in the mental health school partnership pilots, where CCGs, local authorities and schools are collaborating to improve provision for young people's mental health. The AP practice improvement fund could take a similar format - where local areas would bid for funds to pilot effective partnership working models. It would make sense for them to work collaboratively with the mental health projects - 64% of all children in AP have an identified social, emotional or mental health need.

To put some real clout behind this, the Secretary of State wouldn't do badly to build a working group at ministerial level - across the Home Office, Education and Health, focused on supporting schools to safeguard children at risk of exclusion and exploitation, drawing on findings from the recent Children in Need review as well as Timpson.

3. Invest in the AP estate

It shouldn't be acceptable that there are areas of the country where the most vulnerable children should have no option but poor-quality AP. In mainstream, free schools have been allowed to set up in areas where parents felt provision wasn't up to scratch. The Education Secretary should take a stand for children in areas where AP is poor, and allow AP free schools to out-compete existing provision on the basis of quality.

But it's not just about building new schools. Even some outstanding APs have to educate children in unsuitable facilities that would never be accepted in the mainstream - makeshift science labs in car-park sheds, classrooms that double up as dining rooms, and barely enough space to kick around a football. There needs to be investment to bring existing facilities up to scratch, with basic minimum standards for classrooms, science labs and outdoor areas - not only to facilitate quality education on a par with their peers, but also to send the message to these

children that they matter as much as every other child.

Finally, it's a scandal that some of our most vulnerable children are being educated in unregulated provision, with pupils sub-contracted out from their main AP provider and scant checks on attendance, curriculum or safeguarding. The new SoS should pledge to stamp out unregulated provision - whether by requiring self-registration, or putting much stricter controls on sub-contracting and ensuring sufficient places in quality, regulated AP.

Just before the reshuffle Damian Hinds announced that education ministers would visit one in four of every state-funded AP settings over the next year, pledging to familiarise himself with the good, the bad and the ugly. That's about two visits a week, shared between them.

While this is over-ambitious, I applaud the intent - as did many others - and a (realistic) programme of ministerial visits would help develop a deeper understanding of an oft-ignored segment of schools.

The Department for Education has a team dedicated to moving on the Timpson recommendations, there's a general awareness that agencies need to collaborate around school exclusions and AP, and there's a will in the sector to really change things to improve outcomes for vulnerable children. Expertise is growing, and there's a healthy mix of optimism and realism. Willing foot soldiers are in place - they're just counting on the new Secretary of State to fight the case for more money from the Treasury to support the initiatives that are already being planned.

Curriculum - John Blake

Ark Curriculum Research & Design Lead & Now Teach's Director of Policy & Strategy

The recent "curricular turn" in English education policy is to be applauded and the Department for Education is an essential player in ensuring the turn continues and is sustained in schools in the most effective way.

The following recommendations are predicated on the need for the Department to identify the most effective levers it can work through, acting in each area in line with its own objectives, whilst recognising and preserving the importance of professional decision-making in schools.

Recommendations

1. Appoint an Independent Advisor on Curriculum to review the frameworks offered on curriculum by the DfE and ensure they continue to be based on the best available evidence, and suggest training and advice which the Department might usefully provide to improve the fidelity of implementation.
2. Introduce a sixth pillar to the EBacc for Arts subjects, and consult on which subjects, and which qualifications in those subjects, ought to be included in this pillar. Reform Progress 8 to ensure it incentivises breadth of curriculum offer across the different areas of English, Mathematics, the Sciences, Humanities, MFL and the Arts.
3. Commission a full-scale review of MFL curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment to achieve a radical overhaul in form, substance and structure of the entitlement to additional language.
4. The Department should continue its commitment to the Early Careers Framework and associated ITT and NPQ and other reviews, with a strong focus on the subject-specific over the generic in such frameworks. Advice to schools on the effective use of In Service Training (INSET) days and other continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for teachers should stress the importance of subject-specific professional development over generic or narrowly-exam focussed training.
5. Substantially expand the investment in the current Curriculum Fund to embed coherent curriculum programmes into the school system, providing money for their creation and ongoing curation by educational organisations, and also incentives for schools to support up-take of the programmes.

What is the "curricular turn"?

The "curricular turn" describes the recent cluster of policy changes and associated shifts in professional discourse which have made the matter of precisely what is taught in schools the fundamental argument of the age. It has manifested in every stage of compulsory education, whether through the requirement to teaching reading through phonics (with accompanying Phonics Screening Check in Year 1 of primary school), via a revised National Curriculum up to 14, through to reforms to qualifications at 16 and 18. What has distinguished this turn from previous attempts to determine the curriculum in English schools, most obviously the first National Curriculum of 1988, has been the reach of the argument. The advent of social media and the birth of a plethora of grassroots teacher-led organisations such as ResearchEd, has embedded the debate far beyond the tight policy circles of Whitehall and Westminster, outside the halls of academia and the teacher training institutions, deep into the teaching profession in the classroom.

The core of this turn has been the conviction that the content of the curriculum is not incidental to education—randomly chosen gobbets of information of use only to transmit generic "21st Century skills" like "critical thinking" or "resilience" which can be swapped out for any others without

consequence. Instead, a "knowledge-rich" education has been identified as essential, an education which fuses the desired outcomes of the two wings of the educational policy debate—a broad and rigorous academic education, avowedly available to all students, regardless of their background or prior attainment.

This commitment to knowledge-rich education rests on three broad, research-informed grounds:

1. Such an education enhances life chances: evidence suggests that the well-documented economic benefits experienced by young people who enter selective education, whether state- or privately-provided, are, at least in part, a function of the curriculum they have received, not (only) pre-existing socio-economic advantages;
2. A common cultural lexicon is a lynchpin of the common civic conversation necessary for a functioning society, especially a liberal democratic one, and all citizens are entitled to be taught how to engage with that conversation;
3. The way in which knowledge is created and curated means that some knowledge provides more powerful tools for understanding the world and, if people wish to, changing it. This knowledge is defined by communities of practice and the rules of those communities, which we call disciplines, and young people begin their induction into these disciplines in our schools through traditional "subjects" of the curriculum.

In addition to this, growing evidence from cognitive science allows us to be more confident about how young people learn, and how best learning ought to be sequenced and structured to ensure that all our children master the curriculum content which has been agreed as necessary, in line with the grounds above.

How can the DfE affect change within this system?

Since the DfE does not run, nor should it wish to run, schools directly, the levers which government has to effect change here are all indirect and relate to establishing the frameworks within which others within the system, closer to the chalk face, can and should act. These are:

- The National Curriculum
- External assessments, including recognised qualifications
- The training and continued professional development of teachers
- The availability of packages of resources for the use of teachers in the classroom

1) The National Curriculum

Since the Education Reform Act of 1988, government has dedicated a great deal of its time to arguments about the frameworks of the National Curriculum. Less attention was paid to developing effective methods of implementation of its desired curriculum, or where such measures were used, ensuring they were based on the highest quality research in this area and that the measures were implemented with fidelity in schools.

The 2014 National Curriculum represents the best example of such planning in the system since 1988 and a full-scale review along the lines of that which led to the 2014 document is unnecessary. However, it would be of use to the Department to nominate an Independent Advisor on Curriculum—analogous to the role of Lead Behaviour Advisor—to keep under review the frameworks offered on curriculum by the DfE and ensure they continue to be based on the best available evidence, and what training and advice might be useful from the Department to improve the fidelity of implementation.

The only area requiring more immediate attention in this regard is Modern Foreign Languages, which is discussed under qualifications below.

2) External assessments, including recognised qualifications

The rigour of GCSEs and A-levels are maintained by qualifications regulator, Ofqual – government ought to continue to demand high standards here, but the most direct lever for effecting what is taught in schools is through the accountability metrics introduced since 2010, the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and Progress 8.

EBacc was designed to embed a broad education by insisting that in addition to English and Maths—which were privileged by previous metrics—Science, Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) and the Humanities (History and Geography) were also significant, and schools ought to be incentivised the make these subjects available to all up to the end of compulsory schooling. Progress 8 was intended as a complimentary metric, measuring schools' contribution to pupils' achievement at GCSE against the average attainment for children of similar prior attainment, shaped by but distinct from EBacc.

These policies have impacted on the qualifications offer to young people, with substantially increased uptake in History, Geography and the Sciences. However, MFL has not increased in popularity, whilst subjects not in the EBacc, including creative subjects such as Music or Design and Technology, have seen declines in uptake. To cement the government's commitment to a genuinely broad education, a sixth pillar to the EBacc ought to be introduced, to be fulfilled by achieving an Arts subject. Which subjects, and which qualifications in those subjects, ought to be included in this pillar should be a matter for further consultation, but the standards should be analogous to those accepted for the other pillars. Progress 8 will also need to be reformed to ensure it also incentivises breadth of curriculum offer across the different areas of English, Mathematics, the Sciences, Humanities, MFL and the Arts.

MFL curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment needs a radical overhaul. As Britain re-orients itself to a global future, the weakness of outcomes in MFL is unacceptable, but the current incentives have been unsuccessful in changing this, and even the availability of an entire continent on native speakers of various European languages was insufficient to provide a teaching workforce capable of ensuring high levels of bilingualism in the UK population. A much fuller review ought to be commissioned of the whole form, substance and structure of the entitlement to additional language learning in English schools.

3) The training and continued professional development of teachers

A system which is genuinely ensuring all young people are receiving a knowledge-rich education will ensure that teachers are expects in:

Their subject

Subject-specific pedagogy

Assessing young people as they learn to ensure they are mastering content and avoiding misconceptions ("formative assessment"), and assessing young people to give them a clear indication of their current level of expertise ("summative assessment")

The DfE recently announced an Early Careers Framework (ECF) and associated funding strongly based on evidence and with a clear commitment to subject-based education as part of it. It has also commissioned work from an Initial Teacher Training Content Advisory Group to align teachers' first year of training with the ECF. Also currently being reviewed is the framework for additional professional qualifications for teachers beyond those is in leadership. The Department should continue this work, with a strong commitment to the subject-specific over the generic in such frameworks. Advice to schools on the effective use of In Service Training (INSET)

days and other continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for teachers should stress the importance of subject-specific professional development over generic or narrowly-exam focussed training.

4) The availability of packages of resources for the use of teachers in the classroom

The final area in which teachers ought to be expert is in the deployment of high-quality, provenly effective resources, designed by curriculum experts. In other, highly successful educational jurisdictions—even those as different from one another as Finland and Singapore—textbooks and other externally-produced materials have a substantial role in the training and practice of teachers, including and sometimes especially, the most effective. Even the United States, which has an even more diffuse educational culture than our own, has a strong textbook market. English education has marked strikingly in the opposite direction. Teachers in England expect the use of textbooks to decline over the next decade from an already low base, and tend to regard with suspicion externally-generated classroom materials (even whilst they download free, low-quality materials from internet sites).

The DfE created a Curriculum Fund to generate coherent curriculum programmes (CCPs). These are packages of resources, professional development and assessments, created by curriculum experts to ensure that pupils were inducted into a subject in a coherent fashion over several years, with the bonus of reducing workload requirements for teachers. An initial fund of £7 million was ear-marked, and several pilots are already in train—including one by the organisation that I work for. However, a far more substantial investment—at least double the original fund—will be required to embed these CCPs into the system more widely, including money for their creation and ongoing curation by educational organisations, but also incentives for schools to support up-take of the programmes, as happened with the original roll-out of high-quality materials and training to support phonics teaching in the first years of Primary schooling.

Using these levers, the DfE can mould the frameworks in which professionals in the education system act, steering them towards the high quality materials and training necessary to ensure all children receive a knowledge-rich education. At the same time, acting through these framework ensures the DfE is working without imposing too directly from Whitehall in a way at odds with the need for schools and teachers to be professional autonomous and to take responsibility for their decisions.

SEND - Anne Heavey

National Director, Whole School SEND

That the SEND system is in crisis is clear. However, blaming the current situation on funding alone is an oversimplification. If we simply throw money at the system (either through school budgets or the High Needs Block) we may miss an opportunity to address policy and system level issues that undermine high quality provision.

The first issue that our system faces is that we don't currently know how money allocated for SEND provision is being spent. This is most acute for the cohort of pupils identified at SEN Support level (the vast majority of pupils identified with SEND are identified at this level and in mainstream schools). There is no accountability for resources are allocated to support these pupils. As a result of this we cannot be confident that evidence-based interventions are being used, or even that pupils are receiving timely and accurate assessments of their need. To rectify this, we should consider introducing an accountability system similar to that used for Pupil Premium. Under such a system schools would be expected to present (in an anonymised form of course) the interventions, cost and impact of provision for pupils on the SEND register. This would bring several benefits:

- a better understanding of how schools respond to the need profiles of their pupils;
- the ability to monitor the effectiveness and impact of different interventions;
- demonstration to parents and other stakeholders that the school has taken to support a pupil before applying for an education, health and care plan (EHCP);
- a mechanism to incentive early intervention and utilisation of evidence informed interventions; and
- demonstrate how the school is investing in teachers to deliver high quality teaching for all pupils.

Our current system doesn't reward schools for being transparent about the provision put in place to support children with SEND, and it can appear that securing an EHCP is the only way to ensure that appropriate provision is put in place. Introducing this level of accountability could help address this.

This new system would also encourage schools to secure timely and accurate assessments of learning need. This is the intention of the graduated approach, but securing early assessment is not currently recognised or incentivised, despite the well-known benefits.

Finally, this level of accountability would also ensure that children are placed on the SEN register because they have a learning need or difference, not simply because they have a diagnosis or label. There is a lot of confusion around the provision that schools are expected to put in place around mental health, and by ensuring that provision is aligned to specific support and provision required to support learning and participation at school this area could be clarified. Of course this does not mean that schools should disregard children with disabilities, conditions or life circumstances that impact on the school experience, but help schools to maintain a boundary around what they should be doing, and when other agencies and specialists should be involved, or when very simple reasonable adjustments need to be made to facilitate access and engagement.

Whilst there is huge demand for more money, we need to be confident that more money will lead to better outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND.

Structures - Mark Lehain

Director, Parents & Teachers for Excellence

You'll often hear the cry "standards, not structures!" People will say that it doesn't matter what kind of school a child attends, or how we organise our institutions – that it's what is done in such places that counts.

In terms of that last bit, they are absolutely right. But to ignore how legal, governance, and other things influence and determine how people can act, and what they can do, to achieve higher standards is incredibly naïve.

Also, if people genuinely didn't think that structural issues mattered, then they wouldn't put so much effort into opposing academisation or shifting Initial Teacher Education into school-settings, arguing about what counts in league tables, or pushing for a National Funding Formula.

Structures ultimately matter because they determine our responsibilities and influence our mindsets, and thus what we do.

Smart ministers and school leaders have always known this

It is why Kenneth Baker introduced Local Management of Schools (LMS), City Technology Colleges (CTCs) and Grant Maintained (GM) schools in the 1988 Education Reform Act. It's also why Tony Blair, when he realised undoing many of these reforms was a mistake, became so keen on City Academies.

And it is, of course, why Michael Gove was so keen to get mass academisation underway so quickly when he came into office in 2010.

However, after that initial surge of energy and enthusiasm under the coalition, the DfE seemed to lose focus and nerve. Political drift, institutional inertia, tighter funding, and, of course, Brexit – these and other things saw big structural reforms delayed, toned-down, or reversed.

Under Damian Hinds there is no doubt that things picked up again, and he managed to achieve quite a bit in his relatively short term. However, against the backdrop of such a distracted government, there was a big limit to what he could realistically achieve.

I only ended up involved in education policy this past decade by pure chance. In that time, I've been a teacher, senior leader, local campaigner, Principal, CEO, and now national campaigner/neoliberal stooge.

The structure of our school system now is so different now what was in place in 2009.

Then all schools were (technically) run by their Local Authority, apart from a couple of hundred sponsored academies. Money flowed from Whitehall to these schools via the council. The amount of money each area got was largely down to historical and political reasons. Also, unbelievably, how much money each individual school got was then largely down to local decisions, with a school in one area potentially getting far more or less than a similar school in the same area.

Having taken their top slice, Local Authorities provided a wide range of support services to schools, basically on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. This covered everything from subject-specialist consultants and school improvement partners, to Educational Welfare Officers, counsellors, and payroll.

Those of us in schools back then will remember well the feelings we had regarding the variable quality of the above – and the sense of frustration when it was not up-to-par and we couldn't do anything about it.

And of course, this entire set-up meant that there was an accountability black hole when things went wrong.

Technically LAs ran schools, but after LMS Heads and governors did the hiring & firing and budget setting. They took credit when things went well, and were largely left to sort things when they didn't. Indeed, councils couldn't really intervene in a school unless Ofsted had found it wanting.

And so in that gap between things being okay and things being a disaster lay an

accountability grey area where Heads blamed LAs for holding them back, and LAs blamed schools, and this could continue forever.

Fast forward to now. More than half of England's state school pupils are in academies, and this is likely to reach at least two-thirds in a few years. Funding now follows pupils much more tightly, and so the bulk of the schools' budget is now in the academies part of the system – with less-and-less each year going through LA education departments, and thus less capacity is found in them full-stop.

Accountability for academy performance is much more rigorous than for maintained schools, and their finances much more transparent too. Yes, there have been some awful scandals in appallingly run academy trusts – but we mustn't forget that these were often legacy issues from LA days, and frequently they only came to light because of the enhanced rules around academy reporting.

Where performance has been wanting, it is clear that the trust is the one held responsible. They've been forced to take action, or the DfE has, through its Regional Schools Commissioners, taken schools off them to hand over to better groups.

Another benefit of academy transparency is that we can now see from research that they are more financially efficient than maintained schools, and generally put more of their money into classrooms – which is the opposite of what the reporting might have you believe.

However, whilst the majority of pupils are now in academies, the proportion of schools that have converted is still well below 40%. There were quite significant financial and other advantages to conversion for individual schools in the early days, but these have vanished. Also, to put money into core school funding, much of the cash that was available to help trusts pick up struggling schools or grow into new regions has been reallocated.

We thus have a mixed-economy, with around 1000 maintained schools a year converting, many of those doing so reluctantly, and a core of schools ideologically opposed to ever doing so regardless of the direction of travel overall.

We also have a small but important number of schools who really need or want to convert, so they can be supported by successful trusts, but who face insurmountable barriers to do so – such as horrific PFI contracts on their buildings, or historical debts, or major questions regarding their financial viability due to location or size.

These are the very schools who would most benefit from the economies of scale and expertise of being in a successful trust, but are unable to access them.

(As an aside, interestingly, the Catholic Church has announced that it will convert ALL of its schools to academy status over the next few years, on the pragmatic grounds that it is better to have one kind of system, not a mixed economy. That the Church is more radical than recent Conservative Secretaries of State is quite remarkable.)

With all of the above in mind, what then could Gavin Williamson do with some extra money and the newly-found political vigour?

To ensure that Boris's Billions are spent to the best effect, I think he should aim to create a fully academised system, so that we are not funding the overheads of two structure, and all pupils and staff benefit from academy advantages.

There are four areas worth reviewing, and where relatively small amounts of cash, or just policy tweaks, will make a big difference:

- lowering barriers to academisation;
- hardening funding formula guidance;
- enhancing organisational transparency;
- completely reviewing the role of the LA.

Lowering barriers to academisation

The Secretary of State should create the "No School Left Behind" fund to explicitly do two things:

- buy out the legacy PFI contracts of schools that need or want to academise.

- enable RSCs to grow successful trusts in their areas, including through taking on SNOWs ("schools that no one wants.")

A Better Funding Formula

Ultimately, if possible, the Secretary of State should legislate for a National Funding Formula (NFF). However, in advance of this, as extra cash comes into the schools' budget, he should harden funding guidance such that it ensures:

- a decent minimum amount of per pupil funding
- the school-level lump sum is sufficient to make more village and small schools viable
- less local variation, to prevent the bad practice we have seen in some LAs w.r.t fining schools for excluding pupils or advantaging favoured schools
- there is an "academisation bonus" strand, which rewards schools who academise for the first few years, to smooth things until the financial and other benefits of academisation to individual schools are realised.

Greater Academy Transparency

Many of our trusts are doing great things, very efficiently, but too many have used the freedoms to feather the nests of their executives – and then blamed Government for their financial woes. Many have also resisted systematically reviewing their organisation to ensure they can run to budget, insisting that it is for Government to fund their whims, not for them to drive efficiencies.

For instance, some of those running the School Cuts campaign run schools with extremely generous staffing levels or courses with unacceptably low take-up. If they can do this on existing funding, then this is absolutely fine – but to claim they have made all the efficiencies they possibly can is disingenuous.

Also, it is vital that all trusts can access the resource management expertise found within the system, so that they can learn and benefit from it. As such, the Secretary of State should:

- insist that every academy trust carry out a review of its organisation using the Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning tool and publish the results with an accompanying narrative to explain the decisions made
- ensure that key performance and efficiency metrics are published on every school's website, including pupil-to-teacher ratios, leadership team costs (total and as % of school budget)
- collect the above information and add it to the existing online databases so the sector and general public can access and learn from existing great practice.

Review the role of Local Authorities

No one can deny that LA services have faced massive cost-pressures since 2010. And yet there has not been any root-and-branch consideration of what their role should be in this new world of academisation.

Some have tried to keep Education and other departments going; others have cut them completely and handed money to schools. The result has been increasing variability in the quality and quantity of provision.

With the ongoing move towards academies, budgets at the centre will only continue to decline, and everyone would benefit from a clearer and more consistent understanding of what councils should be doing, and not doing.

This is even more important as we approach the tipping point where so few pupils are in maintained schools that there simply isn't the topslice-generated cash to fund any council-based services. At this stage, full academisation becomes a vital, pragmatic step – but councils, trusts, parents, and others need to know who is responsible for what before we reach this point.

Therefore, the Secretary of State should:

- initiate a review of what the fully academised system looks like and what the roles of all players in this are
- use the "Hoodinerny model" as a starting point for this review.

FE & HE - Jonathan Simons

Director at Public First

Higher Education and Further Education will become increasingly important in the future UK economy. Despite claims from some that too many children go to university, the data is clear that some high performing economies educate a higher proportion of their young people to tertiary level ; that furthermore the future shape of the UK labour market will require a higher proportion to have tertiary level skills and in particular be comfortable with their use of technology at a high cognitive level ; and that lastly the drag on UK productivity is caused by a long tail of low skills especially in technical roles, as well as poor management within firms .

All of these are long standing policy issues, and it would be easy in principle for any administration in the next couple of years to continue to duck them. The reasons why this is however less easy in the present circumstances to do is twofold: Brexit will drive shorter term and more dramatic changes to the future of both our labour market and economy (potentially in both positive and negative ways); and the Augar review of HE and FE, which is currently sitting awaiting a government response, is currently causing uncertainty in the tertiary sector - for which read, a sense of paralysis. In this context, taking no action doesn't mean business as usual - it means absence of decisions and regression of performance.

To start with the two immediate issues which DfE cannot duck in the forthcoming Spending Review: how it handles student loans in the national finances, and what it does with the Augar recommendations.

On the former, the ONS decision to reclassify how student loans are treated in the national accounts sounds incredibly nerdy, and is. But it has a real world implication in that, absent any change to how HE is financed, it will add between £12bn and £17bn a year to the government expenditure. This level of additional expenditure cannot be borne by DfE in the normal course of events (it is around half the schools budget annually) and so will need to be met by an additional commitment from the Treasury onto the DfE baseline. However, it is unlikely that the Treasury will simply agree this additional spending without wanting to have a broader conversation about the future shape of HE and FE - and that is where Augar comes in.

The Augar review of tertiary education is the latest in a long-ish line of major, independent reviews of higher education - Browne, Robbins et al. It differs from its predecessors in that, correctly, its scope covered the whole of tertiary education - and indeed, it made a series of recommendations that would, broadly, rebalance spending between HE and FE.

The review is currently awaiting a government response. In the normal course of events, one might expect this at the time of a Spending Review, where the government could commit to the financial implications of any changes. This will be difficult at present time: firstly because the Spending Review will only cover one year (which gives insufficient scope to commit to multi-year changes of finance); secondly because any major changes to HE are politically controversial for a government operating with a very small majority and potentially facing an imminent election; and thirdly because some changes - for example reducing tuition fees - require primary legislation which is almost impossible to see happening in the short to medium term (any future election and subsequent change to Parliamentary arithmetic notwithstanding).

All of this means that the well-meaning pleas to see Augar as a whole, and not to cherry pick certain proposals, are likely to fall on deaf ears. In particular, the centrepiece of the report - and dare it be said, the entire reason the review was commissioned - is a recommendation that undergraduate fees be cut from £9,250 a year to a maximum of £7,500. Given the political salience of this issue, this is unlikely to be ignored - despite

the (correct, in our view) previous protestations about the financial and political and educational efficacy of this move by one Jo Johnson, the former and now current Universities Minister and brother of the Prime Minister

Looking at wider further education issues, the main ask from the sector is for a rise in the rate of funding for college students (both at 16-18 level, and post-18). This is a credible campaign given the discrepancies between pre 16 and post 16 funding on the one hand, and funding for HE students post 18 with those who go to FE on the other. Some increase in funding should, indeed, be a DfE priority in the SR. There is much discussion about the future of Apprenticeships, and the way they are funded and the numbers doing them. Slightly more below the radar, but no less important, DfE are currently carrying out two significant reviews of the post 16 qualification architecture - one looking at the broad suite of qualifications they fund for post 16s at Levels 2 and 3, and one looking at the 'missing middle' element of Level 4 and 5 qualifications. Again, it would be a mistake to consider these in isolation. There is a real opportunity here in the SR to start to set a path to a very clear, vertically integrated route of post 16 education both on the academic and more technical side - with an ambition to move towards more parity of funding and parity of quality of institutions, as a more concrete and less sloganising way to head towards the oft quoted 'parity of esteem' goal.

Given the circumstances facing the government in advance of this spending review, and the challenges facing the tertiary sector, what then are some issues which the government might consider? Given space, each of the recommendations below are by necessity brief. And while they are split by ease of navigation between FE and HE, it is important to reiterate that the premise of these, and the overall goal of government, should be to move more towards an integrated system of funding and pathways.

Further Education

- Maintain development of T Levels, but not to the exclusion of other Level 2 and 3 qualifications. The new qualifications have potential to offer significant technical expertise in specific areas when they are launched. But by definition they are un proven, and some of the features of them (their size, meaning young people can only take one T Level and not a range of subjects; the requirements for work experience) mean that they will never be a universal qualification. It would be a mistake for DfE to pre-emptively defund other well-known and popular qualifications among employers and students - including in private schools - such as BTECs, City and Guilds and Cambridge Nationals in an effort to smooth the way for T Levels.
- Continue to develop the pathway of Level 4 and 5 qualifications and wrap them into further development of Institutes of Technology, to make this the clear alternative pathway for tertiary qualifications to universities. This has historically been an area where the UK does poorly with low numbers of students taking these; despite being ostensibly very suitable as a high level technical qualification and in many cases better than a degree. Government should commit to use the recommendations of the review of Level 4 and 5 to make these world leading qualifications, with clear employer buy in, and linked to the further roll out of specialist technical Institutes of Technology - with a long term commitment to have one of these in every Local Authority. Changes to student funding and access to it by those doing such courses, as recommended by Augar - discussed below - would aid this.
- Further develop Degree Apprenticeships - and consider amending the Apprenticeship target and other elements of the system towards supporting the growth of these. Although Apprenticeship starts have fallen - and are well off track for the nominal 3m target - this is in part because of a welcome shift towards fewer, more

expensive, high level Apprenticeships being taken up at Level 4+. In particular, degree apprenticeships are increasing fast, albeit from a very low base. The latter are potentially very exciting as a development and will further add an alternative to the undergraduate degree model. However, there remain a number of issues with them, including the prevalence of such apprenticeships to older workers and often the funding of existing training. Government should change its approach from boosting apprenticeships in general towards boosting higher level apprenticeships, including degree apprenticeships. To do so, the 3m target should be abandoned in favour of a new soft target on the proportion of apprenticeships which are a) taken by young people and b) taken at L4+. The levy should also be reviewed to consider how to weight incentives towards firms and young people taking higher level apprenticeships. Furthermore, the Apprenticeship Minimum Wage - at only £3.90 an hour for all those under 19 - is far too low, and should be increased for those taking on L4+ apprenticeships, such that a weekly minimum wage approaches £300 a week.

Higher Education

- Consider various funding changes to Higher Education, but with an overarching objective not to destabilise the system. The Augar analysis is on the whole strong, even though not every recommendation is necessarily sensible or even follows logically from it. Given the time invested in it, no government should pledge changes that directly cut across such analysis without a very clear explanation of how and why they disagree. Furthermore, such changes as proposed by Augar, even when sensible, need to be bedded in carefully. The temptation will be not to just cherry pick elements of the review but to implement them too quickly. This would be a mistake. Given the short timescale to carry out the SR, and its short lifespan in terms of funding commitments, any changes made - including the ones recommended here - should not be rushed.
- Any cut to student tuition fees for undergraduates should be (almost entirely) made up via additional T grant. In an ideal world, our view is that the current system does not need changing at all for full time first time undergraduates - record numbers are applying to university including from disadvantaged backgrounds and fear of debt does not seem to be putting them off. However, it is likely that political pressure will mean a commitment to some level of cut. In this instance, it is imperative that the per student funding does not drop much below that which it currently operates at - while there is likely to be room for some efficiencies, a total cut of say 1,750 per student per year (if fees go from £9,250 to £7,500) is likely to cause considerable damage to the quality of much undergraduate education including in elite institutions. The Treasury will need to commit to making up a significant proportion of this difference via annual grants to universities. This will not be cheap - UUK estimate full matching of any fee cut as £1.8bn a year (and more in future as the 18-year-old cohort grows). If such funding cannot be identified, then a fee cut should be postponed until it can be funded.
- Move to a system of unified funding via loans for all Level 4 courses - including in FE. A significant proportion of the Augar recommendations deal with how to move to a system of credit based, loan supported, financing for all students undertaking Level 4 qualifications or above, including in FE. This is welcome and should be accepted with the greatest urgency. For all theoretical discussion of parity of esteem, that is a consequence of actions, not an action itself. Funding

parity- to allow learners access to the same low interest finance whether they choose to study undergraduate degrees or technical qualifications - removes the perverse incentive which privileges one route over another. This should be combined with another recommendation which is the call in Augar for a lifetime loan allocation - which should be able to be drawn down in small amounts and the remainder saved - to allow for greater flexibility with buying training over a lifetime, including in FE and technical colleges.

- Address the issues around repayment of loans. There are a small number of things which could be done here and pay political dividends. Augar calls for a restoration of maintenance grants in HE which should be adopted. Alongside this, the nurses' bursary which was scrapped in 2017 and seems to have led to a decline in nursing applications via university, should be restored. The Government has committed to a small scale pilot to evaluate the benefit of student loan repayment for those in teaching, but its scope and design are far too small - a strong commitment should be made to a major public service loan forgiveness programme drawing on the best behavioural science to design and show the financial impact of it for those entering public services. Augar also suggests a commitment to a maximum cap of 1.2 times the total cost of borrowing for all graduates, regardless of the interest rate and the length of time taken to pay off loans - this should be adopted and termed the 'graduate capped contribution pledge'.

- Consider action on supporting the 'brightest and the best' to study at and work at UK universities - particularly in STEM. Regardless of funding, the UK university sector is still one of the strongest in the world. The Prime Minister's senior adviser Dominic Cummings has written extensively in the past about how the UK should prioritise the development of the HE sector, particularly the 'elite end' (as measured here by things like research funding gained, publication citations in major journals, academics winning major international prizes). The Government has made an early pledge, which is very welcome, around a fast track visa route for the 'best' academics in STEM. Other things which could be considered here include a longer term pledge to expand on this and to abolish visas or salary thresholds for a wider range of academic positions and researchers and disciplines within academia. The Government should also consider a National Scholarship Scheme whereby leading doctoral students from the UK or around the world have the fees for their doctorate waived (or repayments addressed, for post-doctoral students) for those who commit to study, and stay and research post study for a period of time, at UK institutions. The UK should also reiterate its target of 2.4% R+D spend by 2027, and pledge to remain within the ambit of pan European science and research programmes even under a difficult EU exit. And building on the commitment to Institutes of Technology, and recognising the benefits of STEM and applied STEM to the future labour market, the government should commit to creating a National STEM University in the Oxford-Cambridge arc, to build upon the UK's own potential Silicon Valley and to help create graduates and technicians who can work in industry there and also develop new spin off companies.

- Consider action on three areas of concern with Higher Education - on unconditional offers, franchising, and grade inflation. Despite the undoubted strength of HE in the UK, there remain some areas of practice which are vulnerable to exploitation by less principled actors now or in the future. It does the sector no good to pretend that there is no risk, nor that all current practice is as robust as it ought to be. Despite government exhortations on

these issues, it seems insufficient to have curbed the risks of poor practice. In the Spending Review, the government ought to be clear that action needs to be taken to explore the state of play, and commit explicitly to acting on recommendations for addressing the following areas:

- Unconditional offers - the number of unconditional offers to 18-year-olds has risen from 3,000 in 2013 to 117,000 in 2018, while "conditional unconditional" offers have risen from zero in 2013 to 66,000 by 2018. The Office for Students is currently reviewing this practice and government should be clear that it will take action - including regulatory action - if poor practice is identified.
- Grade inflation - analysis published by the Office for Students in December 2018 showed that 27% of students obtained a first-class honours degree in 2016/17, up from 16% in 2010/11. Of all university students, 78% now obtain an upper degree (first or 2:1), up from 67% in 2010/11. Analysis of these figures concluded that the scale of this rise cannot be attributed to the rise in pupils' prior attainment or changes in student demographics alone. The previous Secretary of State committed the OfS to taking action where it finds evidence of grade inflation; again, this should be reiterated by his successor and any additional powers or action requested by the OfS should be considered.
- Franchising - franchising is the process by which accredited degree awarding institutions in the UK enter into an arrangement with other institutions - in the UK or abroad - to deliver that university's programme and to receive a degree from that university. Franchising has become increasingly popular including with a significant growth of international campuses of UK institutions, as well as different geographical campuses within the UK, often by run by third parties. Franchising also occurs between universities and other parties, such as those running teacher training programmes at degree or masters level such as Ambition Institute, or FE colleges running 'HE in FE' programmes. Although nothing is wrong with franchising in principle, and it can act both to widen access to HE both within the UK and externally, there are risks if the franchising university does not have a suitable quality assurance process, or where the franchisee gets into financial or regulatory difficulties and has to cease provision or even close altogether. Given the risks of this approach, the government should consider a similar OfS review into the practice and make strong and clear recommendations for protecting students, and ensuring that all franchised degrees awarded in the UK or abroad are of sufficiently high quality.

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