

ITT MFL

on-line support for teacher education in languages

A Recent History of Primary and Secondary Education in England part 1: 1944 to 1985

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adapted and updated by Keith Faulkner

**Working with your trainees:
Native speakers' specific training needs**

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Introduction

The introduction will give you an idea of the aim of the booklet and its content, and, more importantly, how to use it. You will also learn why the booklet focuses specifically on the English education system.

What are the aims of the booklet?

The main aim is to provide you with an outline of the history of primary and secondary education in England since the end of the Second World War. By working through the booklet you will be able to become familiar with the major events which have influenced the development of the education system in England and understand how the main features of the nursery, primary and secondary education systems in England came about. As a teacher new to the English system, some knowledge of the background to the context in which you are going to work should prove valuable.

“If you would understand anything, observe its beginning and its development.”

(Aristotle)

How do I use the booklet?

Learning about the structure and philosophy behind the education system, as well as all the terms and **educational jargon** (specialist language), is quite a task. This booklet is designed to equip you with the necessary knowledge, in your own time, and at your own pace. It is not meant to be used like a textbook where you simply read and take notes; it is written in an interactive style, so that you as a learner have to take an active role.

“Tell me, and I forget. Show me, and I remember. Involve me, and I understand.”

(Chinese proverb)

As you go through each section, you will come across questions or tasks in boxes inviting you to stop and answer the question or do the task before continuing. The aim of these questions or tasks is to encourage you to think about what you have read and to find out more about it by selecting some of the recommended texts in the *Further Reading* lists.

Throughout the booklet you may find educational vocabulary you are not familiar with. Educational vocabulary used in the text for the first time will be in bold with a definition in brackets, e.g. **comprehensive school** (a secondary school which does not usually select pupils for admission on the basis of ability). Abbreviations are also used in the booklet. The first time an educational term or jargon is used it will appear in full, thereafter it will be abbreviated, e.g. Local Authority will become LA. There is a glossary at the end of the booklet which includes educational terminology and abbreviations.

What is the basis of the historical outline?

Much of the English education system has been shaped by significant changes in the law. An Education Act is a law made by Parliament, usually following the publication of an important, commissioned report. Most of the reports were prepared by a Committee of Inquiry appointed by government ministers, or by working parties or groups attached to government ministers. These committees are usually set up specifically to investigate particular educational issues; for example, the education of ‘ethnic minority’ children. The reports are usually best known by the name of the committee’s chairperson, e.g. the report *Language for Life* is better known as the *Bullock Report*. The summary in this booklet for each Act and report is highly selective and only includes points relevant to early years, primary and secondary education. Looking at past Acts and reports provides a picture of the social, historical and political background to current issues and events; they reflect the thinking of the time they appeared. If you wish to study any aspect in great detail, refer to the *Further Reading* list at the end of each section for recommended academic reading.

Why study the English system specifically?

You need to understand some key facts about governmental responsibilities and political history in the corner of Europe you might know as the British Isles, and which you might think of as a single state. This is understandable - but mistaken!

The British Isles is comprised of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. It is a geographical label, not a political one. Although the whole of Ireland was declared part of the United Kingdom by the Act of Union of 1800, the Republic (southern Ireland) has been a separate country since 1921, when independence for southern Ireland as the Irish Free State was agreed in London. Therefore the Republic of Ireland has its own education administration which has its own development history and characteristics.

The United Kingdom is comprised of Northern Ireland and Great Britain. Great Britain is comprised of three countries on the same island mass: England, Scotland and Wales.

The Prime Minister’s website, number10.gov.uk, offers the following information:

“The United Kingdom is made up of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its full name is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Great Britain, however, comprises only England, Scotland and Wales. Great Britain is the largest island of the British Isles. Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic form the second largest island. The Isle of Man and the Channel Islands are not part of the United Kingdom. They are largely self-governing with their own legislative assemblies and systems of law. But the British Government is responsible for their defence and international relations. The term ‘Britain’ is used informally to mean the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.”



What has devolution got to do with it?

The four countries of the United Kingdom present a united front to the rest of the world in maintaining international relations. All four are governed in relation to financial and military matters by laws made in the Houses of Parliament at Westminster. But Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each has its own set of powers, and these powers include control over their own education systems. The history of how this degree of independence was obtained is a long story. Here is a very brief summary:

Scotland effectively took control of its own education system in 1872. An Act transferred responsibility for Scottish education from the churches to elected school boards. The final devolution of selected powers was effected by the *Scotland Act 1998*.

Northern Ireland effectively obtained control of its own education system in 1921 when it became a country in its own right. The *Northern Ireland Act 1998* finally confirmed this independent control.

Responsibility for Welsh education transferred to the Welsh Assembly Government (Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru) by the *Government of Wales Act 1998*. The Education Act of 1944 (England AND Wales) had previously allowed **Local Education Authorities** (LEAs) to consider opening **Welsh-medium** (Welsh-speaking) schools, and from 1947 onwards the number of these schools has increased considerably. So although the Welsh and English systems have officially been united until 1998, the language issue has meant they have looked substantially different in practice.

England is still entirely governed by the United Kingdom Parliament, and therefore different from Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. This has not gone unnoticed by politically aware people, and in 2008 there were calls for independence or England!

So, as this summary outlines how each of the four countries' own education systems has its own identity, institutions, qualifications and terminology, that is why this booklet can only claim to be about the English system.

Whilst the education systems of England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland are separately governed, they DO share common features and principles in their primary and secondary sectors in terms of curriculum, types of qualification and organisation by age group. Names and labels are often different though.

Study the organisation of Languages education in each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and write lists of what each shares in common with, and what is different from, the English system.

You might explore these websites as your starting points:

Scotland, 5-14 Curriculum, Modern Languages

Modern foreign languages in the National Curriculum for Wales

Northern Ireland Curriculum, Modern Languages

Further reading

Deacon, R., & Sandry, A., (2007), *Devolution in the United Kingdom: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*, Edinburgh University Press

Chapter 1

1944 and post-war reform: the dawn of the modern era

The Education Act 1944

This Act of Parliament laid the foundation for education in England today. The recommendations contained in it dominated the development of the education system in those two countries for decades. Its main recommendations were derived from Dr Cyril Burt's idea that intelligence tests could be used to assess a child's mental ability by the age of twelve. Reports by **Hadow (1926)**, **Spens (1938)** and **Norwood (1943)** claimed that it was possible to sort children into groups based on their intelligence, and thus send them to the appropriate kind of school.

The 1944 Act introduced the following significant changes:

- County Councils were to organise education within their areas into primary, secondary and further stages;
- free compulsory secondary education was to be available for all children;
- children between the ages of 5 and 11 were to be sent to primary schools
- children between 11 and 15 were to go to a secondary school suited to their abilities and aptitudes;
- fees in grammar schools (providing secondary education for mostly middle class pupils of high academic ability) were abolished;
- elementary schools (providing basic education for children aged 5 to 14 from poor families) were phased out;
- the compulsory school leaving age rose from 14 to 15 in 1945;
- local authorities were to provide school meals, free milk and regular medical inspections;
- the Ministry of Education was created to control and direct the implementation of educational policy.

The 1944 Act recognised the importance of education for economic advancement and social welfare. Its aim was to provide secondary education for all children so that every child had equal opportunity to obtain a place in a grammar school, regardless of family background. Most Local Education Authorities (LEAs) interpreted the 1944 Act to mean the provision of schooling according to ability. By using an 'objective' examination, the **eleven-plus** (an exam taken at around age 11 in the last year of primary school), to test their intelligence and abilities in English and arithmetic, three groups of children were identified:

- academically able pupils, who went to the secondary grammar schools. These schools provided the main route to a university education;

- practically able pupils, who went to the technical schools which were vocationally based. There were very few technical schools because the cost of running them was high;
- the remaining pupils, mostly working class, who went to the secondary modern school where they received a more basic education.

Written examinations increasingly became used as the way of assessing pupils, and in 1917 the Secondary School Examinations Council had been set up, and the following year the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate were introduced. The **General Certificate of Education** (GCE) was introduced in 1951 as a result of the 1943 Norwood Report. GCE exams were normally taken at 16 (Ordinary ‘O’ level) and 18 (Advanced ‘A’ level). They were taken mostly in the grammar schools and the **independent schools** (public or private fee-paying schools that are independent of state intervention or funding from central government). These exams were actually designed for the top 25% of the ability range. Therefore not everybody could pass them. Thus, the secondary educational system set up as a result of the 1944 Act was a tripartite system - three types of schools which were in theory different but equal. However, this “parity of esteem and prestige” between grammar and secondary modern schools, which the Act had intended, did not occur. Competition for entry into grammar schools increased because these schools provided the major route to university and a professional career. The tripartite system also reinforced the incorrect assumption that children of a lower social class had lower intelligence. Hence the 1950s and 1960s would see an attempted move towards a single-level system. Chapter 2 will study this development.

What do you think were the positive and negative aspects of the 1944 Education Act?

List these, and make brief comments on each.

Further reading

London County Council (1945) *Education Act 1944 (A summary)*. London: LCC

Barber, M., (1994), *The Making of the 1944 Education Act*, London: Cassell

Chapter 2

The 1950s and 1960s: adapting to the needs of a changing society

The birth of the comprehensive ideal

The 1950s and 60s saw a slow move towards the **comprehensive** (for all children) school system. This was designed to cater for all children without reference to their ability or aptitude, in a particular **catchment area** (area from which children are sent to a particular school) This system came about as a result of growing dissatisfaction with the selective system whereby, at the age of eleven, children were allocated into separate kinds of secondary schools. It was argued that each child should be given the opportunity of realising his or her full potential over a wide range of activities and skills. Therefore, value was to be attached to all achievements, not just to the academic sort.

Several important steps were taken in the attempt to provide greater opportunity for all. A wider range of examinations that a greater percentage of the school population could pass was required. In 1960, as a result of the *Beloe Report*, (DES (1960) Secondary School Examinations Other Than the GCE. London: HMSO), the **Certificate of Secondary Education** (CSE) was launched. This was aimed at the middle of the ability range, to increase the percentage of pupils capable of achieving a qualification before leaving secondary school beyond the 25% capable of achieving success at GCE 'O' level. Until the abolition in the 1980s of both examinations, the 'O' level tended to be the selective grammar school exam choice, and the CSE was the customary target qualification at the end of a secondary modern education.

In 1964 a Labour government was elected. Its election manifesto contained a commitment to ending selection at age eleven in the interests of greater social justice and promotion of educational equal opportunity. It proved difficult to effect, and it still exists in various forms to the present day for use by schools that select their pupils. A House of Commons motion in January 1965 called for selection at 11-plus to be abolished. In 1965 and 1974 the Labour government issued **Department of Education and Science** (DES) circulars asking LEAs to submit plans for the reorganisation of schools into the comprehensive system. But many of the pupils identified as the most able still went to the grammar schools; comprehensive schools for many years were destined to struggle to justify their existence in terms of examination results. LEAs were not legally bound to ban selection until the 1976 Education Act gave the Secretary of State for Education authority to compel LEAs to submit plans for reorganisation. By the 1980s, 90% of all secondary school children were being educated in some form of comprehensive school system.

What do you think of selection for different types of school at the age of eleven? Make a list of arguments for, and a list against. Then decide whether you are for or against the idea.

What constitutes a fair test at age eleven? [Click here](#) to try a mini 11-plus test. Has it changed your thinking about whether you are for or against the idea?

Further reading

Haydon, G., (2007), In Search of the Comprehensive Ideal: By Way of and Introduction, *Journal of Philosophy of Education, Vol. 41, No. 4*, Blackwell

Daunt, P. E., (1975), *Comprehensive Values*, London, Heinemann.

The emergence of new needs: pupils from different ethnic backgrounds

As well as the move to comprehensive reorganisation during the 1960s, there was also considerable debate in England and Wales about the education of ‘ethnic minority’ children. Should they be assimilated into the ‘host’ society with the adoption of its language and culture, or should they be integrated but also allowed to retain their distinctive culture and language? Between 1960 and 1965 there was no central policy to meet the needs of pupils then labelled ‘immigrant’ children in the education system. During this period the main concern was the teaching of English to non-English speaking pupils, and the **dispersal** of ‘immigrant’ pupils to prevent ‘high immigrant’ schools. It was believed that assimilation into British life would be easier if the numbers of ‘immigrant’ children in schools were kept small. This policy was rejected by the Birmingham LEA and the **ILEA** (Inner London Education Authority). The ILEA was created in 1964 when the London County Council merged into the Greater London Council, as a result of the 1963 Local Government Act). Both areas had high percentages of ‘immigrant’ children. From 1960 to 1965, LEAs and schools with growing numbers of ‘immigrant’ children began to develop their own policies and practices mainly on the teaching of English as a second language. But in the 60s, dispersal, like the 11-plus, proved difficult to get rid of. In spite of the considerable efforts of LEAs to cater for ethnic minority needs, it was not until 1975 that it was ruled illegal to disperse these children. The ILEA was to prove a long term success as an institution. Following the publication of its Multi-ethnic Education Policy Statement in 1977, ILEA developed a considerable reputation for its equal opportunities policy. The emphasis was on combating racism, sexism and class prejudice, with a commitment to eliminating the negative consequences

they cause. ILEA could boast many achievements in the areas of curriculum reform and provision of resources. Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) report stated in 1980:

‘The picture that emerges is a caring and generous authority with considerable analytical powers to identify problems, the scale of which is, in some cases, unique in this country...’ (p.21).

Other developments in the same era were to prove less successful in the longer term. Meeting the needs of ‘immigrant’ children became a major issue demanding increased resources. **Section 11** of the Local Government Act in 1966 was created to help provide adequate funding. The Act authorised the Home Office to contribute 50% (later 75%) towards the salaries of local authority staff working on Section 11 programmes. The local authority provided the rest of the salary. Local authorities with an ‘immigrant’ population of 2% from the **New Commonwealth** could apply for the money. Most Section 11 programmes were set up to enable **ESL** children (those who spoke English as a Second Language) to be educated in state schools. ‘Immigrant’ children were taught reading, speaking and writing skills in English. The 1966 Act was originally only concerned with children born in **New Commonwealth** countries (former British colonies excluding English speaking countries). By the time the scope of Section 11 was widened to include all ‘ethnic minority’ children in 1993, funding had been reduced so much that the impact of Section 11 was negligible, and very soon after in April 1994 the Government cut its contribution to Section 11 by a quarter. This resulted particularly in a substantial reduction in the number of teachers available to teach ESL.

Another initiative launched in the 1960s was similarly thwarted by later cuts in funding. The **Home Office Community Development Programme** (CDP) of 1968 had grand objectives. The Home Secretary had described it as being:

‘To provide for the care of our citizens who live in the poorest or most overcrowded parts of our cities and towns. It is intended to arrest, in so far as that is possible by financial means, and reverse the downward spiral that afflicts so many of these areas.’

(James Callaghan: Hansard 1968)

The 1960s had seen a rise in racial tension and anti-immigrant hostility in inner city areas. It is widely accepted that this was exacerbated by the 1967 and 1968 speeches on race by Enoch Powell, a Conservative Member of Parliament. He felt that immigration was to blame for racial tension, and that “rivers of blood” and violence would be inevitable. Taking the broader view that the racial tension was fuelled by poverty and disadvantage, the Labour Government Home Office started up the Urban Programme that year to address the issues, and the CDP arose from that. Within the framework of the CDP, money was made available to projects designed to meet the needs of ‘ethnic minorities’, 75% was centrally funded. Some of these projects were linked to the work of schools. But projects could not continue once the money ran out and most were terminated as early as the mid-1970s.

As an ‘immigrant’ child going to an English school in the 1960s, what would be the barriers to your educational progress? Write down the most significant five. Is there any coincidence between your list and this *Black History* page from [Birmingham City Council’s website](#)?

Further reading

Cashmore, E. E., (1989), *United Kingdom? Class, race and gender since the war*, London: Unwin Hyman

The Plowden Report 1967: learners’ needs and a child-centred approach

“At the heart of educational progress lies the child.”(p.7).

It was in 1963 that the Conservative Education Secretary of the time, Edward Boyle, asked the Central Advisory Council for Education to “consider primary education in all its aspects:”. The two-volume **Plowden Report** published in 1967 was the result of this investigation. The *Plowden Report* of 1967 challenged the traditional approach to education. The report made some far-reaching observations about the growth and development of children’s learning, acknowledging the work of pioneer educationists such as Froebel (1782-1852) and Montessori (1869-1952). Both were child-centred in their approach emphasising rather what children can do, not what they cannot do: “begin where the learner is” (Froebel). The *Plowden Report* and the practice in nursery and primary schools at the time were very much influenced by research on education that was being undertaken, particularly by Piaget (1951) and Bruner (1966). The child-centred approach described in the report emphasised the following points:

- play and exploration are vital for stimulating children’s learning;
- building on children’s interest and encouraging independent learning is an important part of primary practice;
- the primary curriculum should be integrated encouraging a topic-based approach to learning.

For the first time parents’ role in their children’s education was actually being considered. Research showed that parents’ attitudes to education were of significant importance in influencing children’s educational success, more so than educational background, occupational status and even the school. Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) became widespread in the 1970s and 1980s and this can largely be attributed to Plowden. Other issues covered in the report included: nursery education, primary to secondary transfer, teacher training, children of ‘immigrants’ and ‘handicapped’ children in ordinary schools.

The following recommendations were made in the report:

- a child-centred, activity-based approach in nursery and primary schools;
- expansion of nursery education (finally occurred 1973);
- no grouping by ability or attainment in primary schools;
- increased parental involvement in schooling of their children;
- parents to be allowed to choose their children's primary school wherever possible;
- schools to be more involved in their communities;
- positive discrimination to assist schools in deprived or **educational priority areas** (EPA - geographical area of social deprivation). Extra funding to go to schools in EPAs, each LEA to apply to government for funds. A re-analysis of the data in the Plowden Report in 1980 emphasised the importance of economic circumstance as well as family lifestyle in children's ability to achieve in school ;
- corporal punishment in schools to end (finally forbidden in all state schools 1987);
- greater attention to 'slow learners', 'handicapped' and 'immigrant' children;
- more teachers to be recruited to primary teaching;
- primary schools to be reorganised into first Schools (for children aged 5 to 8/9) and middle schools (for children aged 8/9 to 12/13) schools.

These recommendations were described as being "of far reaching significance" by the 1967 Labour Education Secretary, Anthony Crosland.

There were some adverse reactions to some of the recommendations, particularly the link between parental involvement and schools. There was also the fear that the child-centred approach could undermine standards. Piaget's view of 'learning readiness', whereby teachers were encouraged to wait until the child's appropriate stage had developed, was criticised. It was suggested that this approach might undermine educational achievement. However, twenty years later in 1987, Lady Plowden pointed out that while the committee had wanted to see more child-centred, active learning, it had not ignored the value of the more traditional teacher-directed learning.

If you have visited, or observed teaching and learning in, an English primary school, from what you have read here, can you see the significant influence of the **Plowden Report?**

Make a list of up to ten features.

Further reading

Piaget, J. (1951) *Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood*. New York: The Free Press.

Bruner, J. (1966) *Towards a Theory of Instruction*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Chapter 3

The 1970s and 1980s: equal opportunities initiatives

The early 70s: language, assessment and underachievement

The 1970s saw a growing concern with ‘falling educational standards’ and dissatisfaction with methods of assessing pupils. A series of pamphlets published in 1969, 1970, 1975 and 1977 called the Black Papers, drew attention to concerns about ‘falling educational standards’ in primary and secondary school system. As part of this general concern with assessment performance, arguments in favour of national testing for all children at certain age groups started to be put forward. National testing was to arrive later and be a dominant feature of school education in the 1990s. The school leaving age rose to 16 in 1972 so more pupils had to stay until the end of the **fifth year** (now year 11) even though they were not necessarily taking examinations. More pupils were starting to stay on at school to take ‘A’ level exams.

However, between 1973 and 1982 there was pressure on the government to produce national policies and funding to tackle the significant underachievement of a particular section of the pupil population. EPA (Educational Priority Area) studies carried out in the late 1960s and early 1970s produced evidence concerning the lower test performance of ‘ethnic minority’ children. Clear links were established between knowledge of the English language, this underachievement and schools’ approach to communities that were multicultural and multilingual.

In 1972, a Committee of Inquiry chaired by Sir Alan Bullock was appointed by Margaret Thatcher, the Conservative Education Secretary to look at standards in reading.

What do you think a school can or should do to acknowledge that its population is multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual?

Further reading

Cox, C.B., & Dyson, A.E., (1971), *The Black Papers on Education*, London: Davis-Poynter.

Cox, C.B., & Boyson, R., (1975), *Black Paper 1975: the Fight for Education*, Dent.

The Bullock Report 1975: A Language For Life

This report, published in 1975, covered all aspects of teaching the use of English, with recommendations on improving practice and monitoring attainment. It argued that if children were to improve and increase their facility in a language, their own linguistic and cultural background needed to be acknowledged and valued. While looking at standards in English reading, writing and speaking, this report recognised for the first time that Britain is a multicultural and multilingual society; it recommended that this be taken into account when planning the school curriculum.

“No child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold, nor to live and act as though school and home represent two totally separate and different cultures which have to be kept firmly apart.” (p.286).

The following recommendations were made:

- integration of ethnic cultural and linguistic diversity into the curriculum;
- development of a common policy for language across the curriculum in all secondary school departments.

However progress was initially slow as far as the recognition of ethnic and linguistic diversity in the classroom was concerned. It would be left to the later *Rampton Report* (1981), the 1987 **TGAT** (*Task Group on Assessment and Testing*) Report and the National Curriculum documents on maths, English and science to draw attention to the value of using pupils’ mother tongue other than English when referring to the setting of learning objectives.

Make a list of arguments for and against having English as the ‘official’ language of education and assessment in English schools.

Further reading

Department of Education and Science, (1975), **A Language for Life (Bullock Report)**, HMSO.

The Great Debate 1976: Ruskin Speech

‘The goals of our education, from nursery school through to adult education, are clear enough. It is to equip children to the best of their ability for a lively, constructive place in society and also to fit them to do a job of work.’
(James Callaghan, October 1976)

In October 1976 the Labour Prime Minister, James Callaghan, gave a speech on education in England and Wales at Ruskin College, Oxford. This sparked off the so-called Great Debate. Regional conferences were organised and interested parties were invited to participate in the debate. Public awareness of issues in education was increased. Significant issues raised in the speech were:

- **development of a core curriculum**
It was felt that too many pupils in the sixth form (years 12 and 13) were studying arts and humanities subjects, and too few studying science and technology. This imbalance was considered to be the direct result of allowing teachers too much freedom in the planning of the school curriculum;
- **questioning of standards in education**
It was felt that although local curriculum and assessment initiatives were strong, pupils should be able to move from one school to another throughout the country and expect to find the same strengths nationwide;
- **articulating the purpose of education**
It was felt that strengthening the role of parents, teachers and professional bodies would assist in this objective;
- **transfer from school to work**
Meeting the needs of industry and the need for work-related learning; it was felt that creating positive attitudes to industry would encourage economic growth.

As a result of the speech, the following developments took place:

- creation of the **Assessment of Performance Unit** (APU) in 1974 by the **DES** (Department of Education and Science), to “promote the development of methods of assessing and monitoring the achievement of children at school, and to seek to identify the incidence of under-achievement”;
- mass testing by a number of local authorities using standardised tests prepared by the **NFER** (National Foundation for Educational Research);
- **HMI** (Her Majesty’s Inspectorate) and DES initiatives on the curriculum and school organisation - for example, **mixed ability teaching** (children of different levels of ability taught together in the same class).

The **NUT** (National Union of Teachers) was hostile to the Government’s intrusion into the school curriculum, and argued that young people’s lack of awareness of the world of work was a result of high unemployment, and their expectation that there were no meaningful jobs available for them when they left school. Teachers were reluctant to take part in the ‘Great Debate’ feeling that government and employers knew too little about

schools to engage in discussions about educational issues. Many teachers feared that the APU could be used to introduce national testing and to control the curriculum. But the arguments about what school curriculum is and should be had started; they would continue to rage until the present day.

What is your definition of ‘curriculum’?

Who should decide the constitution of the school curriculum?

Write 5 bullet points summarising your views.

Further reading

Barrow, R., (1986) The Concept of Curriculum Design, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 20, No.1, Blackwell

The Warnock report 1978: Special Educational Needs

In the late 1970s, with the increasing awareness of equal opportunities, the education of what was then termed ‘handicapped’ children became an issue of concern. It was the first time that a British government had dealt with **SEN** (special educational needs).

“As far as is humanly possible, handicapped people should share the opportunities for self-fulfilment enjoyed by other people.” (p.99).

In 1974, a Committee of Inquiry into the education of ‘handicapped’ children and young people was set up to review education provision for all handicapped children, to look at the effective use of resources for these purposes and to make recommendations. The report highlighted the fact that 20% of the school population was estimated to have marked physical, sensory, or mental handicaps whereas only 2% had actually been legally classed as ‘handicapped’. For the first time the integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools was being considered.

The following recommendations were made:

- replace the existing medical definition of handicap with the broader concept of ‘special education need’;
- effective assessment of children with special education needs, and support systems for their parents;
- increase awareness among teacher of the special needs which many children have. Training was seen as essential for this purpose;
- provision for children with special needs must be extensive and flexible.

The 1981 Education Act followed the *Warnock Report (1978)* and altered the law relating to the education of children with special needs. The term ‘special educational needs’ was introduced to replace the term ‘handicapped’. These recommendations were made:

- LEAs to identify the needs of children with learning difficulties;
- assessment procedures for ascertaining these needs to be established; and
- statement of SEN to be produced, specifying how the needs can be met (a process that came to be known as ‘**statementing**’).

Part III of The 1993 Education Act was later to build on the recommendations of the 1981 Act.

In the country where you went to school, were children with special needs educated in the mainstream school, or in a special school? Do you have an opinion on that aspect of the system in which you grew up?

Further reading

Department of Education and Science, (1978), **Special Educational Needs (Warnock Report)**, London: HMSO.

Choice, standards and skills: Education Act 1980

The Conservative Party was returned to power by the 1979 election. Margaret Thatcher, the former Education Secretary, was Prime Minister. The late 1970s had seen the beginning of a dramatic rise in unemployment. This was to peak in the mid-1980s with over three million, 10% of the working population, out of work. The government felt that this was due to the lack of basic skills among the workforce. The education system was blamed for not providing young people with the necessary skills and knowledge needed for industry. The government passed two Education Acts in the early ‘80s designed to address the linked issues of choice and raising standards. The main objective of the 1980 Act was to provide choice and enhance the quality of education, and to have bad schools driven out by competition from the good ones. LEAs which had not produced plans for comprehensive schooling were no longer required to draw them up. The Government continued to question the role and work of LEAs and teachers throughout the 1980s. There were clear moves towards centralised government control over the curriculum and teacher training as part of this philosophy.

The 1980 Act contained the following provisions:

- schools were no longer obliged to provide free milk and school dinners;
- Assisted Places Scheme (**APS**) was implemented where it was possible for pupils to transfer from maintained to independent schools with the government paying part of the fees;
- all independent schools were to be registered;
- parents were able to choose the school they wanted their child to attend if there

- were places available;
- parents were also given the right to be represented on school governing bodies;
- the rights of LEAs to provide primary, secondary or further education for students not coming from their area was restricted.

The APS was introduced to help academically able children from poor families to attend some of the country's leading academic fee-paying independent schools. The emphasis was on helping those from inner city areas. However, surveys have since shown that children from middle-class backgrounds were benefiting most from the scheme. There is some evidence to suggest the scheme appeared to be more concerned with filling places, rather than attracting academically able pupils of families with low incomes. Very few 'ethnic minority' pupils benefited from this scheme during a period of social unrest fuelled by unemployment when "racial disadvantage [was] a fact of current British life" (Scarman Report, 1981). By the time Brixton's afro-Caribbean youth rioted amid resentment at police tactics, followed by similar protests in Liverpool and the Midlands, about twenty-five LEAs had already appointed an advisor for multicultural education and a few had produced policy documents in attempts to address inequalities and social cohesion. This put appropriate pressure on the government to address improvements to the education of 'ethnic minority' children. Two important reports on the education of these children, particularly children of West Indian origin, were published in the 1980s - the *Rampton Report (1981)* and the *Swann Report (1985)*.

Consider the idea of schools competing against each other in order to be considered a 'good' school.

Can you list five arguments for, and five arguments against?

Further reading

Whitty, G., (1997) Creating Quasi-Markets in Education: A Review of Recent Research on Parental Choice and School Autonomy in Three Countries, *Review of Research in Education, Vol. 22*, pp. 3-47, AERA

Rampton Report 1981: West Indian Children in Our Schools

As far back as the late 1960s and early 1970s concern had been expressed by the West Indian community about the academic performance of its children. This issue was addressed by the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration, and it recommended in 1977 that the Labour government should initiate an inquiry. In 1979 a Committee of Inquiry into the education of children from 'ethnic minority' groups was set up, chaired by Anthony Rampton (Chairman of Freemans Mail Order Company and Treasurer of Lambeth Community Relations Council). Following the inquiry, an interim

report, better known as the *Rampton Report*, was published in 1981 which looked at the educational needs and attainments of children from all ‘ethnic minority’ backgrounds with particular emphasis on West Indian children. It highlighted the underachievement of many children of West Indian background, e.g. 3% of West Indian pupils obtained 5 or more ‘O’ levels, compared to 18% for Asians and 16% for other groups.

The report identified the following as reasons for underachievement:

- racism within schools and society;
- inadequate pre-school provision;
- language issues;
- teachers’ low expectations of West Indian children.

The following recommendations were made:

- teachers should play a leading role in seeking to bring about a change in attitudes on the part of society as a whole towards ‘ethnic minority’ groups;
- teachers and schools should value all language forms which all children bring to school;
- the curriculum in all schools should reflect Britain’s multi-racial and cultural diversity;
- more West Indian and ‘ethnic minority’ teachers should be recruited to ensure equal opportunities at all levels in the education service;
- schools should make an effort to establish contacts with local supplementary schools (weekend or after-hours schools where children are taught their mother-tongue, culture and traditions).

Criticisms were made about the report. For example, Rex (*Times Educational Supplement*, 7 August 1981) criticised the lack of research evidence to support the claims made about underachievement. The interpretation of existing data from DES (Department of Education and Science) surveys was not standardised. Although a number of factors were identified as reasons for the persistence of racial inequality in education, the main focus was on the school. Other reasons for underachievement, such as social class, and gender differences were largely ignored.

Many of the recommendations which were aimed specifically at the DES were not acted upon. In May 1981 Rampton resigned as chairperson of the Select Committee, he was replaced by Lord Michael Swann.

If you were educated in a country outside England, describe how the education of ‘ethnic minority’ children in England compares with the schooling you experienced.

Department of Education and Science (1981) **West Indian Children in Our Schools (Rampton Report)**. London: HMSO

The Swann Report (1985): Education for All

“We believe that unless major efforts are made to reconcile the concerns and aspirations of both the majority and minority communities along more genuinely pluralistic lines, there is a real risk of the fragmentation of our society along ethnic lines which would seriously threaten the stability and cohesion of society as a whole.” (p.7).

This Report reaffirmed many points in the *Rampton Report*. The Select Committee’s brief was extended by the government so that, “a more broadly conceived examination of the achievements and needs of all pupils for education for life in a multiracial society” was the emphasis in the *Swann Report*. This report’s priority was however to identify weaknesses in the education system affecting pupils of West Indian origin.

As in the *Rampton Report*, DES *School Leavers Survey* data was used which showed that West Indian children did less well in examinations than white children. Asian children achieved the same level as white children except in English. The report claimed that much of the difference in average IQ scores between West Indian and white children was related to differences between them in matters of socio-economic status. Low socio-economic status was in turn aggravated by prejudice and discrimination on the part of society. The strength of feeling about prejudice and discrimination in the educational system expressed by West Indians was very apparent in the report. It was claimed in the report that Asian children were less affected possibly because of difference in lifestyle or a more tight-knit family structure.

The following conclusions were drawn:

- there is no single cause of underachievement and therefore no single solution;
- education has a major role in changing the attitudes of the white majority population;
- there is a need for greater sensitivity in the education of ‘ethnic minorities’. More **INSET** (in-service training for qualified teachers) is needed to raise awareness;
- attention should be paid in **PGCE** (Post-Graduate Certificate in Education) and **BEd** (Bachelor of Education) courses to the needs arising from an ethnically diverse society;
- statistics should be collected on the ethnicity of both teachers and pupils;
- first priority should be given to learning of English;
- school subjects should not be taught using ‘mother tongue’ languages as a medium;
- schools should not take on responsibility for the teaching and maintenance of ‘ethnic minority’ languages.
- ‘The fundamental change needed is a recognition that the problem ... is not just how to educate the children of the ethnic minorities, but how to educate all children.’ (p.10).

As with the *Rampton Report*, the *Swann Report* was criticised for overlooking factors such as class, gender, age and individual performance. It looked at underachievement solely on ethnic lines based on comparison between Asian, West Indian and mainly white school leavers. The Report served to reinforce the notion of cultural stereotypes and the underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils was not considered. Its reservations about ‘mother-tongue’ teaching in schools does not support its concern for a more ‘pluralistic’ approach to education for all. However, it did welcome supplementary education to complement mainstream schooling as a means for minority groups to maintain their cultural identity. It also recognised that racism needed to be dealt with through broader legal and political measures. The extent to which this has been achieved still remains to be seen.

The Rampton and Swann Reports focus on the education of ‘ethnic minority’ children in schools in England and Wales. What were the main concerns of the reports and to what extent do you think the recommendations address the main issues?

Further reading

Department of Education and Science, (1985), **Education for All: a Brief Guide to the Main Issues of the Report (Swann Report)**, London: HMSO

Skutnabb-Kangas, T., & Cummins, J., (1988), (Eds.) *Minority Education: From Shame to Struggle*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters

Gillborn, D., (1990), *Race, Ethnicity and Education: Teaching and Learning in Multi-ethnic Schools*, London: Unwin

Alladina, S., (1995), *Being Bilingual*, Stoke-On-Trent: Trentham Books

Nehaul, K., (1996), *The Schooling of Children of Caribbean Heritage*, Stoke-On-Trent: Trentham Books

Sewell, T., (1997), *Black Masculinities and Schooling: How Black boys survive modern schooling*, Stoke-On-Trent: Trentham Books

Glossary of terms and abbreviations

Assimilation	A policy of integrating an ‘ethnic minority’ group into the majority society through educational practices that make no concessions to the language and culture of that group.
Assisted Places Scheme (APS)	A policy implemented where it was possible for pupils to transfer from maintained to independent schools with the government paying part of the fees
Bachelor of Education (BEd)	A first degree leading to a teaching qualification after a three or four year course involving periods of teaching practice.
Catchment Area	A geographical area from which a school accepts its pupils.
Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE)	The former second tier of examination commonly used in secondary modern schools; ceased to exist upon arrival of GCSE in 1988
Child-Centred Education	A notion of teaching emphasised in the <i>Plowden Report (1967)</i> , also referred to as progressive education. Teaching is based on the child’s needs, learning style and personality and not just his or her academic achievements
Comprehensive school	A secondary school for for all children regardless of ability
Department for Education and Science (DES)	which was responsible for education in England and Wales.
Dispersal	The policy of re-locating ‘immigrant’ pupils and their families to avoid creating ethnic ‘clusters’ of population
Eleven-Plus (11-plus)	Examination taken by children at about age 11. The results determined which schools children were sent to. Only the top 20-25% went to what was considered to be the best schools, the grammar schools.
EPA	Educational Priority Area; geographical area of social deprivation
ESL	English as a Second Language; the current terminology is EAL
EAL	English as an Additional Language
Fifth year	From the former secondary school age-group labelling system. now year 11
Further Education (FE)	Post-school education apart from that given in universities.
GCE	General Certificate of Education
HMI	Her Majesty’s Inspectorate
Independent schools	Public or private fee-paying schools that are independent of state intervention or funding from central government
Inner London Education Authority	Established in 1964 after the merger of the London (ILEA) County Council with the Greater London Council. It was the largest LEA in the UK responsible for school and colleges in inner London Boroughs.. Abolished in the <i>1988 Education Reform Act.</i> (see part 2)

In-Service Training of Teachers	Continuing education and training for teachers. (INSET) to promote their ongoing professional development and extend their knowledge and skill base.
Integration	Education of children with special educational needs (SEN) alongside those in ordinary schools.
Local Education Authority (LEA)	Part of the local government structure responsible for running state education in a particular geographical area in England and Wales.
Mixed ability teaching	Children of different levels of ability taught together in the same class
New Commonwealth	Former British colonies, excluding English speaking countries
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NUT	National Union of Teachers, a major teacher Trades Union
Office for Standards in Education	(OFSTED) Established in 1992 to improve standards of achievement and quality of education through regular independent inspection, public reporting and informed independent advice.
Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)	Organisation of parents and teachers at a particular school. Main activities include fund raising and organising social events. Aim to facilitate mutual understanding.
Pastoral System	Academic and social support and guidance system for pupils in Secondary Schools.
Postgraduate Certificate of Education	(PGCE) Certificate taken graduates that qualifies them to teach. Normally involves a one year full time course with teaching practice.
Preparatory School	Private fee-paying school for children aged between 8 and 11 (for girls) or 13 (for boys) years. Prepares children for entrance exams for Independent secondary and public schools.
Public School	Independent fee-paying school, most of whose head teachers are members of the Headmasters' Conference. Most are single-sex boarding schools, with close links with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.
Secondary Modern School	Part of the tripartite system. Caters for those pupils identified as of average and below average academic ability, who do not go to grammar schools.
Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Term introduced by the <i>Warnock Report 1978</i> to replace old categories of mental or physical handicap. Includes children with particular learning difficulties or behavioural problems.
Special School	School which is specially organised to make special educational provision for pupils with SENs and is approved by the <i>1993 Education Act</i> .
Statementing	Under the 1981 Education Act, LEAs have the duty to identify and assess children with special educational needs. A statement of these needs is produced specifying how they can be met.
Streaming	Allocating pupils in a year group on the basis of perceived ability, to streams, i.e. ranked classes in which pupils stay for all subjects.

Task Group on Assessment and NC Testing (TGAT)	Established by Education Minister to advise on assessment.
Tripartite System	Classification of schools into three types: grammar, technical and secondary modern. Based on the <i>1943 Norwood Report</i> , it was claimed that children could be allocated to a type of school based on his/her achievement in selection tests. Eventually replaced by the comprehensive school system.
Vocational Education	Employment related rather than academic education.
Voluntary-Aided School	School provided by a voluntary body (usually a church) but maintained by LEA
Welsh Medium / Speaking School	School in which more than half of the basic curriculum subjects, other than English and Welsh, are taught wholly or partly through the medium of the Welsh language.

