

ITT MFL

on-line support for teacher education in languages

A Recent History of Primary and Secondary Education in England part 2

based on an original course guide by
Sui-Mee Chan and Pat East
with Sabia Ali and Maria Neophytou

edited, adapted and updated by
Keith Faulkner

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

CILT, the National Centre for Languages
3rd Floor, 111 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7HR
www.cilt.org.uk

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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.

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). This means there is no need for a glossary at the end of the booklet for educational terminology and abbreviations. Abbreviations are used in the booklet, but the first time an educational term or jargon is used it will be defined and appear in full, thereafter it may be abbreviated, e.g. Local Authority will become LA.

Chapter 4

Moving to National Curriculum: 1985 to 1996

White Paper 1985: *Better Schools*

A 1984 report called *Improving Secondary Schools*, better known as the *Hargreaves Report*, once again levelled concern at achievement, especially among working-class children and children from ethnic minorities. In response, the **White Paper** (a governmental proposal indicating an intention to pass new law) **Better Schools** laid out the Conservative government's aims for education as follows:

‘The Government’s principal aims for all sectors of education are first, to raise standards at all levels of ability; and second, since education is an investment in the nation’s future, to secure the best possible return from the resources which are found in it.’

In the White Paper several criticisms of the education service were made;

- standards were low;
- quality and variations between different schools were too wide;
- there were weaknesses in curriculum planning and implementation;
- more objective assessment of ability was needed.

Several fundamental principles concerning the school curriculum were put forward:

- it should be broad to cover a wide range of experience, knowledge and skill;
- it should be balanced. Sufficient time should be given to each area;
- it should be relevant to pupils’ experience and their adult life;
- it should be **differentiated** to match pupils’ abilities and aptitudes.

Better Schools started off development of national objectives for the school curriculum in primary and secondary education. Testing was to be a major feature, especially as many schools were actually using it: a 1981 survey of all **LEAs** had found that testing was widespread in primary schools, and the most common age at which tests were taken was 11. Results of tests in maths, reading and **reasoning** (tests to assess pupils’ thinking skills) were used for a variety of purposes by LEAs, e.g. to identify children with special needs, to monitor standards, or to provide a record for the child’s next teacher or school.

Should we test school-age children? What does testing tell us?

Further reading

Inner London Education Authority, (1984), *Improving Secondary Schools: Report of the Committee on the Curriculum and Organisation of Secondary Schools, (Hargreaves Report)*, London: ILEA.

Department of Education and Science, (1985), **Better Schools**, London: HMSO

Education Act 1986

The 1986 Act responded to the *Better Schools* report. It sought to improve schools by changing the way they were managed: LEAs, governing bodies and headteachers were given responsibilities for curriculum development. Governing bodies were also to give parents a role in school management. The 1986 Act also abolished corporal punishment in schools.

For the first time, the idea of a national curriculum began to take shape. In 1987 a consultative document *The National Curriculum 5-16* was published. It acknowledged support for the aims of education as laid out in *Better Schools*. It argued for a national curriculum backed by clear assessment arrangements to help raise standards of attainment. A national curriculum would, in theory, enable children to move from one place to another with minimum disruption to their education. Schools were to be more accountable for the education they offered their pupils, and LEAs were to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the schools they maintained.

**Are government, local authorities, governors and headteachers the only people who should develop the school curriculum?
See if the recommended Further Reading modifies your opinion.**

Further reading

Harding, P., (1987), *A guide to governing schools*, London: Harper & Row

Skillbeck, M., (1984), *School-based curriculum development*, Netherlands: Springer

Education Reform Act 1988

The *Education Reform Act (ERA)* was passed by Parliament in July 1988. It was the first major Education Act for over 40 years. It was to have a major impact on the whole of the education system. The Act had three main aims:

- 1 to improve the quality of education in schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities;
- 2 to raise the standards achieved by pupils and students;
- 3 to extend 'freedom of choice' in education and to promote the Conservative government's ethos of 'local' management.

The following were very significant features of the Act, and reflect the uneasy mix of centralising, national and decentralising, local measures.

- the National Curriculum (NC) was introduced;
- LEAs, governors and headteachers had the duty of ensuring that the requirements of the NC are satisfied;
- religious education and acts of worship were made compulsory;

- there was to be local financial management of schools;
- it became possible to ‘**opt out**’ of local education authority (LEA) control and become a **Grant Maintained** (GM) School;
- LEAs were no longer have the right to set an admission limit. Each school was to practise **open enrolment** and recruit to its own idea of full capacity;
- the **ILEA** was abolished, and responsibility for education was given to inner London Boroughs.

Many of the recommendations of the 1986 and 1988 Acts were intended to make schools more responsive to market forces, to make them more competitive. Some eminent scholars in the fields of Social Sciences and Education, such as Whitty and Chitty, viewed the legislation as the Conservative government’s attempt to privatise education. The emphasis was on creating choice and diversity for the ‘clients’ (parents and pupils). But in spite of significant financial inducements to do so, only a small number of schools ‘opted out’.

City Technology Colleges (CTCs) were introduced to provide a more vocational education for 11 to 18 year olds. The sort of vocational curriculum on offer was seen as a solution to the poor academic performance in inner city schools. However, Whitty (1992), drew attention to the fact that the “strong competition for places ... developing in some CTCs makes it difficult to predict what form selection will take in the future, and the effects this will have on disadvantaged groups” (p46).

As part of the Act, ILEA was abolished in April 1990. 94% of parents actually voted for its continuation. This makes this an astonishingly undemocratic action, and one apparently carried out by the Conservative government in order to promote its own political philosophy.

In your view, did the 1988 Education Reform Act make the management of education national or local?

Further reading

Lawton, D., Chitty, C., Aldrich, R., (1988), *The National Curriculum*, Institute of Education: University of London.

Flude, M. & Hammer, M., (1990), *The Education Reform Act 1988: Its origins and Implications*. London: Falmer.

Gipps, C. (1988), *What Exams Would Mean For Primary Education*. In Lawton, D. & Chitty, C. (eds). *The National Curriculum*. London: Institute of Education.

The 'Three Wise Men Report' 1992

During 1991, Kenneth Clarke, then Education Secretary in the Conservative government, recommenced the observation of primary school practice. He argued for a return to grouping on the basis of ability from an early age, and more subject teaching. He felt that primary schools were becoming too child-centred, and focussed on play. Clarke commissioned an inquiry into primary school teaching methods which resulted in the so-called *Three Wise Men Report*. The three authors (Rose, Alexander and Woodhead) looked at why existing practice and organisation appeared inappropriate for teaching the **NC**, particularly for children aged 9 to 11 (referred to as **Key Stage 2** in the NC).

The following points were made:

- many primary teachers were not subject specialists, and perceived as unable to teach traditional subjects;
- the report claimed evidence demonstrated falling standards in important aspects of literacy and numeracy;

The following recommendations were made:

- four teaching roles for teachers were identified - specialist, generalist, semi-specialist, generalist-consultant. There should be a combination of the four teaching roles in school staffs, with specialisation in the last years of Key Stage 2;
- schools should review their teaching of the basic skills of literacy;
- teachers should have higher expectations of children from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- pupils should be grouped by ability;
- headteachers should set and monitor **INSET** (in-service training).

Education again emerged as a key issue in the 1992 general election campaign. The White Paper, *Choice and Diversity: A New Framework for Schools*, formed the basis of the 1993 *Education Act*. The White Paper put forward the argument that, since 1979, five main themes were common to the need for educational change - quality, diversity, increasing parental choice, greater autonomy for schools and greater accountability. These themes continue to be arguably the major concerns up to the conclusion of this history in 2009.

Can you write in support of, or against, the 1992 'Three Wise Men' recommendations, based on your own experience as a primary pupil? Should primary school education have 'serious' study of subjects, or should it be child-centred, and make use of play?

Further reading

Department for Education, (1992), *Choice and Diversity: a New Framework for Schools*, London: HMSO.

Chitty, C., (1992), *The Education System Transformed*, Manchester: Baseline Books.

The 1993 Education Act

The Conservative government presented the *1993 Education Act*, the longest ever Education Act, as “a blueprint for the next 25 years”. Critical commentary has identified it as complicated; the Act carries the same mixed message as the previously mentioned 1992 White Paper, and consequently it was difficult to determine whether the government’s vision for education was one of central, state control or devolution to local management. The main provisions of the Act which raise questions around this central dilemma were as follows:

- The process of ‘opting out’ of local education authority control was made easier for schools wishing to do so by taking away more LEA powers.
- The **Funding Agency for Schools** (FAS) was to be established to manage finance for all state schools;
- special schools were to be allowed to ‘opt out’;
- NCC and **School Examination and Assessment Council** (SEAC) were to be abolished and replaced with the **School Curriculum and Assessment Authority** (SCAA);
- parents were to be allowed to withdraw their children from sex education (including **AIDS** education) set by the governors (but not from that prescribed by the NC);

Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACRE), the bodies which draw up locally agreed curricular for religious education, were to represent local religions and denominations in schools.

The Act was heavily criticised and local authority leaders called for a new Education Bill to clear up the confusion. In his interim report on the NC (see page 10), Sir Ron Dearing criticised the government for going too far in reducing local authority input into education. However, the 1993 Act enjoyed some praise for its attempts to define, and provide for, special educational needs. *Part III of the 1993 Education Act* built on the recommendations of the 1981 Act. LEAs were to be given responsibilities for pupils with statements of special educational needs, and a *Code of Practice* was to be created to guide local education authorities and schools in special needs cases, including national guidelines for issuing **statements** (documentation detailing needs, and how they were to be met).

The 1993 Act was significant for carefully defining **SEN** as follows in terms which have endured:

“A child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.”

A child has a learning difficulty if he or she:

- (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age;

(b) has a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local educational authority;

(c) is under five, and falls within the definition at (a) or (b) or would do if special educational provision was not made for the child.

A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of the home is different from the language in which he or she is or will be taught.” (section 156, *1993 Education Act*)

The *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* was finally published and came into effect in September 1994. LEAs, schools, the health service and social services have from this date been required to adhere to it. It attracted praise from critics for its good intentions and principles, for its guidance on identification of discrete types of need, and for structuring the process of identification and resultant strategy. However, the same structured process was criticised for adding significantly to teachers workload, for a lack of practical guidance for teachers and governors, and for loading too much managerial responsibility on certain individuals, in particular the **SENCO** (Special Educational Needs Coordinator).

Write a short response to the assertion in the *Code of Practice* that “A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language ... of the home is different from the language in which he or she is or will be taught.”

Further reading

Cloud, N., (1994), *Special Education Needs of Second Language Students*, in Genesee, F., (ed.), New York: Cambridge University Press, pp 243-277.

Hornby, G., (1995), *The Code of Practice: boon or burden?*, British Journal of Special Education, Vol 22, issue 3, pp 116-119.

Garner, P., (1995), *Sense or nonsense? Dilemmas in the SEN Code of Practice*, Support for Learning, Vol 10, issue 1, pp 3-7.

The Dearing Report 1994

Although the 1993 Act was supposed to be the ‘blueprint’ for the foreseeable future, the government quickly had to come to terms with the idea that periodic review and adjustment would become the norm. In the face of increasing pressure from teacher dissatisfaction, in 1994 there was a major review of the National Curriculum (*Dearing Report 1994*). The NC was criticised for being narrow, prescriptive and too demanding. The changes that were implemented, after extensive consultation with the teaching profession, were as follows:

- simplification and clarification of the programmes of study;
- reduction in the volume of material to be taught;
- decreasing the prescriptive nature of the NC so as to give more scope for professional judgement (20% of teaching time to be used at the school's discretion).

As a result of this, the curriculum was reduced to make it more manageable for schools. Critics of the *Dearing Review* suggested it was not as radical as it might have been. However, to have obtained a review of any sort from a conservative government pursuing its own ideological path with little recourse to consultation, might be seen as a major triumph. The agenda for discussion around primary and secondary education had been set for the coming years on the theme of social justice; four questions would remain as the central focus.

- To what extent can formal assessment demonstrate 'standards', and reveal educational inequalities?
- How can these revealed educational inequalities best be addressed?
- What is the link between revealed educational inequalities and socio-economic, ethnic and gender-based inequalities?
- Who decides how best to address educational inequalities - teaching professionals or government?

How permanent do you think a curriculum should be? Ask an older relative about the subjects and things they learned in school. How relevant is that curriculum today?

What, in your opinion, constitutes evidence of educational standards? How important are test results as evidence?

Further reading

Daugherty, R. A., (1995), *National curriculum assessment: a review of policy, 1987-1994*, pp 142-173, Routledge.

Chapter 5

New Labour and tackling inequality: 1997 to 2001

“Education, education, education” and “raising standards”

A Labour government was returned to power with a large majority in May 1997. The *1997 Education (Schools) Bill* was drawn up quickly, just three weeks into the new government's term of office, to honour the key election pledge to reduce class sizes for five, six and seven-year-olds.

“Parents know how important smaller class sizes are in order to improve standards and provide a high quality education.” (Stephen Byers, School Standards Minister, May 1997)

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 was to consolidate this action. It legally imposed a limit of 30 on infant class sizes. This was funded by abolishing the previous Conservative government's **APS**, the Assisted Places Scheme via which pupils who could not afford to go to fee-paying independent schools were given free or part-funded places if they passed the school's entrance examination. The new Labour government claimed the practice to be elitist and wasteful of public funds. Declaring their priority to be “education, education, education”, the new government reacted swiftly in order to address what its members felt to be social injustices introduced by the previous Conservative regime.

“Our priority is to improve education opportunities for all our children, not just a few.” (Stephen Byers, School Standards Minister, May 1997)

So *The School Standards and Framework Act 1998* also tackled the issue of ‘partial selection’ **Grant-maintained** status had been established by the *Education Reform Act 1988*, the stated aim being to create greater diversity in educational provision, though some said it was part of the political agenda to reduce the influence of LEAs (Local Education Authorities). GM schools were owned and managed by their own school governors, rather than the local authority. Most significantly, they had been allowed to set their own admissions criteria, which had resulted in some of these state-funded schools practising selection, and some even achieving independent grammar school status. So the Act

- abolished grant-maintained schools;
- set up a procedure by which local communities could vote for the abolition of grammar schools;
- introduced an Admissions Code and a Schools Adjudicator to enforce it.

But were New Labour's reforms radical enough? Critics have argued until the present day that its policies have never been significantly different from the previous Conservative regimes, and this argument would be raised again and again in the coming years. **Foundation school** status replaced that of grant-maintained. Although the Admissions Code went some way to prevent the spread of the ‘partial selection’

phenomenon within state schools, ownership of the schools significantly did NOT revert to the LEAs. Furthermore, no grammar schools were ever abolished using the voting mechanism.

The 1997 Bill had been quickly followed in July 1997 by the **White Paper** (government document showing intent to pass a new law) *Excellence in Schools*. The main message of this highly significant Paper was one of addressing inequalities in the system:

“Excellence at the top is not matched by high standards for all children. Too many pupils still fail to achieve what they can. Too many leave school with few or no qualifications. And there are unacceptable differences between different groups of pupils and between schools.” (DfEE, p.3)

Do you believe in the right of state schools to select their pupils? Are you aware of the process by which you gained admission to your secondary schooling in the country in which you were educated?

Further reading

Plewis, I., and Goldstein, H., (1998), **Excellence in Schools: a failure of standards**, British Journal of Curriculum and Assessment, 8, pp 17-20.

The importance of a good start: early years reform

The White Paper had identified targets that schools had to achieve by the year 2002. The Labour government consulted with teachers, parents, governors, providers and employers on these proposals. *Section 2: A Sound Beginning* represented a significant recognition of the importance of a good start via early years, or pre-school, education. Good quality early years education was to be available for all 4 year-olds whose parents wanted it:

“We know that children who benefit from nursery education - especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds - are more likely to succeed in primary school. ... children who benefit from a good primary education are more likely to succeed in secondary education. ... the quality of children’s pre-school and primary education has been shown to have a major impact on their achievements at 16 and their wider social skills.” (DfEE 1997, p.15)

The following areas formed the basis for discussion and consultation in an extensive review of the Early Years Curriculum. This culminated in the publication, in May 2000, of Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. There was to be established:

- a foundation stage for children aged three to the end of the reception year (age 5);
- early learning goals setting out what most children are expected to achieve by the end of the foundation stage.

- development of foundation stage curriculum guidance for schools.

However, practitioners in the field of nursery education were concerned that baseline testing was likely to lead towards more formal styles of teaching in nursery education. They also argued that numerical scores gave a restricted view of children's educational experience and potential at this age. In spite of the existence of this type of view, Nationwide **baseline assessment** was introduced in September 1997 for all pupils starting primary school. The National Framework for Baseline Assessment (**SCAA** 1997) (Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority) allowed schools and LEAs to use a range of approaches provided they met key requirements. The assessment scales published by SCAA (1997), for optional use, in primary schools covered reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics and personal and social development.

What should children be doing in their pre-school (nursery) education? Is it useful to assess any or all of these skills upon entry to primary school: reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics and personal and social development?

Further reading

Lindsay, G., Desforges, M., (1999), *The use of the Infant Index/Baseline PLUS as a baseline assessment measure of literacy*, Journal of Research in Reading, Vol 22, No 1, pp 55-66.

Basic skills and organisation of learning in the primary and secondary sectors

With regard to the primary and secondary sectors, the White Paper encouraged diversity of teaching style, recommending “innovative approaches to organising classes to meet the different abilities of pupils”. However, the view of the Secretary of State for Education was that, in too many cases mixed ability grouping had failed to stretch the brightest pupils and to respond to the needs of those that fall behind. He argued that setting (grouping by ability within a class), particularly in maths, science and languages was proving effective in many schools, and that he expected “setting to be the norm”. However, the strategy has attracted criticism as there still is no recognised research basis for grouping by ability in either primary or secondary education. This is highlighted by some of the recommended readings at the end of this section. The tension between the forms of testing and the purposes of assessment remained an issue. So did the question as to who decides the constitution of a meaningful and fair curriculum - government or educational professionals?

Other significant targets from the White Paper for primary and secondary schools in relation to the ‘standards’ issue were:

- improvement in achievement in literacy and numeracy assisted by national guidelines was to be a top priority: the National Literacy Strategy started in

September 1998 and the National Numeracy Strategy started in September 1999;

- schools were to set their own targets to raise standards, and **school performance tables** (the so-called ‘league tables’ of test results so that parents could make comparisons of local schools) were to show the rate of pupil progress;
- national training programmes focussing on the teaching of literacy, numeracy and IT, were to be created for existing and new headteachers and teachers.

Whilst critics welcomed the intention to improve educational outcomes for all pupils, as with the setting issue, key areas of the strategies outlined in the White Paper attracted serious criticism:

- equating educational ‘standards’ with successful attainment was open to question;
- school performance tables set one school against the other and arguably contributed to creating ‘better’ and ‘worse’ instead of equally good schools;
- the research underpinning the literacy strategy was revealed AFTER its implementation, arousing suspicion it was not based on solid evidence;
- because training programmes were national, they thus could not be critically appraised by teachers.

What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of ‘mixed ability’ grouping? Refer to your own experience as a pupil, from your visits to schools, and your reading.

What makes a school a ‘good’ school, in your opinion? Write down ten features in order of importance. How high is examination success (attainment) in your list?

Further reading

Wray, D., (1998), *Teaching literacy: the foundations of good practice*, Education 3 to 13, Volume 27, No 1, pp 53-59.

Beard R., (2000), *Research and the National Literacy Strategy*, Oxford Review of Education, Vol 26, Nos 3-4, 1 pp 421-436.

Harlen, W., and Malcolm, H., (1997), *Setting and Streaming: A Research Review*, SCRE: Edinburgh.

Boaler, J., Wiliam, D., Brown, M., (2000), *Students' Experiences of Ability Grouping - disaffection, polarisation and the construction of failure*, British Educational Research Journal, Vol 26, Issue 5, pp 631-648.

Excellence for all: educational inequalities and SEN

The White Paper was followed by a **Green Paper** (document proposing a strategy to be implemented by following legislation) with regard to the improvements to SEN provision. Entitled *Excellence for all Children - Meeting Special Educational Needs*, it arguably represented the most comprehensive overhaul of SEN since the *Warnock Report* of almost 20 years previously.

“Improving the achievements of children with special educational needs is part of the crusade for higher standards launched with our White Paper, *Excellence in Schools*.” (DfEE 1997, p.3)

The paper emphasised the need for greater inclusion of SEN pupils within mainstream schooling, and the raising of standards to include those pupils with SEN. It proposed:

- closer cooperation between special and mainstream schools;
- earlier assessment of SEN;
- that more SEN pupils stay in mainstream schooling;
- better support for parents of SEN pupils;
- a revision of the *Code of Practice* to make the processes easier to carry out;
- extra funding for improving physical access to, and within, schools;
- SEN training for all new and serving teachers;
- closer links between education, health and social services.

Do you have a view as to whether children with Special Educational Needs should go to the same school as all other children, or have separate specialised provision? Write down five reasons for and five reasons against special schools.

Further reading

DfEE, (1997), **Excellence for all Children Meeting Special Educational Needs**, London: HMSO.

Excellence for all: educational inequalities and ethnicity

In its drive to raise standards, the White Paper also set out to address perceived educational inequalities, and set targets in relation to raising ‘ethnic minority’ pupils’ attainment and the promotion of racial harmony.

OfSTED had commissioned a review *Raising the Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils: Schools and LEA Responses* in 1996. The review was eventually published in 1999. It was the first major review of research on the educational achievement of ‘ethnic minority’ pupils since the 1985 *Swann Report*. The review highlighted the extent to which the education system

was still failing ‘ethnic minority’ pupils. Here is a summary of the findings:

- social class is strongly associated with differences in pupil progress. However, identification and allocation of resources to meet the needs of ethnic minority pupils resulted in a dramatic increase in achievement even in the face of high levels of economic disadvantage;
- white pupils tended to make greater progress than ‘ethnic minority’ pupils in primary schools;
- racial harassment of pupils was not always recognised as such by teachers;
- African Caribbean pupils were between three and six times more likely to be excluded than white pupils of the same sex;
- a high level of conflict existed between white teachers and African Caribbean pupils.

In terms of what schools could do to combat ‘ethnic minority’ underachievement, the following summary was highly relevant:

- In the schools which had been most successful in raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils, senior managers made clear that the under-performance of any group was not acceptable, gathered evidence systematically and challenged individual teachers and departments to spell out what they intended to do to improve the situation;
- Although schools recorded the numbers of pupils by ethnic group, the use of ethnic monitoring as part of a school’s strategy for raising attainment had barely begun at primary level; too many schools were content to have general ‘impressions’ of the performance of different ethnic groups of pupils, and these impressions could serve to reinforce commonly held stereotypical views;
- Secondary schools were much more likely to have attainment data analysed by ethnic group, but few used this information to raise standards;
- The schools in which minority ethnic pupils flourished could demonstrate that they understood the hostility these pupils often faced. These schools had developed successful strategies for countering stereotyping;
- An important feature of successful race relations work was a school ethos which was “open and vigilant”, in which pupils could talk about their concerns and share in the development of strategies for their resolution.

In conclusion, OfSTED argued that, whilst some schools and LEAs monitored pupil and school performance thoroughly, and used the data to deploy teaching support and resources successfully to raise achievement, many schools and LEAs were not nearly as effective as they should be in tackling the underachievement of minority ethnic groups.

A report in 2001 from the Cabinet Office was to warn that the gap would widen over the next twenty years unless new initiatives were developed. The *Macpherson Report* was published in 1999, six years after the racist murder of the young black man, Stephen Lawrence, in London. The report stated there was “no doubt whatsoever but that the first

[police] investigation was palpably flawed and deserves severe criticism”. It emphasised the need to tackle racial discrimination and eliminate institutional racism, not just in the police service, but in all institutions. The **CRE** (Commission for Racial Equality), in its commentary on the **Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (1999)**, emphasised yet again that schools must more fully reflect the multicultural nature of society and that valuing diversity and challenging racism should be central to their practice. The role of education is highlighted in the report’s recommendations as follows:

67 that consideration be given to amendment of the National Curriculum aimed at valuing cultural diversity and preventing racism.

68 that LEAs and school Governors have the duty to create and implement strategies in their schools to prevent and address racism. Such strategies to include:

- schools record all racist incidents which are then reported to the pupils’ parents/guardians, school Governors and LEAs;
- that the numbers of self-defined ethnic identity of excluded pupils and racist incidents are published annually, on a school-by-school basis; and

69 That OfSTED inspections include examination of the implementation of such strategies.

DfEE pointed out that the National Curriculum already addressed and valued the diverse nature of British society. However, in its commentary on the report, the **Commission for Racial Equality** (CRE) insisted that the NC should more fully reflect the needs of a diverse society; all schools should make the goal of challenging racism and valuing diversity central to their practice. The **QCA** (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) emphasised the potentially influential role of Citizenship education within the National Curriculum (2000).

“... schools must ... reflect the multicultural nature of society and ... valuing diversity and challenging racism should be central to their practice.” What sort of things can schools actually do ? Make a list of your own recommendations.

Further reading

Gillborn, D., & Gipps, C., (1996), *Recent Research on the Achievement of Ethnic Minority Pupils*, London: OfSTED/HMSO.

DfEE, (1997), *Excellence in Schools*, London: HMSO.

OfSTED, (1999), *Raising the Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils: Schools and LEA Responses*, London: OfSTED/HMSO.

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, (1999), *Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny*

Excellence for all: addressing socio-economic educational inequalities

In its drive to raise standards, the White Paper had set out to address perceived educational inequalities, and set targets to combat problems in socio-economically challenged areas. As part of the 1998 *School standards and Framework Act*, the government gave itself radical powers to take over ‘failing’ LEAs and close ‘failing’ schools. These schools could then be re-opened under a new name, with many new staff. By this same Act, **EAZs** (Education Action Zones) were to be set up to support geographical areas of social disadvantage. In the EAZ would be a “loose partnership” of secondary, primary and special schools, working with the LEA, parents - and local businesses. Generous ‘start-up’ funding was available from DfEE with additional funding if further amounts could be raised from private funding by the partnership. The EAZs could ignore standard teachers’ pay and conditions, and the National Curriculum (or parts of it) if this would raise standards. However a critical OfSTED report in 2001 suggested that there had been no significant impact on secondary schools, limited impact in primary schools, and that EAZs had not encouraged new approaches to problems. In addition, EAZs failed to reach their targets for funding from the private sector and the scheme was not extended beyond the initial five-year term. Whilst research into these first ‘public-private partnerships’ was limited, a general message emerged that working relationships in the partnerships were uneasy. LEAs were unhappy with the private sector ‘buying’ a degree of control over their educational policy, whilst the private companies were not allowed to take away the management systems of LEAs and do things their own way.

Schools in EAZs ultimately obtained extra support through the **EiC** (Excellence in Cities) scheme. This was a 3-year programme, set up in March 1999, to improve the education of inner-city children; the aim being to raise attainment standards to match those found in the best-performing schools in the country.

The EiC programme introduced the following resources and strategies, which have remained in place until the publication of this booklet in 2009:

- **City Learning Centres**

These are facilities which provide “state-of-the art ICT-based learning opportunities for the pupils at the host school, for pupils at a network of surrounding schools and for the wider community. (Wikipedia, 2009).

- **Specialist Schools**

“The Specialist Schools Programme helps schools to develop identities through their chosen [subject] specialisms. The schools achieve this in partnership with private sector sponsors and through additional government funding.” (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust website, 2009)

- **Learning Support Units**

These were established within schools to tackle the problems caused by disruptive pupils without excluding them; they are supported by specialist staff, not necessarily qualified teachers, designated as **Learning Mentors**.

- **Beacon Schools**

These were schools identified as good. Their teachers were to get funding to share and spread good practice to neighbouring schools with issues to address.

- **Gifted and Talented Children**

This was introduced to identify and realise the full potential of educationally gifted and talented pupils. Strategies include summer schools at universities for those pupils whose families have not themselves been to university.

The DfEE in its report, *Schools: Building on Success (2001)*, showed that schools in EiC areas were beginning to improve their attainment faster than schools elsewhere. Attainment improvements were fastest in the most deprived schools. That these inner-city areas could aspire to be as good as the best-attaining schools in the country was very important, because in 2000, evidence emerged that Britain had one of the worst records on childhood poverty in the industrialised world. A report by the United Nations Children's Fund (*The Guardian*, 17 March 2000) showed that Britain failed on three key indicators of childhood poverty: 1) the number of single-parent families suffering from poverty was high; 2) the number of unemployed households was high, as was 3) the number of families who had low wages or low levels of state benefits.

In March 1999 Prime Minister Tony Blair had made a speech promising that child poverty would be halved in ten years, and abolished in twenty years. The method used was making changes to the tax and benefit system. Statistics published in 2002 revealed that 500,000 fewer children were living in poverty in 2002 than in 1997, the last year of the Conservative Government. Although welcome, the reduction was short of the government's own claim to have 'lifted' 1.2 million children out of poverty.

To address the long-term causes of child poverty, policies aimed at pre-school children in socially deprived areas were introduced. The government had announced the **Sure Start** programme in July 1998. This was designed to bring together nursery, childcare, and playgroup provision with post-natal and other health services. Parents with children between birth and 3 were offered help to prepare their children for learning in school.

Summarising data in the National Child Development Survey (1958) and British Cohort Study (1970), Brewer and Gregg (2002) said: "Children growing up in financially deprived households underachieved in terms of education, were more likely to contact with the police and probation services, and experienced higher unemployment and lower wages in adulthood." Why do you think this is so?

Further reading

DfEE, (2001), *Schools Building on Success: raising standards, promoting diversity, achieving results*, London: HMSO

Curriculum 2000 and the 14-19 agenda

Significant reform of the 14-19 curriculum and assessment programme was deemed an urgent priority. The specialised study of 3 'A' levels in school **sixth-forms** (now known as years 12 and 13) was primarily designed to prepare students well for continued specialisation at University. But these exams were not necessarily the best preparation for other forms of continuing education nor for employment, and represented a considerable step up from GCSE level. There was thus a perceived need for a qualification in between GCSE and 'A' level, and **Curriculum 2000** brought in the 'AS' examination. It was hoped the less-challenging 'AS' would lead to students pursuing more subjects, and thus introduce a wider subject base, as in European models, to post-16 education. There was also a focus on personal, learning and practical skills as well as academic excellence with the arrival of the **Key Skills** qualifications. Over the next two years, though, post-16 study habits changed little; 'AS' was considered a useful stepping stone by some towards gaining 'A' level, but failed to be considered an important qualification in its own right. Key Skills were not taken seriously by schools, students, universities or employers. Students still tended to narrow their range of subjects to 2 or 3 at A level, and worse, there were administrative problems conducting the first rounds of the new exams. Curriculum 2000 also recognised that many vocational alternatives existed in the 14-19 curriculum in the school and Further Education sector. It was, up until now, difficult to say how forms of assessment such as **GNVQ** (General National Vocational Qualification) and **BTEC** (Business and Technology Education Council) examinations equated to each other and to AS or **A2** ('A'-level). A development of the idea to map and differentiate all these many forms of 14-19 assessment was the **NQF** (National Qualifications Framework). This was helpful, although it attracted criticism in its early form for not mapping post-19 qualifications such as degrees too. A start had been made on reform of the 14-19 sector, but the criticism meant the area would need revisiting by the next government.

List the subjects you studied for your 16-19 qualification. Can you pick three which you feel you could have specialised in, while dropping study of the rest?

Further reading

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Hodgson, A., & Spours, K., (2003), *Beyond A Levels: Curriculum 2000 and the reform of 14-19 qualifications*, Kogan Page: London

The creation of the General Teaching Council

A recurring theme of the period of education history covered by this booklet is that of ‘accountability’. It is inevitable that as schools became more accountable to government for the attainment of pupils, then closer attention would be paid to teachers, their performance and their conduct. Teaching is considered as a ‘profession’ because caring for children is seen to require not only a set of technical skills, but also a sense of moral and social purpose. From a technical point of view, the law sees professions as those areas of work which are **self-regulating** (set their own standards and disciplinary framework). The fields of law and medicine have long-established self-regulatory bodies, for example. Pressure for a general teaching council dated back to the 19th century, but The General Teaching Council for England (GTC) was established rather later by the *Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998*, and functioned from September 2000. The 1998 Act set the GTC two main aims:

- to contribute to improving standards of teaching and the quality of learning;
- to maintain and improve standards of professional conduct among teachers, in the interests of the public.

The GTC responded by establishing the register of teachers, publishing advice to the Government on its proposals for teachers' professional development, and producing a *Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers*. Since the inception of the *Code of Conduct*, there has been much debate about what constitutes acceptable behaviour in and out of school by teachers, and disagreement as to what extent a teacher has to be a ‘role-model’ in all aspects of their life. Critics argue that such a code and the establishment of the GTC is a reflection of excessive attempts by government to make teachers accountable to government and society. On the same theme, the next decade was to see the introduction of **performance management** (judgements of success against given targets) for teachers, and the linking of salary to performance criteria.

What makes teaching a profession rather than just a job? As a professional, are there things you can and cannot do in your private life? Should you earn more if you are a good teacher? How do you judge who is a good teacher?

Further reading

Bartlett, S., (2000), *The Development of Teacher Appraisal: A Recent History*, British Journal of Educational Studies, Vol 48, No 1, pp 24-37.

Mahoney, P., Hextall, I., (2002), *Reconstructing teaching: standards, performance, and accountability*, Teacher Development, Vol 6, No 3, pp 459-476.

Hayes, D., (2001), *Professional status and an emerging culture of conformity amongst teachers in England*, Education 3-13, Vol 29, No 1, pp 43-49.

New Labour: a first term summary

A Labour government was returned to power in the 2001 General Election. There is key evidence that the government had committed itself between 1997 and 2001 to its pledge of “education, education, education”. Key indicators of the pledge were:

In July 1998 the government’s Spending Review had allocated a massive £19bn for education to be spent over the following three years. This represented an average increase in funding of 5.1% per year.

The DfEE’s publication *Schools: Building on Success (2001)* was able to report improvement in literacy and numeracy attainment: 75% of KS 2 pupils reached level 4 in 2000 compared to 57% in 1996, in numeracy 72% compared with 54%.

The government had also invested considerable sums in **Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**. The aim had been that all schools, colleges, universities, libraries and as many community centres as possible should be online and able to benefit from access to the National Grid for Learning by 2002. By 2001, 86% of primary schools and 98% of secondary schools were connected to the Internet.

NOF (New Opportunities Fund) was backed by hundreds of millions of pounds to train serving teachers in the use of ICT in the classroom. This helped bring serving teachers up to the standard required of new teachers entering the profession from September 1999.

However, the uneasy pairing of public authority management with private industry’s financial influence, as the second term of Labour government attempted to continue its programme of public private partnership, would continue to attract debate.

New Labour’s major mission had been to tackle unfairness in the English education system. By addressing matters relating to school admissions, special needs, ethnicity and socio-economic disadvantage, there was proper acknowledgement that resolution of social injustice lay just as much beyond the school gates as within them. Unsurprisingly given the speed of reform, strategies met with mixed success, and a recurring theme of the first decade of the new century would be revisiting of challenging areas: there were to be no quick fixes.

Can local business work with local authorities and not simply promote its own interest? Can local authorities make use of specialist expertise available in private companies? To whom should our children’s futures be entrusted?

Further reading

Jones, K., & Bird, K., (2000), *Partnership’ as Strategy: public–private relations in Education Action Zones*, British Educational Research Journal, Vol 26, No 4, pp 492-506.

Chapter 6

Fresh attempts on stubborn issues: 2001-2009

Diversity, achievement and innovation: the Education Bill 2001

The first important action of the second term of the Labour government was the *Education Bill 2001*. Believing that the primary education sector's major problems had been largely resolved in the first term, the government now set about secondary education. Schools were to have some freedom to try out new ideas for raising attainment, and to work with other schools to lead change in secondary education. The key targets were as follows:

- more diversity of types of school in secondary education. This included the expansion of Specialist Schools, **Faith Schools**, (schools supported by the churches and other major faith groups), and the creation of **Advanced Schools** (an elite group expected to lead curriculum innovation);
- giving schools more freedom to manage their own financial affairs. The target was that 85% of a school budget would go directly to the headteacher, bypassing the LEAs;
- developing a more diverse 14-19 curriculum. This was to involve more early entries for GCSE examination, and a much greater choice of vocational and work-based routes to attainment success;
- a drive to improve the quality of teaching, and thus raise standards, in the first three years of secondary school (at key stage 3, 11-14);
- narrowing significantly the achievement gaps that still existed for children from Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and some other ethnic backgrounds who had tended to be poorly served by their experience at school;
- implementation of **Public Private Partnerships** (PPP). 'Privatisation', the bringing in of private companies, was to be compulsory where schools and local authorities were deemed to be failing.

The Bill attracted significant criticism from academics. They saw educational policy being little different in outlook from that of previous conservative governments. They variously argued:

- moves to take power away from local authorities and to look to private enterprise as a source of inspiration was undemocratic and similar in philosophy to previous conservative governments;
- raising attainment standards would not mean that the education system was succeeding in achieving its overall objectives;
- different types of schools would bring about more inequalities and social division.

Should schools adhere to the 'one size fits all' comprehensive philosophy? Or is it better to have schools which have differences - different faith values, subject specialisms or management systems? What would YOU want for your own children?

Further reading

Chitty, C., (2002), *The 2001 White paper and the New Education Bill*, Forum: for promoting 3-19 comprehensive education, Vol 44, No 1, pp 13-14.

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Green Paper 2002: 14-19 Opportunity and Excellence

The DfEE (Department for Education and Employment) was by now renamed the **DfES** (Department for Education and Skills). This Green Paper argued that the skills of young people should be broadened to improve their employability. Recent reports had demonstrated that success in qualifications amongst this age-group in the UK was substantially below that of all but two other European countries.

A working group was set up by the DfES to look into reforming the qualifications framework for this age group. The group's remit was arguably symptomatic of successive governments' inability to have a view of curriculum other than the assessment-led model. The report which set out principles for the 14-19 reform was published in 2004. The government then decided whether to take up its recommendations, but any changes were likely to take considerable time to effect, and would be unlikely to take shape until the end of the 21st century's first decade. The report claimed its recommendations offered

“a coherent and effective way of organising 14-19 learning which builds upon the strengths of the current system, while seeking to tackle long-standing weaknesses within it.” (DfES, 2004)

These weaknesses were seen to be

- low post-16 participation and achievement; ...
- ... curriculum and assessment systems which limited scope for wider-ranging and in-depth learning, particularly in the A level route;
- a fragmented ... system of vocational qualifications; and
- failure to equip young people of all abilities with the generic skills, knowledge and personal attributes they would need for future learning, employment and adult life.

The main proposals to combat these weaknesses were as follows:

- A framework of Diplomas for 14-19 learning at the first four levels of the National Qualifications Framework (Entry, Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced) was to be introduced’;
- The “template’ for 14-19 learning would be the core (common elements and statutory key stage 4 requirements) as well as “choice and specialisation”;
- For post-16 school leavers, MAs (Modern Apprenticeships) would be linked to the diploma system through clear progression routes;
- Diploma grades would provide a broad indication of learners’ achievement, but be supplemented by “detailed information that many employers, training providers and higher and further education institutions want in order to support their recruitment and admissions processes”.

Does a grade tell the whole story? What else do you want to know about a pupil or student if you are going to enroll him or her on your further education course or employ him or her?

Further reading

DfES, (2002), *Green Paper 14-19: Opportunity and Excellence*, London: HMSO.

DfES, (2004), **14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reform**, London: HMSO.

Priestley, M., (2003), *Curriculum 2000: a broader view of A levels?*, Cambridge Journal of Education, Vol 33, No 2, pp 237-255.

Revisiting ongoing issues: primary curriculum and assessment

The much-criticised baseline assessment strategy established in 1997 was replaced by the **Foundation Stage Profile** in September 2002. The end of the **Foundation Stage** is at the end of the first year in primary school known as the Reception year. This profile is based on teachers’ ongoing observations over the six identified areas of learning: reading, writing, speaking, listening, mathematics and personal and social development. Each child’s typical development and achievements were to be recorded on assessment scales derived from the early learning goals.

Having modified the assessment strategy for children entering school, attention again turned to transition to testing in the primary key stages 1 and 2. Teachers and head teachers had been protesting that the targets at KS2 were unachievable. National targets set previously by the government were missed in 2002. So, as part of the 2003 document *Excellence and Enjoyment: a Strategy for Primary Schools* the government set aside test targets,

and handed back responsibility to teachers and LEAs to decide and negotiate their own targets for raising the performance of each child. The pressure to question the value of testing pupils was mounting. In 2004 Ministers faced growing concern among parents and teachers over the impact of **SATS** (Standard Attainment Tests) on pupils, this time at the end of Key Stage 1 (age 5-7). The government announced that end-of-year tests for seven year-olds would be scrapped. Pupils were still to take tests in reading, writing and maths at any time during the year, but no longer under strict exams conditions. The scores were to be integrated into their teachers' assessment of the pupils' overall work during the year. These primary reforms might be regarded as an admission by government that national testing and setting of attainment targets does not necessarily lead to enhancement of attainment, and that a long-awaited return to the days when teachers' professional judgement is all-important might be on the way.

Do we need to test 7- and 11-year-olds with nationally set tests to judge their progress? Or does the teacher know best, and can find other and better ways of profiling the child's progress?

Further reading

DfES, (2003), **Excellence and enjoyment: a strategy for primary schools**, London: HMSO.

Dainton, S., (2005) **Reclaiming Teachers' Voices**, FORUM, Vol 47, Nos 2 & 3, pp 159-168.

Revisiting ongoing issues: equal opportunities and minority ethnic pupils

The 2003 publication *Raising the Attainment of Minority Pupils* set out the Government's continuing commitment to addressing ongoing and problematic equal opportunities issues. It reminded schools of their legal obligation to address this issue as proscribed in the *Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)*. Drawing from evidence collated by the 2001 **Census** (the procedure of acquiring and recording information about a population every 10 years), it outlined the achievement patterns of minority ethnic pupils, and the need for improvement. To assist schools in the matter of, using recent research evidence, the document attempted to identify characteristics of schools which had addressed minority ethnic achievement. The most significant strategy proposed was systematic review of the impact of policies, practice and procedures both within schools and the wider education system. It then outlined the steps that the Government proposed to take in order to support effective practice, including getting better value out of the substantial monies

provided by Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant.

Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils and *Aiming High: Guidance on Supporting the Education of Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children* offered a range of practical advice and guidance for schools on how to address the very particular needs and challenges posed by the schooling of these groups. The documents offered a brief outline of the characteristics of various traveller and national communities, and identified the following general strategies that schools needed to pursue in a pro-active manner:

- tackling racism and social exclusion;
- enhancing teacher knowledge and raising their expectations of the pupils;
- developing a culturally relevant and diverse curriculum;
- addressing pupils social and emotional needs;
- including and involving parents in the schooling process.

Critics have supported the Labour government for their good intentions. However, it has been suggested that areas of the Labour government's education policy are in conflict with each other, and have tended to make worse, rather than resolve, racial and social equality in our school:

“From 1997 the New Labour government was eager to affirm a commitment to social justice and racial equality, and initially there were moves to address some long-standing educational grievances. But a continuation of Conservative market policies of choice and diversity in schooling and a targeting of 'failing' schools exacerbated school segregation and racial inequalities. Policies intended to improve the achievement of minority groups have had some success, but the higher achievements of Indian and Chinese groups have led to facile comparisons which further [stereotype the behaviour of] young people of African-Caribbean and Pakistani origin.” (Tomlinson, 2005)

What sort of differences do you think the suggested general strategies make to your everyday work in an English school? For example, how would it affect the way you review your lesson plans with your Mentor?

Further reading

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DfES, (2004), *Aiming High: Guidance on Supporting the Education of Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children*, London: HMSO.

Tomlinson, S., (2005), *Race, ethnicity and education under New Labour*, Oxford Review of Education, Vol 31, No 1, pp 153-171.

Every Child Matters: The Children Act 2004, The Children's Plan 2007 and The Education Act 2005

Every so often, a tragic and deplorable event effects a complete reconsideration of what is important. The death of one child in 2000 arguably changed the nation's perspective on education from having lessons and tests to the leading of a happy and fulfilling life. Following the failure of social services' systems in London to prevent the death, effectively at the hands of her family, of 8-year-old Victoria Climbié in 2000, the Government published a Green Paper in 2003 called *Every Child Matters* (**ECM**) alongside the formal report into the little girl's death. ECM set out the Government's approach to the well-being of young people from birth to age 19, and was made into law by *The Children Act 2004*. The required outcomes of *Every Child Matters* are that every child should:

- be healthy;
- stay safe;
- enjoy and achieve;
- make a positive contribution;
- achieve economic well-being.

“The legislation and subsequent changes will bring about a whole new agenda and philosophy that will directly or indirectly involve every school, teacher, paraprofessional and educational support service.” (Reid, 2005)

ECM was developed through the 2007 publication of the *Children's Plan* in 2007. The radical effect of ECM has been that the child's experience is currently viewed from a broader, whole-life perspective, taking into account the fact that young people spend only one-fifth of their childhood in the formal educational setting of school. To reflect their more holistic purpose, LEAs and the government department in charge of schools lost the word “education” from their title, Local Education Authorities becoming **LA**s (Local Authorities) the DfES becoming **DCSF** (Department for Schools, Children and Families):

“*The Children's Plan* is a ten-year strategy ... Because young people learn best when their families support and encourage them, and when they are taking part in positive activities outside of the school day, the *Children's Plan* is based around a series of ambitions which cover all areas of children's lives. The Plan aims to improve educational outcomes for children, improve children's health, reduce offending rates among young people and eradicate child poverty by 2020, thereby contributing to the achievement of the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes.” (**TDA**, (Training and development Agency for Schools), 2007)

A significant outcome has been the notion of **Extended Schools**. The government declared that by 2010, all schools were to provide “extended services and activities for children and families on the school site or nearby ... often ... provided in collaboration with other organisations” (TDA, 2007), for example, childcare in primary schools, community access to school facilities, or swift access to specialist services such as parenting support.

ECM has been embedded into the **QTS** (Qualified Teacher Status) standards, rewritten in 2007, for **ITT** (Initial Teacher Training), and means teachers are by law required to:

- contribute towards ensuring young people’s achievement and well-being;
- work collaboratively as part of the school team, working with other teachers, support staff, parents and carers and other professionals, as appropriate;
- share information about the well-being of the children and young people;
- understand that the information flow – to whom, from whom and for what purpose – is a crucial part of the teacher’s role.

The Education Act 2005 had been rushed through the Parliamentary law-making process as the 2005 General Election approached. It was a very lengthy piece of legislation, but for the purposes of this brief history, it is apt to limit commentary to two key areas clearly linked to the impact of the ECM agenda: school inspections. and staff training.

In terms of schools’ accountability to government, OfSTED inspections had until now been announced in advance, and took a week or more to complete. This had become an impossible task for an insufficient number of inspectors, who usually arrived at schools where the teachers were very stressed following weeks of detailed preparation. From now on, inspection teams were to arrive at short notice and conduct the inspection during a maximum of 2 days. Teachers would not have long to worry about when the inspectors came, and the inspection workload was reduced to a quarter of what it was before. The main inspection focus was to match the ECM agenda: inspectors would judge schools against the five outcomes. Schools were not simply to be judged formally on test results, but also on how well they promoted the well-being of their pupils.

The notion of **Extended Schools** had a significant effect on staffing. A ‘wider workforce’ would be needed to lead activity within and beyond the old school day. Contractual reform has since attracted careful monitoring by teacher trades unions. They wish to ensure that workers are paid at the correct rates for the type of work they do, and that qualified teacher jobs are not reduced. To oversee this reform, the 2005 Act extended the remit of the government agency for training teachers, the **TTA** (Teacher Training Agency), to include the training of this wider workforce. In the process, the agency name was changed to **TDA** (Training and Development Agency for Schools).

Does the ECM agenda change your view of what the school teacher’s role does and should or should not include?

Further reading

Reid, K, (2005), *The Implications of Every Child Matters and the Children Act for Schools*, Pastoral Care in Education, Vol 23, No 1, pp 12-18.

Education and Inspections Act 2006

The White Paper which preceded this law was *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* of 2005. The Act allowed schools to have the choice to become a **Trust School** and “take responsibility for their own school improvement, working closely with other schools and **external partners** (mostly local businesses)” (DCSF, 2006). If a school became a Trust School, key responsibilities were transferred out of **LA** (local authority) control to the school and external partners:

- employment of the staff;
- ownership of the school land and buildings;
- appointment of the majority of the governing body;
- setting their own pupil admission numbers and arrangements, subject to a newly strengthened **School Admissions Code** (see below).

Local authorities would have a particular duty to respond to parental concerns about the quality of local schools, and new powers to intervene earlier where performance was thought to be poor. Critics said that the formation of Trust Schools, like that of Foundation schools and Specialist Schools was the same as saying the comprehensive school ideal had failed, and that it was ironic a Labour government should be dismantling the comprehensive system and implementing what seemed to be Conservative policy.

Since the idea of parental choice had also been introduced by previous Conservative governments, Labour governments had continued to support it since 1997. Now Labour tried to put an end to the worst effects of this policy. It had led to some state schools practising selection-by-ability procedures which were deemed unfair, and to have created ‘better’ and ‘worse’ schools instead of equally good ones. So local authorities were put in charge of **fair access**. State schools were not to be allowed to select by interview or ‘supplementary’ application forms, as both procedures were deemed to be abuse of the state admissions system. In accordance with the Schools Admissions Code, schools were now to provide clear information on uniform and transport policies in order to prevent children from poorer families being disadvantaged, and local authorities’ were to provide:

- free transport for the most disadvantaged families;
- advice to parents in expressing a preference for a school for their child.

Whilst this attempt to prevent abuse of the system was welcome, the Act still did not address the fundamental question of whether parental choice was a politically correct idea. The taking away of power from local authorities appointed by elected officials was seen by critics to be undemocratic.

Pupil behaviour, and control of its negative aspects, was addressed. By this Act, it is currently the legal duty of schools “to discipline pupils, putting an end to the “You can’t tell me what to do” culture.” (DCSF 2006). The rationale was thus:

“Behaviour has long been a major concern for school staff and parents alike.”

The Act made parents take more responsibility: **parenting orders** (instructions to

parents on how to deal with their children's unruly behaviour) and behaviour contracts between schools and parents were to be given legal status. Parents now had to be responsible for pupils in the first five days of their exclusion from school. As a balance, provision for excluded pupils was improved, and school governing bodies and local authorities were required to provide substitute full-time education for pupils from the sixth day of an exclusion onwards. Critics argued that reaction to poor behaviour was not inclusive policy. Some saw the focus on punishment as unworkable, and the use of sanctions as doing little to encourage **behaviour for learning** (a government-backed policy educating pupils to behave in ways better suited to school-based learning).

In the 14–19 Green Paper, the government had “set out plans to transform opportunity for young people through changes to curriculum, qualifications and the organisation of education ... to enable every young person to pursue ... study that prepares them for success ...” (DfES, 2002) The Act introduced specialised Diplomas as an entitlement for every young person in the country. These Diplomas have been introduced on a gradual basis by different subjects up until 2009. It remains to be seen whether the Diplomas represent a real change in the way education of the 14-19 sector is approached, or just a change in the examination system of a curriculum which will continue to be dominated by assessment issues: a future update of this booklet may provide some insight.

School dinners had hit the news headlines, and had been shown to be of questionable nutritional value. The Act created tough new standards for food and drink served in maintained schools. This has been seen as a positive step, but changing the eating and drinking habits of children and adolescents – and the feeding habits of their parents and carers – has proved a tough battle up to the present day.

In spite of its name, the Act had a very small focus on the inspections system, making administrative changes to reduce OfSTED's workload and continue the work towards shortening inspections. In a further simplification, all institutions which provided services to young people and children were from now on to be inspected by OfSTED.

Can changing the law help alter or enforce pupils' learning or eating behaviours, or is it a matter of education?

Does the idea of Trust Schools fit with the idea of all schools being equal and 'comprehensive', and providing the same National Curriculum for all pupils?

Further reading

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Ranson, S., (2008), **The Changing Governance of Education**, Educational Management Administration & Leadership, Vol 36, No 2, pp 165-184.

Hill, D., (2006), *New labour's education policy*, chapter 6 in *Education Studies: Issues and Critical Perspectives*, Kassem, D., Mufti, E., Robinson, J. (eds), Open University Press.

Secondary National Curriculum reform 2007

The National Curriculum had undergone a major review in 1994. This was mainly instigated by disquiet in the primary sector. Ever since, it has been reviewed on a regular 5-year cycle, resulting in refreshed statutory orders in 1995, 2000, and 2005. The **core subjects** were, and remain, compulsory for all pupils between the ages of 5 and 16 (for example, maths, English and science). Other subjects had, and have, the status of **foundation subjects** (for example, modern languages, history, geography), which in simple terms means that they had, and have, periods of compulsory study until the end of key stage 3, and were, and are, thereafter optional.

During its brief history, criticism of the National Curriculum at key stage 3 had typically been directed at the narrow vision of each subject area; teaching and learning in the subject areas was separate, what a pupil was doing for example in maths during one half-term topic was not linked in any way to work in other subjects. The 2007 revision of the National Curriculum tried to take account of what has come to be known as the ‘big picture’. There has been an attempt in its design to acknowledge that a more holistic view of the child’s experience of curriculum was needed; the emphasis on **cross-curricular strands** has been the result in the revised curriculum. Such an approach was deemed necessary to achieve the desired outcomes expressed in holistic terms in the *Every Child Matters* agenda. The revised curriculum came into force for Y7 starting in September 2008.

“A review at key stage 3 was very necessary because this is the only area of the curriculum still excessively prescriptive ... the QCA has gone beyond the slimming down of content that we originally anticipated and has quite rightly looked at the whole curriculum much more critically. What has emerged is a major shake-up that will require every secondary school to examine its curriculum for 11- to 14-year-olds, based on the template of the review's proposals. (*The Guardian*, Tuesday 3 April, 2007)

Schools are encouraged to ask these key questions in evaluating their key stage 3 subject curriculum:

- How well does it meet the wider aims of the curriculum?
- How well does it allow all young people to achieve high standards?
- How well does it allow all young people to achieve the outcomes of the *Every Child Matters* agenda?
- What are the strengths of your current curriculum?
- What are areas for further development of your current curriculum?

Many critics felt that the curriculum would never properly be ‘free’ whilst the end-of-key-stage **SATs** (Standard Attainment Tests) still remained. Following a major controversy in the summer of 2008 over late marking by a private company commissioned to administrate them, the tests for 14-year-olds were abolished in October; schools now can conduct their own assessment and more frequent class assessment is likely to be the result.

Tests for 11-year-olds at the end of key stage 2 remain in place as an indication of primary school standards. At secondary school, GCSEs and A-levels remain the measure, with Diplomas forthcoming.

One particular subject, Citizenship, is worthy of special mention in the bid of curricular reform to achieve wider aims and address inequalities relating to ethnicity. The Government's citizenship programme for secondary schools, made compulsory in 2002, was designed to "help pupils become informed, thoughtful and responsible citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities" (DfEE, 2002). Only a year after, OfSTED said the incorporation of citizenship into the curriculum had been mismanaged in more than half of schools and the subject was "well developed" in a very small number. A separate report by CSV, the volunteer charity, claimed that half of teachers felt they did not have enough time or backing to do the subject justice. Following resurgence of racial tensions in 2001 in schools and communities, in response to issues around international terrorism, Oldham and Bradford schools had devised lessons for pupils to discuss their identity, values and what made them British after the 2001 race riots. A government-commissioned review of the citizenship curriculum in 2007 by Sir Keith Ajebo, a former headteacher and Home Office adviser, concluded that more needed to be done to provide "the essential glue" that binds society together, and he called on teachers to learn from the experiences of those Oldham and Bradford schools. The government's officially stated view was that schools should do more to teach pupils the core British values of justice, fairness, equality and tolerance. The key proposal of the review was for the Citizenship programme to include a new element called *Identity and Diversity: Living Together in the UK*.

"This will mean that all pupils, as part of compulsory secondary citizenship education, would be taught about shared values and life in the UK. This will be informed by an understanding of contemporary issues and the relevant historical context which gave rise to them." (*Teachernet*, May 2008)

There was a resulting call for all curriculum subjects to adequately reflect the diversity of modern Britain, and that schools be appropriately supported by training in communicating the significant diversity message.

Do you have any ideas how national curriculum subjects might approach the cross-curricular strand of diversity?

Do you have any ideas how the subject you are going to teach can contribute to broader educational aims in the 'big picture'?

Further reading

QCA, (2007), **National Curriculum, Key Stages 3 and 4**, London: HMSO.

Multiverse website, *Focus on diversity and schooling*, <http://www.multiverse.ac.uk>

Education and Skills Act 2008: 14-19 and beyond

The 14-19 agenda remains key to addressing socio-economic disadvantage. Following the 14-19 review of 2004, the government commissioned an independent review known as *The Leitch Review*, which had recommended enhancement of skills levels of young people by keeping them in education and training longer. In July 2007, the Government published **World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England**. The 2007 Green Paper **Raising Expectations: staying in education and training post-16**, focused specifically on young people, and significantly proposed to raise the school-leaving age to 18.

The Act duly imposed an obligation on:

- all young people in England to participate in education or training up to the age of 18.
- local authorities and employers to enable and support participation.
- the **LSC (Learning and Skills Council)** to secure proper facilities for apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds, (and those aged 19 and over)

The Act also amended the *School Standards and Framework Act 1998* so that post-16 students could choose where they have their sixth form education, instead of simply remain at the school where they have completed key stages 3 and 4 (11-16).

In the modern world, do pupils have enough skills and knowledge to start in the world of work at the age of 16, or was the raising of the leaving age to 18 justified in your view?

Further reading

Hodgson, A., Spours, K., (2007), *Specialised diplomas: transforming the 14–19 landscape in England?*, *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol 22, No 6, pp 657-673.

What does the future hold?

It is posited that common issues lie at the heart of both the historical achievements of, and future challenges to, the primary and secondary education sectors in England. Arguably this all-too-brief history from 1944 to 2009 raises five major headings under which to debate the formation of a coherent future vision of our children's education:

- 1 The role of education in society;
- 2 The design and control of curriculum;
- 3 The roles of educational professionals, government and appointed institutions;
- 4 The purpose and form of assessment;
- 5 The search for social justice and equality of opportunity regardless of gender, special need, ethnicity or social class.

Having studied its history via the pages, weblinks and recommended further reading in this 2-part booklet, what are the 5 most important questions, in your opinion, that the education system of England must address before 2020?

Further reading

Whitty, G., (2008), **Twenty Years of Progress? English Education Policy 1988 to the Present**, Educational Management Administration & Leadership, Vol 36, No 2, pp 165-184.

End of part 2