PREM 19/1722

New File Cover
17.4.86

MT

PART 6

Confidential Filing.

Policy on Education Expenditure.

General Policy on Education.

EDUCATION.

Part 1: May 1979.

Part 6: Sept. 1985.

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
~~16.4.86~~							
~~17.4.86~~							
~~18.4.86~~							
~~22.4.86~~							
~~23.4.86~~							
~~25.4.86~~							
29.4.86							
PT6 GNDS							

In folder attached:

Minute 26.3.86 SS/DES "How to get Better Schools".

PART 6 ends:-

DN to PM DGS 29/4

PART 7 begins:-

SS/SCOTLAND to SS/DGS 6/5.

Published Papers

The following published paper(s) enclosed on this file have been removed and destroyed. Copies may be found elsewhere in The National Archives.

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE),
The National Criteria, Mathematics
Published by HMSO. ISBN 0 11 270569 3

Signed _____ Date 16/09/2014

PREM Records Team

Subject
11 master.

file

cc BG

cc B Ormin

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 April 1986

Dear Bob,

HOW TO GET BETTER SCHOOLS

The Prime Minister this morning held a meeting to discuss policy towards education. The Lord President, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and your Secretary of State were present. The meeting had before it your Secretary of State's paper of 26 March and its attachments, and minutes by the Chancellor of the Duchy (31 March) and the Home Secretary (7 April).

Sir Keith Joseph said the choice of options for the future could not be entirely separated from the tangle of teachers' pay, career structure and so on. There was no possibility that ACAS would make recommendations which were both affordable and acceptable to the Government, and the Government would have to choose sooner or later whether to reject the ACAS recommendations or to abort the process before the recommendations were made. None of the options would be effective unless the teachers were more or less willing to implement them.

In discussion, it was quickly agreed that the options for a nationalised system of education and separately elected education authorities could be ruled out. There were however differences about the proposal for Government Maintained (GM) schools and the proposal to rely on greater use of specific grants as the main lever for bringing pressure to bear on the state sector.

It was argued that the proposal for GM schools would not provide a real middle way between the state system and fully private schools. It was tragic that direct grant schools had been abolished. The result had been a major loss of educational opportunities. It should be possible to consider other possibiliites along those lines - and others between the two extremes - recognising that this might mean the introduction of some charging for some parents at the point of use. Against this, it was argued that to attempt to recreate direct grant schools would be highly controversial and divisive, would damage morale in the state system, and, at best, would only lead to the creation of a few scores of schools, leaving the bulk of the state system untouched. It was suggested without discussion that an extension of the assisted places scheme would be expensive and would demoralise the state sector.

The meeting considered the proposal for more extensive use of specific grants as a lever to achieve the Government's objectives for state education. Sir Keith Joseph said that the proposals in this area (technical paper no. 6) were directed towards improving education for the great majority of children. (The other proposals could help only a small minority.) They were in many ways a modest version of those set out by the Chancellor of the Duchy (minute of 31 March). They would not conflict with the proposed reforms of local authority finance: if a local authority were to defy the Government, the burden arising from a loss of specific grant would fall on the community charge.

In discussion of this proposal it was noted that greater use of specific grants would tend to lead to higher spending. The leverage of specific grants would probably have to be used vigorously, which would lead to a constant risk that decisions would be subjected to judicial review.

However, even if it could be made to work, the proposal did not go far enough towards allowing greater choice for parents, with all the pressures that would create for higher standards in state schools. The provisions for parental choice included in the 1944 and 1980 Education Acts had not worked as intended and greater thought should be given to ways to give them substance.

One model might be provided by the way in which the capitation fees received by GPs rose and fell according to the number of patients who chose to register with them: capitation fees would be attracted by schools in proportion to the number of children placed in each school by parents. LEAs would in essence act as paying agents. The level at which capitation fees would be set would be important and difficult to determine, but this should not prove an insuperable difficulty. Associated with this proposal - though also worth considering in its own right - it should be possible to devolve much more financial authority to headteachers.

On the other hand it was argued that proposals for vouchers or credits had been thoroughly studied in the past, and had been rejected. Credits would be highly controversial, they would not help parents in large areas of the country, the legislation would be massive and complicated and very substantial safety nets would be needed for children with special needs or who were refused entry to the schools of their choice. It would only be worthwhile to attempt a credit system if it were to apply to the whole country from the start: there was nothing to be gained from beginning with pilot schemes.

It was suggested that the curriculum also needed further study. There was a case for a nationally determined core curriculum. This would include mathematics, science, English and perhaps a foreign language, each subject possibly to be studied from a limited list of text books.

Observance of the curriculum would probably simply be required by legislation, rather than being enforced through financial penalties, though the DES could well need to take a stronger role in setting and overseeing standards.

Bringing the discussion to a close, the Prime Minister said it was important that the Government should demonstrate its concern for higher standards of education. Further work should distinguish between changes which could be made without legislation during this Parliament and those which would require legislation. The aim might be to publish a Green Paper in the early autumn which would discuss the more radical options followed by a White Paper early in 1987.

A further meeting of the group (somewhat enlarged) should be held in about two weeks. A free-standing paper would be needed for that meeting, which should specify fully the objectives and the assumptions and should consider

(i) a full range of options for encouraging middle ways between state and private provision; some options might require the introduction of charging;

(ii) a full range of options for increasing the ability of parents to choose in the state sector; one option would be a form of transferable capitation fee and a credit or voucher system could not be ruled out;

(iii) ways of devolving more decisions in the state system to the level of the school;

(iv) a nationally determined, standard core curriculum;

(v) the supervisory, regulatory, and standard setting functions which might need to be exercised by DES under these more radical options.

I am copying this letter to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Rachel Lomax (H M Treasury) and Andrew Lansley (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office).

Yours,

David.

DAVID NORGROVE

Rob Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science

BG

CC BC

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Sir Peter Hordern MP
House of Commons
LONDON SW1A OAA

Prime Minister 2 cc MA (both letters)

DRN 30/4

28 April 1986

Dear Peter.

Thank you for your letter of 23 April on behalf of the Executive of the 1922 Committee about the Government's provision for expenditure by local authorities on education. I am grateful for the sustained support which I have had from colleagues in the prosecution of our education policies and pleased that you should have put so clearly to me the Committee's concerns for the future.

I accept that the state of our school buildings and the provision of books and equipment in schools are matters of widespread concern. I think that we also share a perception that simply making more resources available to local education authorities would not of itself put matters right. In successive public expenditure White Papers we have given priority to provision both for repairs and maintenance and for books and equipment within the overall plans for education. Although there is evidence of some real-term increases in spending, particularly on repairs and the provision of equipment, the general response of local authorities has been unimpressive. I have accumulated evidence, for example, that some authorities have deferred expenditure on buildings maintenance in order to avoid cutting surplus school places or the number of staff whom they employ, despite falls in pupil numbers. Expenditure on books and equipment has been liable to suffer from similar short-sighted policies. Equally, the shortages in schools may result, as HMI have reported, from teachers' misperceptions of pupils' needs. What is abundantly clear is that local education authorities need to manage their resources better.

That said, I do not argue that better management will solve all the problems, some the consequence of accumulated neglect over a number of years. We acknowledged in "Better Schools" (Cmnd 9469) that some increase in real levels of expenditure per pupil would be needed for the full achievement of our education objectives for schools. I have taken on board the Committee's view that we should now make a start in increasing resources and will draw to the attention of colleagues in our discussion

on public expenditure their strongly expressed opinion that education is now the most important priority. I think that you will appreciate that I can go no further than that at present.

You also raise the question whether more use of specific grants, particularly in these areas, would deliver better returns for the resources which the Government puts into local authority education. I believe that they will. And we have already gone some way to increase the use of specific grants in education. In 1983 I introduced a specific grant for the in-service education of teachers. In 1984 we passed the Education (Grants and Awards) Act which enables the holder of my office to pay education support grants up to a limit of 0.5% of planned expenditure on local authority education. Earlier this year, the Education (Amendment) Act raised that limit to 1% in order to accommodate payments of grant on new arrangements for midday supervision in schools. And the Education Bill now before Parliament provides for much wider powers to pay grant on the in-service education of teachers.

There may well be a case for going further still. For example, in response to the particular point which you make about books and equipment for GCSE, £20m over the two years 1987-88 and 1988-89 represented the maximum that I could authorise within the statutory limit on expenditure for education support grants under the Act. My powers remain strictly limited in this field. As you will know, however, Kenneth Baker has announced a review of specific grants in the Green Paper "Paying for Local Government" and we acknowledge there that there may be a case for some new specific grants, for example in the education field, in support of the Government's objective of raising standards at all levels of ability. That review is now well under way.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister.

Yours ever,

Kenneth

CF
Personal file.

Mark
Tell you

10 DOWNING STREET

NCW

Nigel

I have

(i) let Lady Lea know that the PM is sorry she simply cannot cope for the diary this week. Lady C perfectly understood.

(ii) told the L.P's office that the PM hoped he could decide this instant working the PM

(iii) let B.G. see the ppts, and informed him of my call from Lady Lea, and its upshot.

MCA 25/4

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

Neil Wright is already desperately busy. I hope the L.P. can do what I am sure he will have towards resolve because the volume of support not

Prime Minister

The Lord President's office feel very strongly that the Lord Pres. would not wish you to see Healey Cos not work. He is having the most difficult negotiations with Lea and the DES to try to establish a working thing. If he is not successful, he may wish

to see you next week and possibly to ask you to see Sir K. Joseph.

The Lord Provost's Office believe that he would be glad that any direct contact between you and Lady Cox would complicate his negotiations, which already are driving him to despair.

I suggest you ask Brian to keep you well informed of developments next week.

N.L.W
25.4

Duty Clerk
AB requested

With the compliments of

D.J. Gladwell
Private & International Law Branch

LORD CHANCELLOR'S DEPARTMENT,
House of Lords,
SW1A 0PW

01-219 5848

CCBG.

CONFIDENTIAL

Mark, You wanted to see the report of this meeting. JP 30/4

Minute of Meeting held on Thursday 24 April 1986 at 4.30 pm:

Education Bill

MGA

Present: Lord Chancellor; Seaton, Gladwell, Secretary of State for Education and Science; Ulrich, Solicitor-General; Inglese

The Secretary of State opened the meeting by saying that the Government was facing a huge campaign, led by Lady Cox, to include a provision in the Education Bill against indoctrination in schools. He accepted the noxiousness of indoctrination but said that the problem was securing evidence. He had been urged by the Lord President if humanly possible to come up with an amendment which would satisfy Lady Cox, Lord Home and others.

2. The Lord Chancellor indicated that he did not have the same objection to judicial review as he would have to the direct involvement of the judiciary: before that it would anyway be necessary to have delicate consultation with the judges. Although it would not be possible to keep the Courts out altogether [Anisminic] some sort of a Tribunal might be considered. The Secretary of State however questioned the effectiveness of such a tribunal and its likely cost.

/Cont...

CONFIDENTIAL

3. The Lord Chancellor thought it impracticable to ask judges to decide what was indoctrination, or to give them an objective set of criteria. He would like to avoid the suggested statutory duty on LEAs and schools to promote a responsible approach to political issues (see Annex), though he considered that the Act might contain an objective statement of a positive duty on those lines: on the LEA and the teacher to approach political issues responsibly (subject to guidelines to be issued by the Secretary of State), failure to observe it amounting to professional misconduct to be determined by an impartial tribunal. The more insidious problem was the persistently indoctrinating teacher against whom the LEA could get no evidence. Although he did not like tribunals [Occam's razor], as protector of the judiciary he felt there should be a green baize door between them and politics. If they were directly involved it would be difficult to keep them out of controversy and individual judges would rapidly get political reputations. But on judicial review, vires and Wednesbury would provide alibis. He would be prepared to appoint members to a tribunal, after consultation with the Secretary of State.

4. The Solicitor-General suggested that the test might be, 'professionally' responsible manner.

/Cont...

6. The Secretary of State said he would report the outcome of this meeting to the Lord President who would have to negotiate with Lady Cox. If the tribunal-idea failed it would be necessary to consider the direct approach. The Lord Chancellor said that the cost/effectiveness argument against a tribunal was always one which had to be met.

D.G.

D J Gladwell

Private & International
Law Division
SO/02 (HL)
219 -5648

25 April 1986

POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION

Draft new clause - fourth version

BEFORE CLAUSE 37

Insert the following new Clause-

("Duty to secure responsible treatment of political issues.

. The local education authority by whom any county, voluntary or special school is maintained, and the governing body and head teacher of the school, shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils while they are-

(a) at the school; or

(b) taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised for registered pupils at the school by or on behalf of the school;

those issues are dealt with in a responsible manner.")

Education: Policy Pt 6

PRIME MINISTER 24 April 1986

EDUCATION BILL: AMENDMENTS RE. POLITICAL BIAS

The groundswell of opinion in the House of Lords over political bias has at last forced the DES to accept amendments to the Education Bill from Caroline Cox and others (Charteris, Orr-Ewing, Harris of Greenwich, Renton, Chalfont and Annan). Caroline Cox claims it has wide all-Party support.

Although the DES may try to mobilise legal opinion against their amendments on the question of judiciability, it appears that no less an authority than Lord Denning is prepared to defend the amendments on this score.

The Secretary of State in his letter to the Solicitor-General of 22 April lists five possible options, though the setting up of a complaints body is of a different standing than the first four suggestions; and, indeed, might be used in the practical implementation of any of them. His preference for Option B - "a positive duty on LEAs to promote a responsible approach to political issues" - while good in being positive not negative, depends crucially on "responsible" being judiciable, which must be open to question.

The Lords' draft reworded Amendments

The following are the existing likely amendments.

Primary Schools

"It shall be the duty of every local education authority to forbid the pursuit of partisan political activities in their primary schools as part of school life, whether in their schools or elsewhere."

Political impartiality

"It shall be the duty of every local education authority to ensure that in the teaching of any subject in any of their schools the presentation of political views shall beiimpartial and objective."

Police in schools

"The articles of government for every school shall provide that courses on crime prevention and road safety are provided by any policeman or policewoman appointed for the purpose by a chief officer of police."

Published syllabus

"It shall be the duty of the governing body of every school to ensure that up-to-date written statements of the school's syllabuses are available to parents on demand."

Freedom of speech

"It shall be the duty of any university, polytechnic or college of further or higher education to use available resources, including if necessary requesting the help of the police, to prevent serious interference with freedom of speech within the law on their premises."

Recommendation

It is virtually certain that the present Bill will be amended. It is important that the amendments have bite. Your support in the coming week could be crucial to their success. I would suggest you invite Caroline Cox in for ten minutes or so next week and discuss the matter with her.

BG.

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

From: Sir Peter Hordern, M.P.

Secretary

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

SJT

STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

23rd April, 1986.

My dear Keith,

I have been asked by the Executive of the 1922 Committee to write to you about education. If I may say so, we all admire the new initiatives which you have introduced into education, and we accept that expenditure per school child has continued to increase since you have been Secretary of State. We also accept that, if teachers accept the principle of ~~comparability~~ association, that an additional £1250 million will be available, which will do much to improve morale.

It remains the case, however, that, despite all the expenditure for which our Government is responsible, the state of our schools, and the manifest shortage of equipment, stands in stark contrast with the personal prosperity which most people in ~~Parliament~~ employment now enjoy. Perhaps this is the fault of the Rate Support Grant mechanism. But whatever the reason, we wish to say that we find the present position unsatisfactory, and one in which we should like to see an early and marked improvement. We are all convinced that extra resources are urgently required. Further, if the Rate Support Grant mechanism is to be used, we favour specific grants, made to education authorities for the purchase of books, equipment and stationery, and for repairing and renewing school buildings. Recently, you were good enough to announce an increase of £20 million on books and equipment to prepare for the new GCSE examination. This was widely welcomed. Yet if it is possible to make such a specific grant, it is our view that the amount should be substantially increased.

DES	
MR STUART	
ADVICE ✓	INFO
COPIES	MR HILLIER
	MR SPEARING
	MRS TURP
	MR MARSTON ✓

MR LIBBY
MR NORBURY
MR KAY
MR CAPEY

MR ULRICH
SC1

.../2

I should say that we are all aware of the importance of the PSBR and the need to contain public expenditure. In our opinion, however, education has become the most urgent priority, and one which demands immediate action. No doubt there is greater room for efficiency amongst local education authorities. But we cannot but be aware of the disparity between the growing prosperity of very many parents, and the shabby conditions of the schools to which they deliver their children every day. This contrast is doing us no good at all, and will do us no good, with the electors.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, as I have been asked to do so.

Yours ever

Pat.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Joseph, Bt., MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science.

E.R.

Yes. Noted CR.

DAVID

EDUCATION: RADICAL OPTIONS

The above meeting got cancelled this morning, and I have re-arranged it for next Tuesday at 1100. But the Lord President can only stay for 45 minutes, as he has to go to Windsor for a Privy Council meeting.

Content with these arrangements?

CR.

Caroline Ryder

23 April 1986

BG

cc BG

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-934 9000
FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

CF

Avant regard of meeting.
MEA 22/4

Sir Patrick Mayhew QC MP
Royal Courts of Justices
LONDON WC2A 2LL

22 April 1986

Dear Patrick.

Following Committee Stage of the Education Bill in the Lords last Tuesday when the amendments by Lady Cox and others to outlaw politicisation were discussed sympathetically and at length, the Government's business managers are anxious that we should avoid, if at all possible, what promises to be a humiliating defeat at Report Stage. They are also concerned more generally at the effect on business if the Government are not seen to respond to this evident wish of the House of Lords that some tangible measure be taken against the admitted evil of political indoctrination in schools. I have therefore undertaken to the Lord President that I will look again as positively as I can at the possibility of a Government amendment which would satisfy the House while causing the least damage.

I take very seriously what you said in your letter of 3 April, supported in Quintin Hailsham's letter of 15 April, about the principal legal objection to any amendment that is likely to be acceptable to the Lords: that it would make justiciable in the courts issues which are incapable of being clearly defined objectively. I recognise the difficulties in requiring the courts, and indeed the holder of my office, to adjudicate on the meaning of ill-defined terms like "politically controversial" or "politically partisan" in their application to highly contentious cases. I also fear that, by putting too much emphasis on balance and impartiality, we could inadvertently legislate against those teachers who seek to support in the classroom some of the sound principles that sustain our society.

However, I accept too that the Government cannot be seen to do nothing in the face of the views expressed in the House of Lords, and I have seen Alec Douglas Home's recent letter in this vein. I should therefore like to consider with the Lord Chancellor and you at a meeting which I understand has been arranged for Thursday, whether it is possible to find a least damaging legislative solution to our problem. As a starting point, I set out below 5 possible options, in some cases supported by the indicative - but by no means final - draft amendments by Parliamentary Counsel which I believe you have seen:

(A) A duty on LEAs, governors and heads to forbid indoctrination (Annex A)

An amendment along these lines would place a duty on local authorities and others to forbid the promotion of a political viewpoint unless it was a) one generally accepted by our society, or b) part of a balanced presentation. (Paragraph (2)(a), as drafted, does not yet succeed in describing the fundamental values we would seek to promote in schools.)

Arguments for: This amendment would place the duty where it belongs, consistently with the division of responsibilities for the curriculum in clauses 16 to 18 of the Education Bill. The holder of my office would be in the background, but with a clear locus to intervene under sections 68(unreasonable action) and 99 (breach of duty) of the 1944 Act.

Arguments against: the amendment would, however, be likely to give rise to a considerable volume of complaints to the holder of my office, whose decisions would be subject to judicial review by the courts. This amendment is likely to result in the greatest involvement of the courts. Because of the difficulty of drafting the requirements for balance and the promotion of fundamental values, we could not be sure that the courts would not interpret it in a way that enabled extremists to secure that their views were presented in classrooms.

(B) A positive duty on LEAs and others to promote a responsible approach to political issues (Annex B)

Like A, this amendment would put a duty on LEAs and others to act responsibly when political views are put to pupils.

Arguments for: This amendment, like (A), would place the duty where it belongs; it acknowledges more clearly that it may not be the political view that is controversial, but the way in which the issues are presented. It emphasises the professional responsibility of the teacher. And, reflecting Lord Ritchie's proposed amendment, Alec Douglas Home's view in his letter, and the mood of the House last Tuesday, the duty is cast in positive terms.

Arguments against: Complaints, though possibly fewer, would still come to the holder of my office, whose decisions would be the subject of judicial review by the courts. This version does nothing to solve the fundamental objections to making this issue justiciable: the decisions of the courts on what constituted acting in a responsible manner could not be predicted with confidence.

(C) Giving the Secretary of State a power of direction without a corresponding duty on LEAs and others (Annex C)

This version would give the Secretary of State discretion to intervene if partisan political views are being promoted in a school. LEAs, governing bodies and headteachers would be under an obligation to avoid indoctrination only by implication.

Arguments for: the pressure on the holder of my office to intervene would be reduced, and his administrative decisions would rather less open to challenge in the courts. Accountability for his decisions would primarily be to Parliament. This option thus reduces the legal objections to legislation.

Arguments against: This option materially increases the powers of the Secretary of State, and the new power would be with the holder of a political office whose views may not always be shared by those who now advocate legislation. The amendment does not put the duty with LEAs and schools, where it properly belongs.

(D) A general principle to secure political impartiality, to be observed by LEAs and others, analogous to Section 76 of the 1944 Education Act (No Annex)

A general principle could be drafted in terms similar to the duties imposed by options A or B above. LEAs, governing bodies and heads would be required to have regard to it alongside other relevant factors.

Arguments for: this might help to deal with the objections associated with any legislation in this area. By allowing other factors to be taken into account, LEAs would have a broader defence against complaints so that fewer cases would come before the Secretary of State and the courts.

Arguments against: Depending how it was framed and interpreted, this might prove to be either totally ineffectual (it might be possible, for example, to defend a teacher who was admittedly indoctrinating pupils by arguing that otherwise he was excellent at his job), or equivalent to a duty (in the sense that no sensible LEA, with due appreciation of its responsibilities, would have failed to act in accordance with the principle). If it was ineffectual it would not be acceptable to Lady Cox and others; and if it was equivalent to a duty, then options A or B would be better.

(E) A new body to receive complaints (Annex E)

A different kind of proposal, set out at Annex E, would be to establish a new body whose function would be to receive and investigate complaints of politicisation in schools.

Arguments for: This option would keep from the holder of a political office (my office) any power to decide on what will be seen as highly political issues, and it would greatly reduce the involvement of the courts. We would argue that this issue is too political in the hands of the courts or the Secretary of State, and that a special kind of independent tribunal set up for the purpose was required.

Arguments against: Setting up the body could be costly, and would involve a substantial amendment to the Bill. It might well be ineffective because of the difficulty of securing hard evidence, so that this extensive apparatus would not seem commensurate

with the problem. While having the virtue of removing responsibility for receiving complaints from the holder of my Office, and to a large extent from the courts (although they would still have a role in judicial review), ~~and~~ its own decisions would not be free from political controversy. The proposal risks creating a precedent because it could create demands for other kinds of parental complaints to be treated similarly.

All these options are very difficult, as is the option of not legislating. Subject to the views of colleagues, while Option E despite its difficulties should at least be considered, I would favour Option B.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Quintin Hailsham, Bertie Denham, John Wakeham, John Biffen, Malcolm Rifkind, Nicholas Edwards, Tom King, John MacGregor and Sir Robert Armstrong, and to Parliamentary Counsel whose help I gratefully acknowledge.

Yours ever

Ken

Annex A

EDUCATION BILL [H.L.]

AMENDMENT

TO BE MOVED IN COMMITTEE

Before Clause 37

Insert the following new Clause-

(" .-(1) The local education authority by whom any county, voluntary or special school is maintained and the governing body and head teacher of any such school shall each take such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent views of a politically controversial nature being promoted-

(a) in the course of the teaching of any part of the secular curriculum of the school;

(b) through any materials-

(i) used in the course of that teaching; or

(ii) otherwise used or displayed at the school except in connection with the religious curriculum of the school; or

(c) in the course of, or in connection with, any extra-curricular activity provided or organised, by or on behalf of the school, for registered pupils at the school.

(2) For the purposes of this section-

(a) a view shall not be taken to be politically controversial if it would be reasonable for any teacher expressing it to believe that it was one which was held by the majority of the people of England and Wales; and

(b) the expression of any politically controversial view (whether by any person or in the course of, or in connection with, any activity or through the use or display of any materials) shall not be taken to amount to the promotion of that view if all such steps as are reasonably practicable have been taken to secure that the pupils to whom it is expressed, or who are likely to be exposed to it, are given a balanced presentation of other views on the matter in a manner designed to enable them to form their own views.")

Annex B

10/36

POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION

Draft new clause - fourth version

BEFORE CLAUSE 37

Insert the following new Clause-

("Duty to secure responsible treatment of political issues.

. The local education authority by whom any county, voluntary or special school is maintained, and the governing body and head teacher of the school, shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils while they are-

(a) at the school; or

(b) taking part in extra-curricular activities which are provided or organised for registered pupils at the school by or on behalf of the school;

those issues are dealt with in a responsible manner.")

Annex C

EDUCATION BILL [H.L.]

AMENDMENT

TO BE MOVED IN COMMITTEE

Before Clause 37

Insert the following new Clause-

(".-(1) Where the Secretary of State is satisfied, in relation to any county, voluntary or maintained special school, that views of a politically controversial nature have been promoted -

(a) in the course of the teaching of any part of the secular curriculum of the school;

(b) through any materials -

(i) used in the course of that teaching; or

(ii) otherwise used or displayed at the school except in connection with the religious curriculum of the school; or

(c) in the course of, or in connection with, any extra-curricular activity provided or organised, by or on behalf of the school, for registered pupils at the school;

and that the pupils concerned have not been, and are unlikely to be, given a balanced presentation of the issues involved in a manner designed to enable them to form their own views, he may give such direction as he thinks appropriate with a view to securing that those controversial views are not so promoted.

ANNEX E

A NEW BODY TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS OF POLITICISATION

Because of the difficulties associated with requiring the Secretary of State or the judiciary to determine whether LEAs, governing bodies and headteachers have allowed politicisation to take place, a new body specifically set up for the purpose might be thought advantageous. Such a body could not be purely advisory because then the recipient of the advice - presumably the Secretary of State - would be faced with the same dilemmas as with other approaches in acting on that advice. The body would therefore be some form of tribunal.

2. The function of the body could be to investigate parents' complaints that their children had been exposed to political views in a manner which was not responsible, and to issue reports with recommendations to LEAs, governing bodies and headteachers on what action to take. It would need powers to call for evidence (including probably the power to enter schools), to direct LEAs, governing bodies and headteachers, and its directions could be enforceable by mandamus. Its decisions would be subject to judicial review and possibly also to appeal, at least on a point of law, in the higher courts of the land.

3. Careful thought would need to be given to the potentially contentious issue of appointments to the body. They might be made by the Secretary of State or the Lord Chancellor, and an obligation to consult at least some of the education partners would be necessary. The body would presumably need permanent officers and inspectors to service it. And there would be many other details to be worked out.

hle ECA

CCBG

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 April 1986

C/F
Previous pps are not in GR

ARTICLE IN "GOOD HOUSEKEEPING"

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 15 April. She has noted this without comment.

(Mark Addison)

Rob Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

RPO

CABE

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL. LONDON SW1A 2AT

17 April 1986

NBPM

Dear Quintin

2 pps

Thank you for your letter of 15 April. I trust that you will by now have seen the account of the meeting which I have had with Keith Joseph, Bertie Denham and David Swinton contained in my Private Secretary's letter to Keith's Private Secretary of 16 April. I hope it will be clear to you from that that I am very much aware of the difficulties you predict in this area. I also hope that it leaves you in no doubt of the political realities of the situation in which we now find ourselves on this subject, and which I am seeking to deal with as best I can.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Secretaries of State for Education and Science, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, both Chief Whips and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours
Willie

The Rt Hon Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone CH

EDUCATION, Policy Pt 6

E. R.

PRIME MINISTER

POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION IN SCHOOLS

You will remember that the Lord President was unhappy with the line Sir Keith Joseph was planning to take on Baroness Cox's amendments to the Education Bill.

The attached letter to DES (Flag A) sets out the Lord President's views. I think you will be happy with the line he is taking. In particular, you will note that the Lord President will be meeting Lady Cox and telling her that every effort would be made to produce some proposals for the Bill, on indoctrination, on which she could be consulted before the Report Stage.

Also attached (Flag B) is a letter from the Lord Chancellor which confirms the Law Officers' view about the dangers of involving the judiciary in the arbitrating on the question of political indoctrination.

MEA

Mark Addison
16 April 1986

JA1APQ

010

CGBG

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

16 April 1986

Dear Mr Smith

EDUCATION BILL

Your Secretary of State came to see the Lord President this morning about amendments relating to political indoctrination. Lord Denham and Lord Swinton were present.

As I explained, the Lords Ministers outlined to Sir Keith the breadth and vigour of feeling in support of legislative provision to deal with a problem whose existence was generally acknowledged from all quarters of the Lords. There could be no prospect of avoiding defeat on any particular amendment that might be pressed by Lady Cox and her supporters at Report Stage. Indeed, the vote against might well be derisory, given the likelihood of abstention by the official Opposition and given the known position of prominent Alliance peers. Although the various methods of increasing support for the current Government position were explored, it was agreed that the prospects of success were minimal even if the disadvantages attaching to such action could be overcome: and they were considerable.

The Lord President said to Sir Keith that the consequences of such a defeat extended far beyond the Education Bill, to the whole management of the Government's programme. He could not run the risk of those consequences without first reporting back to the Prime Minster. He and Lords Denham and Swinton also took the view, which Sir Keith accepted, that using the Commons to overturn such a decision was hardly viable. There were likely to be difficulties anyway with Government backbenchers on the issue; and such difficulties would be stoked up by those at the centre of the very effective coalition in the Lords. Indeed it was Lord Denham's strongly held view that only use of the Parliament Acts could deliver a Bill without the kind of amendment favoured by Lady Cox and others.

The Lord President reiterated that he was fully seized of the difficulties of making legislative provision in this controversial area. The undesirability of putting the judiciary in the position of having to make judgements on these questions was evident; though there were precedents of areas where policy questions merged into political ones; areas in which the courts had a role. However, for all that, Sir Keith accepted the hard fact that some provision would be in the Bill, and the choice was whether it was of Lady Cox's or the Government's devising. He

Rob Smith Esq

would do his utmost to ensure it was the latter. He undertook to examine whether placing a responsibility for making directions on the Secretary of State for Education might produce improved scope for action against the political indoctrination. Alternatively, allegations of partisan political teaching might be referable to an independent board or tribunal, say of three "wise men", which might have as chairmen or members retired senior judges or former members of HM Inspectorate of Schools. It ought not to be impossible to devise some such scheme which avoided involving the courts in the first instance. This would have advantages notwithstanding that it would be impossible to oust their jurisdiction in relation to judicial review. Clearly the details of any scheme would be for further discussion in a more suitable forum; the Police Complaints Authority or the Board established under the Legal Aid (Scotland) Bill (see Clauses 24 and 31) have been mentioned in this context.

It was agreed that, not least in order to facilitate the passage of Government business, the Lord President would see Lady Cox; would stress how concerned the Government were to meet her desire for some provision in the Bill to deal with the problem of political indoctrination; and that he would ensure every effort was made to produce some proposals on which she could be consulted before Report Stage.

Sir Keith was informed that the Lord President would convene a further meeting before then, to which Lady Cox would be invited.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Lord Chancellor and the Solicitor General as you requested.

Yours sincerely
N. Gibbens

JOAN MACNAUGHTON
Private Secretary

Educ: Gen Policy Pt 6

Prime Minister (4)

The Good Housekeeping article which gave rise to your concern is attached. This is Sir Keith's reply, to the effect that he looks at each case on its merits

MBA 16/4

PRIME MINISTER

ARTICLE IN "GOOD HOUSEKEEPING"

Your Private Secretary's letter of 24 March recorded that your attention had been drawn to a recent article in "Good Housekeeping" by the Education Correspondent of "The Guardian".

2. I am considering whether it might be necessary to issue guidance about the educational effectiveness and value for money of local authority institutional arrangements for 16-19 provision in the light of falling rolls. I am not considering, and would not entertain, a proposal to establish nationally "a definite break in education at 16, and a new start in a college for all those who would previously have been sixth formers in the schools".

3. Statutory proposals, which used to come to the holder of my office under the 1944 Act and now come under the 1980 Act, and which involve reorganisations in specific areas may - or may not - envisage a break in education at 16. For example, I will soon have to consider proposals from Sheffield which entail replacing its county 11-18 schools by 11-16 schools and tertiary colleges. Falling rolls have resulted in the closure of a number of schools with sixth forms, or changes from 11-18 schools to 11-16 schools. The statistics for the consequential creation of sixth form colleges and tertiary colleges are set out in the Annex. A sixth form college is a school ie the upper age limit is 19, and all the students attend full-time on sixth form studies. A tertiary college is a college of further education containing both such students, and full-time and part-time students on vocational and other courses not normally offered at school, with no upper age limit.

4. Sixth form and tertiary colleges have been established since 1970. As the Annex shows, the sixth form and tertiary colleges which have been approved have been proposed by authorities

which support us as well as those which oppose us.

5. The 1980 Act, unlike some of our predecessors' legislation, was deliberately not prescriptive about the pattern of schools. It left this to be proposed locally and proposals are approved or rejected by the holder of my office on their merits. I am reviewing the advice given in 'Better Schools' about the minimum size for certain categories of school below which, without disproportionate resourcing, it was unlikely that they would be able to deliver the curriculum.

6. I study proposals, including those which involve the creation of sixth form or tertiary colleges, with the utmost care and LEAs know - to quote from one of my Circulars - that I:

> "will not normally approve proposals which have as their consequence the closure or significant change of character of schools which, by a sustained record of success in the provision they make for sixth form education, have already proved their worth under existing arrangements [and] can continue to do so except where [I am satisfied that] the prima facie case for their retention is displaced by other compelling educational considerations."

7. In the new guidance which I will need to issue following "Better Schools" and the promulgation in this year's Public Expenditure White Paper of new national targets for removing surplus places up to 1991/2, I shall reaffirm my intention to be mindful of the need to preserve the good in existing provision when rationalisation takes place.

KJ.

Department of Education and Science 15 April 1986

ANNEX

ESTABLISHMENT OF SIXTH FORM COLLEGES AND TERTIARY COLLEGES IN ENGLAND BY YEAR, 1970 TO 1984

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Sixth Form College	3	1	7	14	20	7	9	9	6	10	4	1	6	5	4
Tertiary College	1	0	2	2	4	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	2	9

NOTES

1. Establishment follows approval of creation by some 12 to 18 months.

2. Tertiary and Sixth Form Colleges are spread across 53 Authorities:

   i. as regards Sixth Form Colleges, Hampshire (10), Cleveland (9), Surrey (7), Manchester (5), Birmingham (4), Harrow (4), East Sussex (4), Liecestershire (4), Bury (3), Cheshire (3), Kirklees (3), Lancashire (3), Nottinghamshire (3), Salford (3), Shropshire (3) and West Sussex (3) presently have 3 or more;

   ii. as regards Tertiary Colleges, Lancashire (6), Hampshire (4) and Somerset (3) presently have 3 or more (and one Authority, Richmond on Thames, has a Tertiary College only for its 16+ year olds), 18 Authorities in all having such colleges.

3. A few sixth form colleges have closed since they were opened; and in one or two Authorities they have been replaced by tertiary colleges.

CONFIDENTIAL

HOUSE OF LORDS,
SW1A 0PW

15 April 1986

Dear Willie:

Education file with MGA (2 pp's)

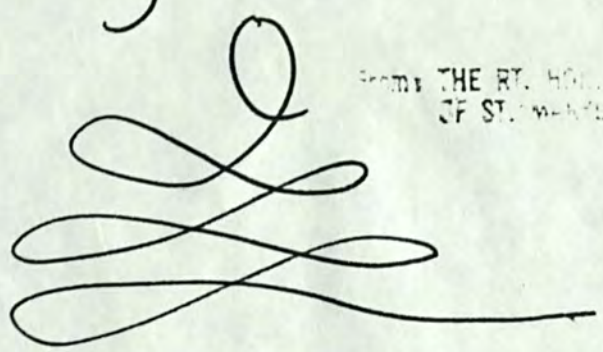
Education Bill: Amendments on Indoctrination

Thank you for copying me your letter of 9th April 1986. I have also seen Keith Joseph's letter of 8th April and entirely agree with him and Patrick Mayhew on the dangers of involving the judiciary in political controversy by making the question of political indoctrination a justiciable issue.

You will remember that similar difficulties arose when we considered the provisions of the Local Government Bill on political advertising by local authorities. I suggest that the present issue is even less amenable to legislation. I also suspect that we may find there is little real consensus on any workable definition of what constitutes political indoctrination. For all these reasons, I very much doubt whether legislation is appropriate, and would prefer to see the matter dealt with by school governors and parents, as Keith Joseph suggests.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, the Secretaries of State for Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, both Chief Whips and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

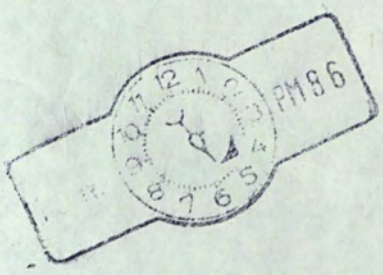
Yrs.



THE RT. HON. LORD HAILSHAM OF ST. MARYLEBONE, CH, FRS, DCL.

The Right Honourable
The Viscount Whitelaw, CH., MC.

Educ; Gen Bhum Pt 6



PRIME MINISTER 14 April 1986

HOW TO GET BETTER SCHOOLS

The Secretary of State in his paper of 26 March makes four main proposals:

- A specific grant to give DES greater leverage over LEAs.

- A statutory Review Body on Pay.

- New Government Maintained Schools.

- An expansion of the Assisted Places Scheme.

Weakness of these Proposals

These proposals are inadequate. They involve:

a. A major shift in power from the LEAs to the DES, but without any compelling arguments or evidence why central bureaucracy would be more effective than local bureaucracy in managing education.

b. The prospect of pressure for increased local authority spending financed by specific education grants. Specific grants also run completely counter to our proposals in the Local Government Green Paper for a simpler block grant.

c. A perpetuation of the rigid distinction between the independent and the maintained sector, with no proposals whatever for hybrid schools.

d. Continuing to treat the LEA and not the individual school, as the key decision-making body.

e. Creating feeble GM schools. If they are the radical option, then the old direct-grant schools must be positively revolutionary!

Power to the DES

If, some years ago DES had wished to create a nationalised education service - directed and controlled from the centre, with LEAs as their local outposts - they would surely have done the following:

i. established comprehensive schools as "national" schools, and closed grammar schools;
ii. introduced GCSE as a national curriculum;
iii. reformed their monopoly over the national supply of new teachers (already under DES) by setting up CATE.
iv. switched finance from local to national control
v. established national control of teachers' salaries

They have already achieved i, ii and iii: the present proposals are for iv and v.

The Education Scene if these Proposals were Implemented

If the DES proposals were implemented (after major battles damaging battles with the LEAs and teacher unions) we would end up with:

a. The overwhelming majority of schools still in the maintained sector, but subject to greater DES control.

b. A few new GM schools (their number would be small because of the capital costs of setting up secondary schools). It would take a long time (well over a year) and absorb the energies of the DES between now and the next Election.

c. Some voluntary-aided and controlled schools might opt for GM status. They would want extra cash to pay teachers higher salaries and show they were benefiting from their new status: in view of the financial position of the Church of England, it is doubtful if this option would be chosen.

d. More pupils would be assigned to the Assisted Places Scheme.

Most parents would see little change in the education of their children. But we would have incurred considerable costs:

a. The switch to a specific education grant would mean institutionalising conflict between the DES and LEAs over their grant, parallelling the present conflict between DoE and local authorities.

b. Setting up a Statutory Pay Review Body would give greater, not less, power to national teacher trade unions: comparison with the Nurses, Armed Forces and TSRB is invalid because these unions have undertaken not to strike. It must be highly doubtful if teachers would accept this constraint.

c. We would have perpetuated the division between schools in the public and private sectors. The DES proposals cover them separately - APS for the private sector, and GM schools in the state sector.

So you would have used all your energies and those of the DES to fight difficult political battles, and given birth to a mouse.

What kind of Education System do we want?

1. Abolish the present rigid distinction between independent (charging fees) and maintained (free) schools by creating a greater variety of schools in terms of their financing and their charging.

2. Make individual schools cost centres free to manage their own affairs with more independence from the LEAs.

3. Build on the undoubted success of voluntary-aided schools by increasing their number - with their foundations being laid by parents, charities, churches and business.

4. Increase the variety of schools by introducing technical, TVEI schools and making a commitment not to close any more grammar schools.

5. HMI would continue to be an inspectorate which laid down minimum standards.

The end result would be a decentralised system subject to overall HMI quality control with a variety of institutions which can therefore respond more effectively to parents' wishes.

Recommended Action

The range of radical options from DES officials is too limited. Therefore, invite them to submit two more papers.

The first paper should cover greater independence within the maintained sector. The rigid separation between the private and public sector must be broken down. The DES have not grasped this yet. Ask for a paper, therefore, which examines:

(1) differing ways of converting existing county and controlled schools to a more independent status;

(2) ways of setting up schools similar to the old direct grant schools, not GM schools; and

(3) a method of giving these schools greater managerial freedom within their overall budgets.

Central to such a paper would be a change in the responsibilities of LEAs under the 1944 Act.

Secondly, invite a paper on the Tebbit proposals for DES contracts with LEAs.

BG.

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

CONFIDENTIAL

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

14 April 1986

GRANT-AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The Prime Minister has noted your Secretary of State's minute of 9 April, without comment.

Mark Addison

Rob Smith Esq
Department of Education and Science.

CONFIDENTIAL

E.R.

cc.
Rt Hon.

PRIME MINISTER

Your meeting to discuss the "original options" paper by Sir Keith is next Tuesday. Aside from Sir Keith, the Chairman and Chancellor are down to attend.

You are keen to have a very small group to discuss the paper at this stage. Could I, however, check with you that you would not wish to include the Lord President for now? If you would like him to be there, we may of course need to delay the meeting a little bit to fit in with his diary.

I should like the Lord President to be there

Mark Addison

Mark Addison

9 April 1986

DG2AZS

CC/G

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister (2)

For information, particularly on the announcement point.

MCX 9/4

PRIME MINISTER

GRANT-AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS

You may have noted that H last month endorsed the proposal in my memorandum H(86)13 for a feasibility study into the practicability of an experimental scheme of grant-aided primary schools.

attached

2. I am now embarking on this feasibility study, and shall let you know the outcome. I hope that the lessons learned during it will also be of value in the wider context.

3. H thought that the feasibility study should best be concluded in confidence and without a prior announcement, but were concerned about the possibility of a leak. If there were to be one at this stage, I propose to confine myself to saying that, as is already known, the Government are considering whether there is scope for a new kind of experimental direct grant school, but are still some way from decisions on this.

K.J.

Department of Education and Science 9 April 1986

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

The Lord President, as you will see from the attached correspondence, has decided not to intervene with the Education Secretary before the Bill reaches Committee Stage in the Lords. But he will speak to Sir Keith before the Report Stage. I understand that the Lord President is not at all satisfied with Sir Keith's letter and does not believe it meets the spirit of the commitments given to Baroness Cox.

MAA

Mark Addison

9 April 1986

DG2AZM

010

CONFIDENTIAL

CC/BG

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

9 April 1986

Dear Keith

EUCATION BILL: AMENDMENTS ON INDOCTRINATION

- watch MEA?

Thank you for your letter of 8 April about this. I note the points you make. I suggest that at this stage the best course is for us to see how the debate goes on Tuesday, when I understand from Caroline Cox that she will not press her amendments, but I should like soon after that to consider with you how we should handle the Report Stage of the Bill: we will obviously be in a better position then to judge what the difficulties are likely to be, if any. I have asked my office to arrange for us to meet in the middle of next week for this purpose.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, the Secretaries of State for Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chief Secretary, Treasury, the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, both Chief Whips and Sir Robert Armstrong.

John Wakeham

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP

CONFIDENTIAL

B1SS141

CONFIDENTIAL

cc BG

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Prime Minister (2)
The Lord President's view I understand is that this does not meet the spirit of the commitments given to Baroness Cox. He will be taking the matter up with Sir Keith.
MPR 9/4

8 April 1986

Dear Willie

EDUCATION BILL: AMENDMENTS ON INDOCTRINATION

1. When we met Lady Cox and others in your room on 18 March we discussed with her the amendments she has now put down for Committee Stage of the Education Bill with the aim of outlawing political indoctrination in schools - an aim with which we all agree. At that meeting I explained to her the difficulties that I saw with her amendments and undertook to explore whether the Government could offer her alternatives which would meet our shared aim and still be practicable and consistent with Government policy.

2. Parliamentary Counsel could not have been more co-operative in seeking to find a solution to the problem the Government faces. However, the more he has examined the problem the more he has been impressed by the difficulties. It is not just that, as we knew, there are problems of definition, evidence and enforceability: which make for bad law. However an amendment was formulated, the courts would inevitably be asked for judgements on specific cases before very long, and they would have to decide whether political indoctrination had taken place; such a judgement is bound itself to be seen as the taking of a political stance, and the impartiality of the judiciary would thus be impugned. Moreover, Parliamentary Counsel advises that it may be impossible (a) to allow for the promotion in the course of education of certain fundamental values such as support for Parliamentary democracy and the rule of law which we would all support and (b) to avoid the legislation being misused by our opponents against teachers who put forward arguments, for example, in favour of sound monetary or defence policy.

/3. When

The Rt Hon Viscount Whitelaw CH MC
Lord President of the Council
Privy Council Office
LONDON SW1A 2AT

CONFIDENTIAL

3. When politically controversial issues come up at school, treating them objectively entails balance. Caroline Cox's position on such balance is not wholly clear. But if partisan teaching is to be prohibited, the law has almost certainly to prescribe balance; that too has dangers - we could be requiring the presentation of unacceptable views simply to balance those which are acceptable.

4. The Solicitor-General who has seen Parliamentary Counsel's draft clauses has warned of the dangers of making justiciable the question of whether a particular view is politically partisan.

5. I met Lady Cox with Lord Charteris and others on 4 April, explained these difficulties to her, and showed her - as an earnest of our good intent - two alternative draft amendments by Parliamentary Counsel neither of which overcomes the obstacles. She was not persuaded of the objections and, in the absence of the Government offering her an amendment, she will want at Committee Stage on 15 April to debate - probably, she said, on a probing basis - the amendments she has put down. Unless she and the numerous supporters that she is sure she has are convinced by our answers, she will probably force a vote at Report if by then the Government has not offered her a solution.

6. We therefore have to decide before the debate on 15 April what to do now. I am impressed by the legal arguments put to me; and would not wish to go against the advice of the Law Officers. I believe that, although the legal arguments may not carry weight with the House of Lords, they might well do so with our supporters in the Commons. I therefore conclude that we should not offer any alternative amendments at Committee Stage and, although we should continue to reflect upon possible legislative solutions, I do not expect to have amendments to offer at later stages of the Bill's passage through the Lords. If we lose on a division, we shall have to seek to overturn it in the Commons.

7. Such an approach can be defended by other arguments. First, we must emphasise that it is not the law that has been the problem in pursuing cases of abuse but the lack of hard evidence; in the few cases where there has been evidence, LEAs have been ready to act at my prompting. Lady Cox and her colleagues accept that reliance on the law makes evidence even more crucial but do not face up to the problem of securing evidence. Second, we can refer to the provisions in the Bill requiring each year a report by school governors and an annual meeting of parents; while not removing fears of victimisation, these will give opportunities for parents collectively to voice their concern. Third, I continue to attach a good deal of weight to our draft statement of principles which will give parents and others quite properly worried about political indoctrination a basis for complaints.

8. An inquiry would have been an alternative to legislation, but I accept your advice that it cannot be conducted by a House of Lords Select Committee. The Prime Minister's view as recorded in her Private Secretary's letter of 7 April is that an inquiry of any kind would be unlikely to achieve very much.

/3. Finally,

9. Finally, it occurs to me that so far we have heard views on this issue only from peers whose primary expertise is not in jurisprudence. I wonder whether one or two law lords might discreetly be apprised of the legal issues involved before the debate on 15 April?

10. I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, Quintin Hailsham, Nicholas Edwards, Malcolm Rifkind, Tom King, John Biffen, John MacGregor, Michael Havers, Patrick Mayhew, Bertie Denham, John Wakeham and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours,

Ken

ce BG

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

7 April 1986

Dear Prime Minister,

It seems to me most encouraging that a new debate about education is getting under way within the Party. It reflects growing concern about schools, particularly among our supporters. Many of the heads of the home Departments in your Government find the signposts of our own policies pointing in the direction of educational reform. We all have to be educationists now, because the policies which we wish to promote cannot thrive without changes in education. This must be true of Kenneth Baker, David Young and Paul Channon. It is certainly true of myself because of the Home Office interest in law and order and race relations. The problem of educational standards is central to tackling the problems of the blighted inner cities. So I very much hope that out of this debate will come a scheme for a new Tory Education Bill which will emerge in outline this year and form a central plank of our next manifesto.

I drafted what follows before seeing recent press reports which cover some of the same ground, and my thoughts are independent of whatever thinking lay behind these reports.

Such a scheme will need to go very wide and encourage a revival of the variety of educational provision which was once one of the strengths of our school system. It will have to deal with increasing the scope for parental contribution; with the need to take education once again out of the block grant; with the perils of indoctrination; with the structure of the teaching profession; with equipping young people better for the world of work and to play a responsible part in society; and with the need for increased resources. These are not matters directly for me as Home Secretary. But there are some points which arise out of our experiences in the Home Office and which perhaps you will allow me to put now in this informal way.

The peak age for offending for males is now 15 and for females 14. In our inner cities there are some excellent schools, but it is hard to avoid the impression that the system as a whole is failing those who need it most. Indeed

where the problems of the children are the greatest the performance of schools is too often at its weakest. In these places truancy runs at 20% and a lot higher among older pupils. Pupils derive their information and impressions not from teachers but from their peers and from television. School is often irrelevant except as a social meeting place for the exchange of experiences among peers. Yet the potential importance of schools is enormous. It is a part of the structure of the lives of these young people even though it may contribute little to their well-being. It has the potential to offer stability to people whose lives often lack a sure foundation.

As I wrote to you in October, the chance of peace in our inner cities depends in the long run on our ability to prevent the pool of young unemployables from being constantly replenished from below. That chance depends substantially on what we do about schools.

In the inner cities I doubt if there is any prospect of succeeding in this by giving new power, responsibilities or choice to parents, white, black or Asian. To take an extreme example, the young black mother coping alone with five children would simply be unable to understand or cope with fresh responsibilities. If she were minded to intervene she would most likely be intimidated by a teacher whose mastery of educational jargon would be sufficient to reduce her - and many other parents - into dumb acceptance. Furthermore, I believe that there is every likelihood in the inner cities that supposedly independent parental representatives on governing bodies will often effectively be selected and manipulated by teachers, many of them acting for political purposes. What this harrassed single mother wants for her children, and what they need to keep them within the boundaries of our society, is a good school provided by the community. But I strongly believe that we cannot succeed in the areas I am concerned about by propping up the existing LEA system by fresh resources or renewed exhortation. The decay and politicisation of local government in some of them has gone too far.

In the light of this analysis, I see part of the way forward as being along the lines of:

a) the encouragement of voluntary aided provision by churches, including the black churches, or by responsible community groups. Inspection to enforce standards rigorously is essential, but provided this is forthcoming we should face squarely the consequences of encouraging such variety. The problems of being thought to be encouraging separatism are considerable, as are aspects of the education which some fundamentalist Moslems would wish to promote. But there is perhaps more to be said for having a few

schools run by Asians teaching some of the values of the sub-Continent as well as the English language than perpetuating the present incoherence of schools in areas like Tower Hamlets.

b) the establishment in some of the inner cities of direct State schools, funded, staffed and run by Government (either the DES or a special Board) with their own staff structures, curriculum and salary scales. LEAs in some of these areas would have to be relieved of their buildings and responsibilities, perhaps at first on a pilot basis.

(a) and (b) are not alternative but complementary. (b) is heretical of course, but politically acceptable in my view as part of a wider package covering the points I sketched at the start of this letter.

Of course we can only think in this way because of the success of Keith Joseph in transforming the debate. The fact that there is now so much emphasis on the objective of raising standards is very much a result of the notable reforms which he has instigated. Much can still be achieved, particularly once the teachers' dispute has been brought to a close, through leadership and through the reforms which he is pursuing in teacher training and the profession. Nevertheless, particularly in the areas of highest stress I think that this will not be enough and we need to examine more radical options.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Keith Joseph.

Yours,
Douglas.

DOUGLAS HURD

CONFIDENTIAL

file

TA1 AOQ

bc BGV

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

7 April 1986

Dear Rob,

BIAS IN EDUCATION

The Prime Minister has now had an opportunity to consider your Secretary of State's minute of 25 March canvassing the possibility of an inquiry into political bias in education. For the reasons set out in the Lord President's minute of 27 March she does not believe that an inquiry conducted by a House of Lords Committee would be a practical proposition. More generally, however, she does not believe that an inquiry of any kind would be likely to achieve very much. Experience with parallel problems in local government, where the problem is more defined, suggests the difficulty of turning up tangible evidence. For this reason she does not at this stage at least wish to proceed with an inquiry of the kind to which Sir Keith's minute refers.

I am sending copies of this letter to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Colin Williams (Welsh Office), Robert Gordon (Scottish Office) and Jim Daniell (Northern Ireland Office).

Yours ever

Tim

(TIM FLESHER)

R. L. Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

CONFIDENTIAL

BM

File

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

7 April 1986

Thank you for your further letter of 4 April about the GCSE. In view of the considerations set out in that letter and in your Secretary of State's minute of 26 March the Prime Minister has agreed that the timetable for the GCSE should go ahead as proposed.

I am sending copies of this letter to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office) Jim Daniell (Northern Ireland Office), Colin Williams (Welsh Office) and Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

(TIM FLESHER)

R. L. Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

PRIME MINISTER

POLITICAL BIAS IN EDUCATION

We discussed this briefly at your meeting with Brian Griffiths today but didn't reach a conclusion. It is clear that the idea of a House of Lords inquiry is not a starter. Do you therefore wish:

(i) to press DES to consider a Government inquiry.

(ii) follow the course suggested by Brian Griffiths of support for an unofficial inquiry together with an investigation by HMI of extra-curricular courses, or

(iii) drop the idea of approaching the problem in this way.

I do not believe that an inquiry would achieve very much - especially in view of Wilddecombe - on a subject, rather more delicate than this and

Tim Flesher
4 April 1986

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Prime Minister:
The response to your query. For the moment at least, there seems little alternative but to acquiesce in Sir Keith's view that GCSE must go ahead.
To do otherwise is contradiction of his position would look like taking the side of the unions.

Tim Flesher Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

After the Teachers' unions' endorsement I agree - no option but to go ahead

4 April 1986

Dear Tim,

1. Thank you for your letter of 27 March about the availability of draft GCSE syllabuses in science subjects.

2. Mr McIntosh informed this office by 'phone on 24 March that his school had two approved syllabuses in biology, two draft syllabuses in chemistry, one draft physics syllabus and various draft syllabuses in integrated science. The Southern Examining Group has confirmed that the London Oratory School was sent draft syllabuses in the individual science subjects and in integrated science in September 1985. Draft syllabuses in science subjects were also available at that time from the Midlands Examining Group and, within the succeeding few months, from the two other English Examining Groups.

Now that Mr McIntosh told me again on Sikkell on 26th (not 24th) March. MT

3. You also asked for comment on the resolutions adopted by the NAS/UWT and the NUT at their Easter conferences. The NAS/UWT resolution calls on its members to take no part in the development programme for the GCSE. This position is unreasonable and the Secretary of State made this plain in his address to the conference on 3 April. The resolution asks for the timetable for introduction to be extended to give sufficient time for preparation, and for adequate resources including teaching cover and staffing levels to be provided for in-service training and internal assessment procedures. The Secretary of State's announcement last month about further training seminars, training days in the summer term, and additional capitation allowances for GCSE books and equipment, was intended to meet just such concerns; but for the NAS/UWT to make their co-operation in the GCSE

TR 4/4

conditional on further measures in this direction amounts to blackmail in regard both to resources and to teachers' pay to which in Sir Keith Joseph's view the Government could not give way.

4. The third part of the NAS/UWT resolution concerns scales of fees for teachers who conduct assessment - mainly of oral work and course work - in connection with GCSE examinations. This is a matter for negotiation between the Examination Boards, the local authorities and the teachers' organisations; the GCSE Examining Groups have already established procedures to begin negotiations about this matter. The Department has no locus in these negotiations at this stage; but it may be that at a later stage the wider discussions on teachers' pay and conditions may be able to take this specific question on board.

5. The NUT's resolution goes further than that adopted by the NAS/UWT and calls on its members to ignore GCSE syllabuses and teach to O level and CSE syllabuses from September. On present plans there will be no such syllabuses for pupils starting their 4th secondary year in September.

6. Sir Keith Joseph does not believe that these conference resolutions should cause the Government to change its position. It is apparent that the GCSE is being used by both unions in an attempt to hijack the negotiations on pay and conditions. If the GCSE were postponed, the same negotiating ploys can be paraded by the teachers' organisations next year. The right way forward is to go ahead with the timetable for the GCSE; and to make publicly clear that teachers are only making their own job of preparation more difficult. Many teachers will realise that there is no turning back and that the only sensible course is to prepare for the new examinations properly, taking advantage of the opportunity presented in the package of measures announced on 13 March. Next September, teachers of 4th year pupils will have no option but to teach to the GCSE syllabuses and to make up for their own lost ground. They will be helped at that point by the further phase of training for the GCSE which will take place during the course of the next academic year and which will be devoted to the specific syllabuses offered by the Examining Groups.

Copies of this letter go to Private Secretaries to the Lord President, the Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland and for Wales, and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Smith

R L SMITH
Private Secretary

EDUCATION Policy P16

PRIME MINISTER 3 April 1986

HOW TO GET BETTER SCHOOLS

I thought it might be useful if I set down some preliminary thoughts for our meeting tomorrow.

Overview

Getting better schools involves an initial but quite fundamental choice between:

i. achieving greater control over the producers of education (LEAs and schools) by a major shift of power from local to central government and a substantially enhanced rôle for the DES; and

ii. giving parents greater choice and encouraging the supply of new schools.

The DES paper is deceptive. While it ostensibly argues for two "radical options" - the creation of Government Maintained Schools (GM) and extending the Assisted Places Scheme - its major thrust is to argue for greater central control involving more money, more people and more powers for the DES. It rejects giving parents greater choice (education credits) and its new GM schools are just a variant of existing aided schools, but "managed" by the Department.

The DES Preferred Option

This consists of icing (new GM schools plus more Assisted Places) on a cake (improving the LEA sector, still the great bulk of schools) which means:

a. a major transfer of power from LEAs to the DES; and

b. the creation of few really "new" schools and the extension of very little extra choice.

a. Power to the DES

This is clear from the following passages:

> "We must take steps to secure for central government the same kind of financial leverage on the education system that it engaged when the 1944 Education Act was drafted." (Paragraph 5)

> "If we want an effective national policy for education, then central government must have more control." (Paragraph 6)

> "We should use the education grant particularly to 'police' the new teachers' contract. Our aim should be legislation to improve the outcome of the work of a statutory review body on pay, and what pay is for." (Paragraph 24b)

"It is essential to move to a separate education grant régime incorporating a substantial element of specific grant. What is involved is a fundamenal change in the Government's relationship with LEAs. . . There is no half-way house." (Paragraphs 19,20)

"There would also be extra central government manpower costs to implement the programme. . . These might amount to about 50 AEC grades and 50 AMI, in addition to what the DES needs now to do its present job. If we were to proceed to establish a sizeable number of GM schools beyond an initial tranche, further additional staff would be required." (Paragraph 23)

b. New Schools, More Choice?

The new GM schools are not like the old direct grant schools. They involved a hands-off approach by the DES; GM schools involve a much closer relationship.

"The financial relationship between the Secretary of State and the governors of a GM school would require much further consideration." (TP 4, paragraph 4)

"The Secretary of State would need to be able to satisfy himself that his grant was properly administered." (TP 4, paragraph 4)

"Teachers in GM schools should comply with the Secretary of State's policy for the curriculum." (TP 4, paragraph 5)

"It is also for consideration whether the Secretary of State should be associated, formally or informally, with appointments to key posts." (TP 4, paragraph 5)

"It would be open to the Secretary of State to cease to pay grant if GM schools failed to reach standards acceptable to him in relation to the curriculum and teaching quality." (TP 4, paragraph 5)

"By assuming responsibility for maintaining a category of schools, the Secretary of State would become involved in detail in part of the publicly maintained sector of schools, alongside LEAs, in a way and on a scale which are unprecedented. The Department would have to learn how to discharge direct responsibilities in relation to individual schools, and to discharge them in addition to and in combination with the functions which derive from the Secretary of State's more general responsibilities for the education service". (TP 4, paragraph 14)

Not only are GM schools dependent on the DES, but the major "reservoir" for new GM schools would be existing voluntary-aided schools. This is because existing successful independent schools would be reluctant to exchange their autonomy for government control, and entirely new foundations

are unlikely to be numerous unless the financial terms are generous (which are most unlikely). However, the voluntary-aided schools are already among the best in the maintained system at present. The gain in terms of improved choice and performance from this would be marginal.

If voluntary controlled schools transferred to GM status, that would be a more substantial improvement; but out of a total of 4,350 they only amount to 200.

Vouchers and Credits

This kind of scheme is rejected. Some of the arguments against can be dismissed quite easily, but others cannot. The following seem to me important:

a. In the transition, where certain schools were being run down or closed, some children would receive worse schooling than at present.

b. No voucher/credit system has been established anywhere in the world.

c. Unlike previous radical changes (abolition of exchange control, privatisaton, sale of council houses) this would meet with hostility from our own supporters - not least Conservative-controlled LEAs.

At the very least, these need to be carefully explored before going down this route.

An Alternative Strategy

1. Welcome the extension to the Assisted Places Scheme - this will certainly increase consumer choice.

2. Welcome the idea behind GM schools. But their very name - Government Maintained - shows them to be a far cry from the independent or semi-autonomous schools which need to be set up; or, indeed, from the previous Direct Grant schools. The proposal for GM schools therefore needs to be reformed such that day-to-day management of the schools remains in the hands of the schools, and the DES involvement is limited to:

   a. the Government should have the powers to inspect and monitor the educational quality of GM schools; and

   b. GM schools should be required to provide an annual report and accounts, examination results etc, in a similar way to companies, and the DES (like the DTI) should have reserve powers to investigate the management of a school in the unlikely event of a misappropriation of funds.

   Moreover, it is important that GM schools should be allowed to take private pupils who pay full cost fees so as to blur the distinction between private and state schools.

3. As this is Industry Year, and the charity laws for business have been changed, why not tap the goodwill of business by

getting individual trusts or groups of companies to raise endowments for:

- Technology Grant Schools (which would cover 11-18 and specialises in applied science); and

- Technical and Vocational Education Institutions (the logical outcome of the TVEI - which would cater more for basic technical education)

so that each LEA in the country would have one of ech. This should meet the approval of those who attended the recent Switch Seminar.

4. Meanwhile, why not also try and get the Church to convert voluntary controlled schools to a more independent status? This would mean that the Churches and the company sponsored schools would be on a par - making their reversal by a future government very difficult.

Brian Griffiths

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

PRIME MINISTER 3 April 1986

AN INQUIRY INTO BIAS IN EDUCATION

The tasks of any inquiry in this area should be first to expose the facts on bias to the general public; and second to propose some way of achieving balance.

It is clear from Lord Whitelaw's note that the House of Lords is not an appropriate vehicle for an inquiry. It is also clear from the DES note that officials are very sceptical of getting at the facts through an official inquiry.

It might be best to develop a two-pronged attack.

First, the unearthing of facts regarding political bias might be better done by a private initiative (similar to that achieved a number of years ago by Professor Julius Gould on "Marxism in Higher Education"). Apparently Lady Olga Maitland has already set up a committee to look at the issue (Oliver Letwin is a member). It might be useful for Central Office to give the committee some standing, publish its report and then, on the basis of its evidence, invite the Secretary of State to take action?

Second, and at the same time, why not invite the HMI to give a factual report on extra curricula courses at schools for students between the ages of 11-16? This would not be a report into political bias as such, but should nevertheless expose it.

BG

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

10 DOWNING STREET

CT

pse check with BG on his return when he aims to comment eg by the weekend. I would like to resume with BG's views on Friday. He should also know that there is a possibility of a chat with the PM later in the week

TL

Prime Minister

Brian Griffiths would like to raise this in his meeting with you. N 3/4

PRIME MINISTER

POLITICAL BIAS IN EDUCATION

Attached is a rather odd minute from Sir Keith Joseph about whether to have an inquiry on political bias. The minute canvasses two kinds of inquiry: a Government inquiry and one by a House of Lords Committee. It comes down against a Government inquiry on the grounds that it will be assumed to have prejudged the issue and argues in favour of one by the House of Lords on the grounds of its independence. The minute suggests that the Government could secure an eminent Chairman such as Lord Home to ensure that the report was on the right tracks.

Lord Whitelaw's minute which is attached at Flag A is, in my view, rightly sceptical about this proposal. Select Committees of either House require the consent of both sides before they can be established. There is small chance of the Labour Party (or indeed the Alliance Parties) agreeing to an inquiry into left wing bias in schools. Nor can the Government dictate the choice of members or Chairmen even if there were to be such an inquiry. Quite frankly, it is a non-starter. Indeed, there must be a suspicion that the evident lukewarmness of the DES towards the idea of having an inquiry at all leads them to suggest such a daft notion.

This is not an issue on which there is any possibility of bipartisanship. The Government has to decide whether to grasp the nettle of a Government inquiry or to let the matter rest with the DES circular.

It is not impossible to have such an inquiry: the Widdicombe Committee showed that it was possible to produce a workable report in matters of this kind. The only question is: is it worthwhile at this stage?

i) Do you wish to further press the idea of an inquiry? If so, we will need to consult the Chancellor of the Duchy;

or

ii) Do you wish to let the circular have time to work, if it is going to, with the possibility of an inquiry to be held out if there continues to be evidence of bias?

Looking to the future, any recommendations resulting from the inquiry could form part of a wider educational package to be presented in the next Election manifesto. Alternatively, an inquiry could itself form part of the package.

Timothy Flesher
1 April 1986

SECRET AND CMO

CC/BG B/UP 1

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

PRIME MINISTER

EDUCATION

In folder attached

Keith Joseph has sent me a copy of his minute "How to get better schools". I have, for my own part, been considering the inadequacies of the existing relationship between Central Government and Local Education Authorities.

In view of Keith's initiative in sending you his minute, and our proposed meeting, I think that I should set out before that meeting one further option to be considered, and some of my initial views on the range of radical options for change in the structure of education available to us.

The teachers' dispute has shown that the present structure is ill suited to the contemporary scene in which many LEA's are in the hands of, or heavily influenced by, members who regard education as secondary to partisan politics and in which the leadership of some teaching unions take a not dissimilar line.

I believe we should reject the idea of direct central control of schools. We don't have the machinery for it. It would infuriate our supporters who run good LEA's; and it runs counter to the whole thrust of our policies both to increase local accountability and responsibility, and to allow the interests of the consumer to work, as they do in the market-place. Nor am I attracted by such options as treating the education service as a "nationalised industry", or converting it into a national service, managed locally, on the lines of the health service.

Single-function locally-elected bodies escape the accusation of placing central direction before local responsibility. And it may serve to reduce the extent to which the control of education locally is put into the hands of those with wider political priorities which causes them to ignore the expressed wishes of local people on the particular character of education service they wish to see provided. But it would be deeply resented, nonetheless, by local government, who would see their responsibilities emasculated; and, most important, it would only leave us where we are: doomed to pay, but unable properly to influence the manner of spending.

This leads me back to basics. How do we re-create the effect of a customer and a supplier of a service? A voucher scheme is not sufficient. In too many cases, the choice so created would be imaginary not real. There would remain for most a monopoly supplier of education services. I believe that we should explore the possibility of instituting a customer-contractor relationship by which Government would pay LEAs, by a formula on a per capita basis, to educate children within specified curricula and to specified standards.

A statutory duty would be required, to be laid upon LEAs, that they should propose a contract to Government which would provide places in the maintained sector for all those seeking it, subject to expenditure at the level set by Government, and consistent with the performance criteria set by Government. There will of course be considerable local discretion in how this schooling is arranged, or the standard of schooling may be raised above the national contractually agreed standard by additional local expenditure.

No

By this means, the effective power will have been switched from the supplier to the purchaser. I see this model as being effective in improving public sector education, and to offer the opportunity to move at a later date towards education credits or some other market-based scheme. The contract would also underpin the capital expenditure programme which would allow Government to approve capital spending plans (financed as now), which would be consistent with providing school premises sufficient to meet the authorities' existing and prospective contractual commitments.

It is in the enforcement of the contract that the key to solving our present difficulties would lie. A contract between an LEA and Government may run well and smoothly. Equally, it might emerge that an LEA was not producing the goods. In that case, the customer (ie Government) would propose changes in the arrangements, eg that a school with a bad record would be closed, or its head dismissed. Government would, of course, pay close attention to the views of parents in arriving at these determinations under the contract. In the event that the LEA refused to cooperate, then Government could decline to pay for pupils to attend that school.

Similarly, in circumstances such as we have experienced recently, if, as in Scotland, 300,000 pupil days were lost, then so would be the appropriate percentage of contract payments.

Thus we would have an effective mechanism which could be used with discretion and provision to avoid hitting our friends whilst aiming blows at the unGodly!

My proposal seems to me to be rather less radical than Keith's option 3, automomous schools, and rather more effective than his proposed change to specific education grants. It would not rule out Government maintained schools, nor the assisted places scheme, nor the support of private sector schools, existing or new. In the light of some of our recent difficulties with backbenchers, the media and the Party, perhaps a Green Paper setting out Keith's four options, plus mine, would offer the best chance of a firm commitment by a White Paper and possibly publication of a Bill before the general election.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Willie Whitelaw, Nigel Lawson and Keith Joseph.

NT

NORMAN TEBBIT

31st March 1986

EDUCATION Policy PT6

PRIME MINISTER

AN INQUIRY INTO BIAS IN EDUCATION

I have seen Keith Joseph's minute of 25 March on a possible inquiry into politically biased teaching in the education system. I accept that proposal has considerable merit.

However I do not think that this subject matter is appropriate for investigation by a House of Lords Select Committee. In the House of Lords the consent of all the political parties is usual before setting up a Select Committee and this is unlikely to be obtained in this instance. In my view the parties are unlikely even to agree that there is a problem that requires investigation. There is also the question of membership. We shall have no control at all over the nominees of the other parties and as a result it would be very difficult to predict what the Committee's findings might be. Finally even if such a Committee were set up the political divisions within it are likely to be such that unanimity would be highly unlikely.

For these reasons I very much hope, if Keith Joseph's proposal for an inquiry is to be pursued, that it will not be considered on the basis of a House of Lords Select Committee.

I am sending copies of this minute to Keith Joseph; to the Secretaries of State for Wales, for Scotland and for Northern Ireland; and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Privy Council Office
27 March 1986

2.

The Minister

PRIME MINISTER 27 March 1986

273

GRANT-AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS - 'H', 26 MARCH

Keith Joseph laid out plans for a feasibility study to set up twelve direct grant schools costing £2 million. He hopes there will be no publicity because negotiations with the charities that might run it were delicate. The aim was to permit more variety in education and to allow fair comparison with the public sector schools, so he ruled out the possibility that fees might be charged. He reminded the Committee that he had already announced the little mouse of policy at the Party Conference. If the study is successful, the policy would form a Manifesto commitment at the next Election.

The Lord Chancellor strongly opposed Sir Keith's proposal on the basis that the new idea was neither State nor private education! He had no concept of the need for variety in education.

Fortunately, the vast majority of the Committee agreed with Sir Keith rather than the Lord Chancellor. John Biffen, Norman Tebbit and others pointed out the obvious that this is unlikely to remain confidential. All the provincials except Northern Ireland would probably want to follow.

John Biffen wanted the schools in the Inner Cities but the consensus was that the schools would have a difficult

enough time without being directed to the Inner Cities. Keith Joseph said "if they did go there glory be" but that they should not be directed there, nor for the same reason should it be a pre-condition that any of them should be denominational.

John MacGregor was not against the idea in principle but pointed out the need for caution as it was unlikely that Local Education Authority bills would be reduced in the short-term, and there would be more need for HMIs.

Norman Fowler made the excellent point that it will be popular to show to the public that schools can be run outside the Local Education Authority without requiring parents to scrimp and save to push their children into the private sector. It would reverse a trend for parents such as himself to send children to the private sector!

It isn't meant for parents like him!

Conclusion

The Committee gave cautious approval, which we strongly support.

HMBooth.

HARTLEY BOOTH

NC

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

27 March 1986

The Prime Minister has now seen your Secretary of State's minute of 26 March about GCSE. She has raised a query about the reference to the number of syllabuses received by Mr. McIntosh's school. It is her understanding that the London Oratory School has received no science syllabuses. I should be grateful for a note clearing this point up.

BF

(TIM FLESHER)

R.L. Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

E.R.

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PRIME MINISTER

GCSE

Attached is the promised minute from Sir Keith Joseph reporting on the outcome of his consultations following your meeting last week.

You will recall that he was asked to consult HMI about the desirability of postponement of the implementation of GCSE. Sir Keith reports that HMI judged that GCSE should go ahead on its present timetable. The report is at Annex A to his paper.

Sir Keith also records that he has spoken to John McIntosh who apparently accepts that far more syllabuses have reached his school than he previously believed. No - I was present this evening when John McIntosh told him to head research no such syllabuses

The Secretary of State for Wales has consulted his Inspectorate who also believe that we should adhere to the present timetable.

It is clear that Sir Keith is absolutely committed to pressing ahead with GCSE. I will show these papers to Brian Griffiths on his return from leave next week but it is plainly going to be very difficult to continue to press the merits of delay.

In these circumstances do you wish:

(i) to acquiesce in Sir Keith's view that we should adhere to the timetable; or

(ii) to continue to press the point?

I saw Keith this evening. The information is not all correct.

Timothy Flesher

26 March 1986

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COVERING CONFIDENTIAL

CCBG.

PRIME MINISTER

GCSE

1. Following our meeting on 20 March, I attach as requested a paper from SCI giving the views of the Inspectorate (Annex A). I also attach a note on the availability of draft syllabuses (Annex B).

2. In addition I am forwarding a letter from Sir Wilfred Cockcroft supporting the introduction of the GCSE on schedule (Annex C). He mentions in passing why he, as a mathematician, believes that a GCSE Grade F in mathematics will be a more valuable - and valued - qualification than CSE grade 4.

3. I have spoken to John McIntosh. He was in error in claiming that only three draft syllabuses had reached his school; he has now discovered that his heads of department had received many more. The London Oratory School is one of the 95% of English schools that received the 24 Southern Examining Group's syllabuses in main subjects circulated last September. His heads of department have also received or obtained a number of syllabuses from other Examining Groups. But No SCIENCE Syllabuses

4. As the attached note on syllabuses at Annex B indicates, any school could by now have looked at the draft syllabuses of all the Examining Groups: four letters or phone calls would have secured this. If schools lack draft syllabuses it is through incompetence. They have been told several times how to get them.

No

5. Moreover schools have been told that the changes being made to draft syllabuses during the approval process are nearly all related to the associated assessment and administrative procedures, and not to the proposed content. (A "syllabus" means much more than a list of subject contents - it includes

specimen papers, test questions, arrangements for moderation etc.) A brief study of the GCSE criteria for specific subjects would in any event enable teachers to begin their preparations - and these criteria have been in all schools for over a year. Pages 3 and 4 of the mathematics criteria (enclosed at Annex D) illustrate this point nicely.

6. John McIntosh reported worries about books and equipment, but we have moved to meet these genuine concerns by announcing on 13 March a £20m initiative under the ESG arrangements. He also reported anxiety amongst teachers about the role that they would play in assessment. Again, it was for this very reason that we launched a national, introductory training programme on an unprecedented scale. Moreover, that training will continue after September as each Examining Group offers further help to teachers following its syllabuses.

7. A system can never be fully prepared for reform. Much has to be learned "on the job". But schools are demonstrating a gathering momentum towards GCSE - a momentum that in even the best circumstances was unlikely to have gathered before the GCSE introduction date was imminent and a momentum that would be completely lost by postponement.

8. I continue to hold firmly to the view that we should go ahead this September. To do otherwise would be a damaging concession to teacher militancy; would involve a considerable waste of resources - resources that are not available next year for a repeat training exercise; would go completely against our constantly reiterated public commitment; and would give away a key lever for securing higher standards.

9. I am copying this minute to the Lord President, the Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland and Wales and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

KJ.

Department of Education
and Science

26 March 1986

ANNEX A

Confidential

cc Mr Hillier
Mr Spearing
Mr Marston
Mr Ulrich
Mr Halsey
Mr Summers
Mr Stuart
CI Mr Everson
SI Miss Millett
Miss E Hodkinson

Mr R L Smith

HMI VIEWS ON THE GCSE

1. The attached paper sets out in some detail why HMI in England judge that the timetable for the introduction of the GCSE is feasible and should be maintained and what we believe to be the implications of the new examination for standards in our secondary schools.

2. The Inspectorate, as the Secretary of State knows, has kept in close contact with the development of the GCSE, nationally through its work with the Secondary Examinations Council; regionally via the various examination boards; locally through LEA contacts; and at individual school level through its formal inspections and routine and specialist visits. It is on the basis of this level and range of knowledge about what is happening in the education service, and our professional judgement arising from the findings of varied and wide-ranging inspection, that we advise against postponement of the GCSE.

3. In the Inspectorate's view postponement would:

(i) result in the whole initiative going "off the boil" and not, as is sometimes argued, in sustained and increasing efforts to become better prepared. Teachers are now beginning to stir themselves about the GCSE: they realise that it is going to happen. Consequently, more teachers are attending INSET sessions. For example, in the last

two weeks attendance at such sessions in Devon and the South West averaged 70% of those expected to attend. Before the pay settlement, the announcement of ESG money and the possibility of "occasional days" for INSET, the level of attendance in those areas was between 30% and 60%;

(ii) lead to even greater uncertainty for teachers, the schools, the LEAs, examiners, parents and employers. Quite apart from the "is it on, is it off?" uncertainty, if the GCSE does not now go ahead, in 1986-88 there will be GCSE approved; GCSE unapproved; joint 16 plus; O level; CSE and pilot CEE plus A/O level syllabuses all in operation or in circulation in our schools, all making different demands upon teachers, pupils, and examiners and causing vast confusion among parents, employers and other users of the qualifications involved. In addition the examination boards will have to divide their strengths and resources between maintaining existing examinations and standards and developing new exams and assessment procedures. Doing so will not only militate against effectiveness and quality but will also cause costs to escalate.

4. Furthermore, postponement will leave secondary education without an assessment framework that is itself a pressure for much needed curricular development and change and which is able to promote new initiatives such as the TVEI and further the general spread of the improvements brought about by them. The present GCE/CSE arrangements are not conducive to these initiatives because no courses exist that can accommodate them. Thus access to certification for more able pupils following TVEI courses will be in doubt. Modular courses will be available, because they are now being developed, but they will have no certification route, and the graded

assessment movement will suffer from the absence of a GCSE assessment structure to accommodate it.

5. Without the development of the GCSE as envisaged much of the cutting edge of the "Better Schools" policies for raising standards will be lost. Consequently, the crucial development of a national curriculum will falter because the terminal examination system will not relate to, nor reinforce and grow out of worthwhile, new agreed curricular objectives now being formulated. If this judgement is correct, a one year's postponement would in practice lead to a much longer delay.

6. Given the wide-ranging and radical changes in examining, course content and pedagogy implied by the GCSE, it is understandable that all involved wish to be fully prepared and desire all I's to be dotted and T's to be crossed. It is also understandable that teachers, pupils, parents, employers, as well as those responsible nationally and locally for providing for education, should be anxious about how it will work out. But there are some who resist the developments presaged by the GCSE for less understandable and acceptable reasons. For some the requirements that knowledge and skills must be applied; for problem-solving activities; for practical work to be assessed in situ and not via written papers; and for a better balance than now exists between theoretical and practical approaches to learning and the achievement of competency, are seen as threatening that which they have always done. For others, the declared aim of recognising a wider range of competencies and proficiency across a much larger proportion of the age cohort is seen as potentially damaging to the high standards in academic work currently achieved by a few which are rightly highly regarded. This will not happen because of the special responsibility for the top GCSE grades entrusted to the GCE boards as part of the new system. Nor does it happen in other countries, which, unlike England, successfully retain a much higher proportion of pupils in worthwhile education and training up to the age of 18: and where pupils right across the ability range

gain worthwhile, useful and well-regarded qualifications, which for average and below average pupils are of a higher standard than the qualifications gained here by pupils of similar ability.

7. Furthermore the GCSE makes it possible to control the amount and assessment of course work through the establishment of a rigorous, supervisory framework for course assessment that will sharply reduce the incidence of mode III type courses and eliminate the undersirable elements of existing CSE Mode III arrangements and practice that give rise to such concern about the maintenance of standards.

8. Finally, I doubt that any other large scale change in our education service has been as well prepared for as the GCSE, including that from School Certificate to GCE; the introduction of the CSE and the raising of the school leaving age. The delay in the last of these did not lead to teachers and schools being better prepared. They were ready for it when it was first mooted but the postponement led many to act as it had gone away for good. Of course eveyone is not as fully prepared as they would like to be. In important ways they cannot be until they actually begin work on the new courses. But the very extent of the preparation, plus the disruption caused by the pay dispute, have, in my view, led teachers and heads to believe that, given a little more time, they could be better, if not fully prepared for every eventuality. The latter is unachievable at this stage of any change. In addition there are some powerful voices, not least in the teacher unions, who see the issue of preparation for the GCSE as a useful vehicle for fighting other battles, and delay as giving them more time to fight and win those battles. On the educational grounds set out in the attached paper it is the Inspectorate's judgement that the GCSE is crucially important to raising standards in our schools and that it should proceed on the present timetable.

EJB.

E J BOLTON

24 March 1986

Confidential

HMI's judgement of the key factors for improving standards in our education system embodied in the new GCSE examination.

1. The Secretary of State asked me to set down the Inspectorate's views about the introduction of the GCSE examination in relation to its timing; the education service's preparedness to enter into such a change; and about the implications, one way or the other, for standards in secondary schools of the new examination.

2. Before examining each of these issues in more detail I should say that it is the English Inspectorate's judgement that the GCSE should go ahead on its present timetable and that it is a much needed reform which is crucial to the raising of standards of pupil attainment at all levels of ability and of teaching quality in our secondary schools.

Timing

3. The timetable for introduction has come to be described by some commentators as 'tight'. In our view that is incorrect. The timetable is feasible rather than tight, although it must be said that in some areas and in some schools more than others, action arising from the teachers pay dispute has disrupted and delayed developments. This apart, we believe that the timetable as set out manifests a reasonable balance between too much haste, leading to ill-preparedness, and too long a lead time which unduly extends the unavoidable period of uncertainty and lacks the necessary pressures for change that arise from having to meet realisable deadlines. More particularly the timetable is feasible because:

(i) the GCSE National Criteria for 20 subjects, after being discussed nationally for some years have been in secondary schools since January 1985;

(ii) individual subject training manuals have been in the schools since January of this year;

(iii) draft syllabuses, some of them existing 16+ syllabuses, have been in schools for some time and the examination boards have notified the schools of the availability of syllabuses and many have been sent out;

(iv) final syllabuses will be in the schools by the end of May;

(v) in-service training programmes are in operation and there is no reason why all teachers, even those who, for whatever reason, did not attend at an earlier stage, should not have undergone some training by the end of July 1986.

4. The presence in schools of the National Criteria and subject training manuals means that there has been time for 'in-house' training in the new examinations; for teachers to perceive and begin to respond to some of the implications for the organisation and teaching of their subjects; and for them to become familiar with the implications of the criteria for assessment.

5. The draft syllabuses have enabled many schools to begin the necessary task of course development since, in the vast majority of cases, changes from draft to finally approved syllabuses are small and almost always concerned with assessment and moderation rather than course content. The arrival of final syllabuses in schools by the end of May allows June and July for preparation, which is the period in secondary schools when 5th year pupils are sitting examinations enabling the staff released from teaching to use the time for syllabus development and for the planning of next year's courses. This is a normal annual activity which this year and subsequently will be concerned with GCSE syllabus and course development.

6. It needs to be said that the planning and development of any new courses cannot be, and are not, ever completed wholly in advance of the courses beginning. Only so much can be learned before the work actually begins. In addition a belief that all can be completed before the new courses start would prevent the necessary evaluation and modification of syllabuses and practice that must take place 'on-the-hoof' as teachers gauge the effectiveness of the courses in relation to their pupils' learning. The new examination courses will be constructed in sections over the first two years; this is normal and necessary. Thus what has been decided by September 1986 will not, and could not constitute the whole course, or the final statement of guidance about its assessment.

7. It is claimed by some heads and teachers that they are not able to set out their course option schemes for pupils and parents. To the extent that this is based on the absence, as yet, of final syllabuses, it is not a true bill of goods: indeed some HMI have described some of these claims as a "gross misrepresentation of how option systems are normally operated". Detailed syllabuses are not required for this purpose and are rarely, if ever, relayed to parents and pupils when options are being chosen. All that is required is that the subjects to be offered need to be decided and made known to pupils and parents in March or April of each year. It is inconceivable that schools will be in any doubt that they will be offering all the main subjects of the school curriculum.

Implications for standards

8. The Government's policy for raising educational standards at all levels of ability as set out in "Better Schools" requires examination and curricular reform and better quality teachers for its delivery. In English secondary education the examinations at 16+ and 18+ are the most visible, but not the sole, means of assessing the effectiveness of what has been achieved, and success in them is rightly regarded

as of great importance by pupils, parents and teachers. Consequently, examinations at 16 and 18 plus have always had an influential effect on secondary schools' curricula.

9. Neither curricular nor examination reform, together or singly, can deliver better quality education: the crucial component of high standards is high quality teachers in sufficient quantity and in the right places to make optimum impact. However, a curriculum governed by nationally agreed objectives, coupled with a system of examination and assessment that translates agreed course aims into assessment objectives, ensure that examinations no longer determine the curriculum. These also help ensure that the initial and in service training of teachers and the work teachers do are conducted within a national framework of agreed objectives for teaching and learning and that work is suitably differentiated to ensure that pupils of all levels of ability are involved, stretched and challenged. In addition such a system would go a long way to ensuring that teachers, parents and employers share an understanding of and a commitment to what the schools are seeking to achieve for their pupils. Thus the GCSE, through its national criteria, differentiated papers, and questions enables the exam system to be used as the cutting edge of policy related to raising standards and reforming the curriculum.

10. In particular, the GCSE will raise standards of educational performance by:

(i) defining teaching and assessment objectives which, in the view of HMI, will lead to the specification of relevant content; the removal of clutter from syllabuses; and clearer, demanding targets for teachers and pupils to aim for and achieve;

(ii) setting differentiated courses and examinations which allow pupils of all levels of ability to display positive performance, thus stretching

the most able while ensuring that the grades achieved by the average and below are based on worthwhile performance and not, as now, on the achievement of low marks in papers wholly unsuited to them and too difficult;

(iii) requiring the active involvement of pupils in their learning through problem solving and practical activity, thus improving the relevance of what is taught and raising the level of understanding of subject matter, and processes and the mastery of skills;

(iv) reducing the present undue emphasis on the academic and theoretical and allowing all pupils, particularly the average and below, to realise their potential and display their real competency, as happens with such pupils in the education systems of other countries, such as West Germany.

11. The GCSE as envisaged will help to deliver necessary curricular reforms in our secondary education by;

(i) causing the review and development of current syllabuses and assessment practices. Some radical changes in present practice are much needed and will be required by the GCSE criteria and practice. These include an increased emphasis upon conceptual understanding and the mastering of skills and a diminution in the current heavy reliance placed on the rote-learning of facts and on writing that consists of no more than lengthy and often inaccurate paraphrasing of what is already available. much better written, elsewhere;

(ii) controlling the quantity and quality of the examinations offered. There are at present some 20,000 syllabus titles. GCSE will reduce this number to between 200 and 250 and thus help to improve comparability of standards achieved and ensure that pupils are not entered for examinations in which the qualifications gained are useless.

12. The GCSE, via its national criteria and subject guidelines, is a beginning to the important task of clarifying the examining and standard setting processes in secondary schools, thereby improving the understanding of users such as pupils, parents, employer and society at large. The GCSE is also the necessary basis for the important development of a clearer articulation of the criteria of performance in different subjects at different grades (grade criteria), which will enable all pupils to show what they can do and enable the users of the qualifications involved to know what levels of competency are implied by each grade.

E J BOLTON
SCI

ANNEX B

PLANNING FOR GCSE - AVAILABILITY OF SYLLABUSES

1. When the GCSE decision was announced in 1984, a timetable was also set out. Draft syllabuses were to be available by the end of 1985 and all syllabuses approved by May 1986. This timetable was undisputed by teachers when announced, and is on course.

Availability of draft syllabuses

2. Draft syllabuses have been available throughout to schools on request, and this fact has been widely publicised. The SEC newsletter to all schools carried this message clearly; in addition a poster was sent to all schools, under a letter from Sir Wilfred Cockcroft in September 1985, publicising the availability of draft syllabuses from Examining Groups.

3. Each of the 4 English Examining Groups has mailed copies of syllabuses to schools using their O level and CSE exams:

a) Southern Examining Group: 24 syllabuses (in all main subjects) to 95% of all schools in England in September 1985.

b) Midlands Examining Group: 70 syllabuses to all Midlands Schools, and all schools taking any of the O level exams of Cambridge, Oxford and Cambridge and Southern Universities Joint Board, in summer 1985.

c) Northern Examining Association; 75 syllabuses to all northern schools, and all schools taking JMB O levels, before mid- February 1986.

d) London and East Anglia Group 35 syllabuses to eleven LEAs outside London between November 1985 and February 1986.

Approved Syllabuses

4. The SEC has to date approved 170 syllabuses (out of 250) and expects to complete approvals by the end of April, ie on schedule. The first approved syllabuses have now been distributed to schools by the four Examining Groups: three expect to complete their distribution by the end of May; and the fourth a week later.

5. Draft syllabuses have not had to be substantially changed as far as syllabus content is concerned. The changes required for approval have been concerned with the proposed assessment procedures (specimen papers etc) and administrative procedures.

ANNEX C

SEC Secondary Examinations Council

Newcombe House
45 Notting Hill Gate
London W11 3JB
Tel: 01 229 1234

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph
Secretary of State
Department of Education & Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
London SE1 7PH

24 March 1986

Dear Sir Keith,

I am told that you might find it helpful to receive a personal note from me in support of the proposals for reforming the examination system at 16+.

Let me say straight away that I regard the introduction of the GCSE, on time, as the most vital component in your campaign to raise standards at secondary level. Your speech to the North of England Conference in 1984 is generally regarded as a watershed in thinking about assessment. Since then, work has gathered momentum and day by day we have seen how the ideas for reform can be put into practice using the National Criteria for the GCSE.

Present immediate criticism in the press and elsewhere should be discounted. The views of those who support the reforms are not being heard, for the simple reason that they have better things to do than argue again about the issues. You made your decision and, having accepted it, they are concerned to get on with the job in hand; they read and discuss the material published to support their work; they attend and hold briefing meetings. They hold firmly to their belief that the new GCSE examinations offer an opportunity for long needed reform. Public statements are not their first priority; the needs of their pupils are their immediate concern. I do not believe from evidence received by my Council that they are in a minority.

There is a danger that in reacting to criticism we forget the inadequacies of the old system. The intention of the CSE to offer a qualification to the pupil of average ability never came to full fruition; the interaction of the O-level and the CSE 'at the boundary' resulted in an inappropriate watering down of O-level material in the CSE and criticism of the remoteness of O-level from the needs of the more able in our modern society. If some think there is no need for reform, one wonders why the Examination Boards have already introduced joint 16+ examinations offering both CSE and O-level certification. Indeed one view could be that the National Criteria have given us the means to control and improve what was an inevitable development.

/2...

As you know, the Boards cannot conceivably be regarded as prime movers in curriculum reform: their initiatives in joint examinations must be seen as a reflection of a majority view in the teaching profession.

The effect of the National Criteria has been to focus Board thinking, more clearly than ever before, on the problems involved in examining across the ability range. The key idea of 'differentation' is now being widely understood. I have no doubt that in 1988 candidates will be given the all important opportunity to show what they know, understand and can do.

The criteria have indeed given us a unique opportunity to tighten up sloppy thinking about syllabus construction. Time after time I have been told by Board representatives, in the course of presenting proposals to us, that they have ultimately welcomed their discussions with us, even when initially they often found criticism of their work, and our insistence on their meeting the Criteria, not to their liking.

Our aim throughout our work in the past three months has been to improve the quality of examinations; no one has disagreed with us in our belief that this is what we are achieving; the difference between many first and final syllabus submissions is there to be seen.

Thus, if we are in sight of our objective, namely a system of examining in which, by building syllabuses 'from the bottom up', we can test all candidates to appropriate limits, why should there be delay?

In my view, postponement would inevitably lead to pleading for further delay in the neat future. No one arguing at present for postponement can guarantee that this will not happen.

Arguments for postponement based on the claim that without examination syllabuses teaching cannot be arranged for the next academic year are fallacious. Not only were draft syllabuses widely circulated, but already 170 approved syllabuses are in the hands of the Examining Groups. History is still history: the good young historian will still have to understand the nature of the historical process to gain good grades. Chemistry is still chemistry: the fact that we rightly insist that the practical, experimental nature of the subject should be examined cannot come as a surprise to even the least competent teacher of the subject. The Criteria for the subjects have been in the schools since January 1985; they make these points abundantly clear, and represent the results of three years of the widest possible and well publicised consultation throughout the profession. Finally, if secondary teachers cannot advise pupils and parents without having available examination syllabuses, they stand accused of 'teaching to the syllabus' in a way which might well attract the strongest possible criticisms were it publicly recognised.

There are also of course teachers who consider that their Mode 3 syllabuses are at risk. In this respect the examining groups are in my view correct in wishing first to produce and get our approval for the syllabuses which are group based rather than to work on school-based syllabuses. They see advantages in being able to argue that many of the best developments in Mode 3 CSE and GCE syllabuses have now been incorporated in the National

/3...

Criteria. They welcome the power to stop completely all the Mode 3 excesses allowed under the old system. I agree with the Groups, and see the criteria as a standard-setting device, rightly working against inadequate Mode 3 proposals. Course work does indeed give the opportunity to assess the all-important practical skills which cannot be assessed in timed written examinations; but the Criteria provide a controlled structure within which teachers will have to work.

I know you will not expect me to write in this way without pointing up my own subject in relation to the question of maintenance and improvement of standards. As you know, the research which my Committee of Inquiry commissioned and drew upon looked into the nature of the fear of mathematics which lingers into adulthood; we also looked at the mathematics young adults need for employment and citizenship, and at the studies into children's attainment (APU, CSMS etc) which offer valuable clues about where people start to lose their way in mathematics. We discovered that the mathematical 'toolkit' which the vast majority of adults need is in fact very small; but it is important to be able to handle these mathematical tools with confidence. We called this toolkit the 'foundation list' and list 1 of the National Criteria for Mathematics - the chief basis for the award of the foundation level grades for GCSE is closely modelled upon it.

It is I believe most interesting to note, in this connection, how close a correspondence there is between the aims and objectives of GCSE mathematics and the YTS numeracy objectives. Again, the City and Guilds of London Institute has recently produced a numeracy scheme which is also allied in spirit to the GCSE proposals at this level. There is a unity of purpose abroad which the GCSE boards, with their close association with our schools, are in an excellent position to harness. I believe that they must be given scope to do so in the controlled conditions the GCSE Criteria offer us. The use of the Criteria in mathematics typifies our work going much further than simply trying to maintain standards: in all subjects we have addressed the question of how a radical definition of standards can transform the character and quality of the curriculum.

Looking further ahead, I must draw your attention to the fact that my Council is already thinking beyond syllabus approvals, and is formulating a policy on how best to scrutinise operational examinations from 1988 onwards. We see 'on the spot' appraisal of all materials and procedures, including candidates' responses, as essential to our purpose. We already have our experience at A-level to call on, but no such monitoring exists at present at the 16+ level.

Finally, and again with an eye to the future, we are now beginning to get responses to our first draft grade criteria. On the whole these are encouraging, and there is little doubt in my mind that we must continue to press forward without delay so that the present National Criteria can evolve over the years to incorporate clear grade criteria, setting the more absolute standards we strive for in the best interests of candidates and users alike.

Sincerely

Bill Cockcroft

SIR WILFRED COCKCROFT
Chairman & Chief Executive

EDUCATION
POLICY
PT 6

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

An inquiry into bias in education

1. I undertook to let you have my considered views on the possibility of an inquiry into politically biased teaching in the education system for which there was a strong demand in the Lords debate on 5 February. I attach a paper by officials which sets out the main considerations. The choice is, I believe, between a Government inquiry and one set up by the House of Lords. The arguments for and against an inquiry are summarised in paras 15-17 of the paper.

2. In my view the possible outcome of an inquiry is so uncertain as to make it a risky enterprise. I think therefore that if it is to be set up, this should be by the House of Lords itself. We should use our influence to secure that it is chaired by a peer of outstanding eminence - perhaps Lord Home of the Hirsel - and has terms of reference limited to the schools on the lines suggested in paragraph 18 of the paper.

3. I am sending copies of this minute to the Lord President, and the Secretaries of State for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

K.J.

Department of Education and Science 25 March 1986

AN INQUIRY INTO BIAS AND DISTORTION IN EDUCATION

Background

In response to increasing concern about biased and distorted teaching and materials, the Secretary of State has invited the education partners to endorse a statement of principles about the teaching of politically controversial issues in schools and colleges which would then be commended to LEAs, schools and colleges in a Circular. In addition, the Education Bill strengthens the position of governing bodies in relation to their schools and that of parents in relation to governing bodies, in order to bring an informed and concerned lay judgment to bear on the ethos and character of each school.

2. Conservative speakers in the Lords Debate on 5 February, a day after the draft statement of principles was issued, tended to say that this was not enough: an inquiry was now needed also. The general view of those favouring an inquiry may be summed up as being that an impartial body should stand back from the day-to-day exchanges about this matter in order to establish what was going on.

Objectives of an inquiry

3. In principle an inquiry could have some or all of the following objectives:

(1) To try to establish the facts about the scale and nature of instances of deliberate bias or indoctrination in teaching.

(2) To establish the extent to which bias is endemic in teaching not as the result of deliberate attempts to indoctrinate, but of sloppy or woolly thinking on the part of teachers.

(3) To identify measures which ought to be taken by the Government and by others in order to eliminate bias either as in (1) or as in (2) above.

4. As regards the objective in 3(1), the biggest obstacle is the difficulty of establishing hard evidence of malpractices which there is reason to believe do occur. Witnesses are reluctant to come forward for fear of repercussions on the pupils or students. We have found similar difficulties in Widdicombe. Experience also shows that HMI find it very hard during their formal inspections to establish the sort of evidence of bias and distortion which could appear in a published report, although some inspections have revealed the presence of conditions that are conducive to such bias. One difficulty is that much course material contains material which in itself entails a biased presentation, but which is matched by other material, also slanted, which presents another point of view, so that the course as a whole is objective and can be taught in an objective manner. A national inquiry might therefore cause the education service to react defensively; more effort focussed on a limited area might yield better results, for example an inquiry into alleged indoctrination in institutions of selected LEAs. But the evidence, often not very hard, which has been published - for example in a recent article in the Times Educational Supplement - does not purport to cover the whole country. Those areas or institutions selected for an inquiry could claim that there was little hard evidence to justify their selection for investigation, and no ground for excluding others.

5. As for the range of issues to be covered presumably Ministers would wish the inquiry, like the Circular and the statement of principles, to be confined to the politically controversial and in particular not to extend it to religious issues. But a politically contentious issue can relate to social or economic matters, and could even relate to religious questions for example the politics of Northern Ireland or Iran. It follows that however the scope of the inquiry is defined at the outset, the inquiry may move into unintended territory.

6. Moreover the nature of impermissible bias is relevant to both 3(1) and 3 (2). Presumably the inquiry, like the statement of principles and the Circular, does not assume that all value-laden issues which could be politically contentious should be taught without bias. On the contrary, the statement in effect recommends that teachers should, as now, encourage pupils and students to understand and support the fundamental values of our society (as outlined in the statement of principles). This approach should presumably be reflected in the inquiry's terms of reference. But it could not there be spelt out in detail. Indeed the question of what are our society's fundamental values, and the question of how far pupils and students should be encouraged, as opposed to merely given the opportunity, to support these values, are themselves questions which are, or may be, contentious. It seems inevitable that the inquiry's first task would be to form its own view of these questions. The public acceptability of the view would be likely to depend on the confidence which the public had in the wisdom of those conducting the inquiry and in the soundness of their philosophy.

7. This consideration bears particularly on the objective in para 3 (2). There would be ready assent to the proposition that teachers should apply reason and rigour to all they teach and be concerned to examine, for example, their own hidden assumptions. But the issue which can be of concern in this context is the nature of the hidden assumptions, not the fact that they are hidden: a woolly attachment to, say, the rule of law would not give grounds for concern in the same way as, say, a woolly attachment to the notion that unilateral nuclear disarmament in the UK would help to perpetuate world peace.

8. Nor is it likely to be easy to assemble evidence in relation to the objective in para 3(2). Unconscious bias is not easy to establish. Attempts to do so could take the inquiry into the kind of territory in which the Swann Committee began to flounder. The Committee

did not make much sense of the evidence it received about "unconscious racism"; to take another example, a belief that private enterprise is incompatible with preserving the environment could be due as much to woolly utopianism as to unconscious Marxism.

9. The attainment of the objective in para 3(3) plainly depends on how far the objectives in 3(1) and (2) are attained. Although it may be very difficult to reach convincing conclusions about the scale and nature of bias in teaching, an inquiry may nevertheless throw light on what might be done to create conditions in which such teaching is less likely to take place and more likely to be eliminated when it does. But how far the inquiry might thus succeed is bound to remain uncertain.

Bias in teaching whom?

10. Concern about bias in teaching has been expressed mainly in relation to the schools and to institutions of higher education. An obvious distinction can be drawn between children and young people below the age of majority, and those above that age, who may be presumed to need less protection, and certainly protection of a different kind. To extend the inquiry beyond the age of majority introduces a large further complication to a complex and difficult task. However the distinctions between institutions do not correspond neatly to distinctions of age: schools contain young people up to and including the age of 18, and colleges of further education contain students from the age of 16 with no upper age limit. One possibility would be to limit the inquiry to schools.

What sort of inquiry?

11. In principle, the choice lies between an inquiry set up by the Government and a Parliamentary Inquiry. Ministers have decided there is no prospect that an inquiry set up by the House of Commons could tackle the issues otherwise than on party lines. But that need not be true of an inquiry set up by the House of Lords; and although

the Government could not control the composition and scope of a House of Lords inquiry, it might hope to influence its scope eg by the evidence which Ministers gave to the inquiry.

12. To leave it to the House of Lords to set up an inquiry could be seen as less than resolute action on the part of the Government. On the other hand, the action so far taken by the Government - the Circular - is not negligible and the Government would leave open the possibility for further action in the light of the outcome of the Lords inquiry. Indeed, since the House of Lords is asking for an inquiry, why should it not use its powers to hold one?

13. It is also necessary to consider whether an inquiry is likely to come up with findings, either as to fact or action to be taken, which would do credit to whoever set it up. The task, even if its scope is limited, is very difficult. In particular, a failure to establish the facts, or to find hard evidence of bias in teaching, might not settle the matter. The failure might be attributed to the composition of the inquiry; yet it is scarcely conceivable that the Government could appoint an inquiry membership which was other than both knowledgeable and broadly based and which covered a fairly wide range in the spectrum of opinion, under the chairmanship of a respected, independent figure - a judge for example. An uncertain venture of this kind might appropriately be left to the high court of Parliament.

14. A Government inquiry would lack the powers of a parliamentary one in relation to, for example, the summoning of witnesses; and it would also be more expensive in scarce departmental manpower.

<u>The case for an inquiry</u>

15. The main arguments for an inquiry are:

(1) An inquiry is the natural response to public concern over a matter like bias in teaching which is difficult and potentially extensive. The necessary attention cannot be given to it in the day-to-day business of Government.

(2) The issue is sufficiently contentious not to be left solely to the Government, which might be thought to be parti-pris.

(3) The Government is under pressure to act against bias in teaching. But it is far from clear what action would be for the best. An inquiry offers the best prospect of good advice.

(4) The Government may find it easier to resist unwise and unworkable amendments to the Education Bill if there is an early inquiry.

16. The arguments against an inquiry are:

(1) Given the difficulties its outcome is uncertain and may rebound on whoever sets it up.

(2) It is likely to be criticised by some as a witch-hunt.

(3) It will be taken by many as yet another vote of no confidence in the education service.

17. The force of the arguments against an inquiry would be considerably diminished if it took the form of a Lords inquiry, under an exceptionally respected chairman; and if its scope were restricted so as to improve the prospect that its task might be manageable.

Terms of reference

18. As noted above, if the inquiry were set up by the Lords, they would determine the terms of reference. Subject

to that caveat, and to illustrate the possible terms of reference of an inquiry which was relatively narrow in scope, the following draft terms are offered for Ministerial consideration.

> "To inquire into the nature and extent of deliberate bias and distortion in the teaching of politically contentious matters, and in the materials made available, in schools, having regard to the statement of principles prepared by the Secretary of State for Education and Science [which has now been endorsed by the education service] and to recommend any further action which may be desirable on the part of those concerned."

Timing

19. The amendments likely to be moved during the Lords Committee Stage of the Education Bill on 15 April may force the Government into an early statement of its attitude towards an inquiry. If the Government decided in favour of an inquiry and set it up itself, it could hardly do the latter until after the issue of the Circular with the definitive statement of principles. The consultations on the draft circular and statement can be completed soon after Easter, provided the education partners can be induced to give a quick response on a matter of great importance to them.

Department of Education and Science March 1986

PRIME MINISTER

HOW TO GET BETTER SCHOOLS

What is wrong

1. i. England has never had a high quality mass-education system: we have no centralised tradition as has France: no long-established regional culture like West Germany: no high expectations of school standards like the Swiss, the Dutch and the Scandinavians. We believe that too many children of every level of ability are ill-prepared for life as adults, citizens, and at work.

ii. HMI are always reporting the low expectations that teachers here have of their pupils. Parents in all too many cases seem content or indifferent in the face of under- even grossly under-achieving by their children. But many parents are gravely dissatisfied with the standards of many of our maintained schools.

iii. Only Direct Grant schools and grammar schools offered escape from mediocrity to bright children in the majority of homes - and Labour abolished the former and strangled the latter, now further endangered by falling rolls.

iv. So millions of children are trapped in schools that are under no internal pressure to serve them well. It is to such pressure - by way of competition - that escape routes, and to go further, voucher or credit advocates, look.

2. The problem has been made worse by the teachers dispute. Added to this, there is a widespread feeling that -

a. the Government is not "in control" of our education system;

b. parents are not in control either;

c. we are not spending enough money on education;

d. a creaking education system is undermining our present and future international competitiveness.

All four of these perceptions are valid.

e. the Conservative Government and Party do not care about the maintained schools.

This is not valid, but it is believed.

3. Taken together these perceptions add up to a major political problem. The importance of education has risen in the opinion polls. We are not thought to be handling the issue well. It seems to be a potent recruiting sergeant for the SDP and Liberal Parties.

4. I do not believe that it will be sufficient to put forward some interesting proposals on education in our next manifesto. We should aim to show before the autumn that we have got a grip on education and have positive proposals for transforming it. A coherent set of proposals will neither be credible nor will it work unless we are prepared to invest more money in education. Action could be taken on some of the proposals set out below before the end of the Summer term. But in any event we should aim to launch a sweeping reform package in a statement before the Party conference, perhaps in the shape of a White Paper with green edges.

But we are complaining about what we have already invested

Objectives

5. We advanced in "Better Schools" a widely applauded series of ambitions but our means of delivering them are woefully inadequate. We must take steps to secure for central government the same kind of financial leverage on the education system that it enjoyed when the 1944 Education Act was drafted. But this is not enough. We need to give still more power and influence to parents. We must have - particularly in some of our cities - alternative schools to those provided by local education

authorities. Escape routes from bad LEA schools should be available to even the poorest parents of children of all abilities, but at the same time we need the power to push local education authorities into improving quality in their schools. We need to be able to manage a better paid, better trained, better motivated teaching force much more vigorously. We also want industry more involved - and permanently too - in our education system.

6. For years we have talked about education as a partnership. We have argued that education can best be delivered by collaboration between central and local government, the teaching profession and parents. This still seems a sensible approach - and the one most likely to secure results - but it bears very little relationship to what we have today. The taxpayer and central government, who pay for much of the service, and the parents and children, who are the customers, have less clout than the producers - the local education authorities and the teachers. We should redress the balance. If we want an effective national policy for education then central government must have more control. If we want satisfied parents and children then parents must have more influence and independence.

7. Given the powers here proposed (paras 18-20) we could cut the waste by some LEAs and ensure that existing and extra money is spent effectively - in education terms. If we had the right structure for education, and the right balance between the partners, these policies might be sufficient. But it is also right to consider radical options for improving the education system.

Radical Options

8. In identifying radical options, one or more of which we might adopt, I have thought it necessary to accept four constraints:

a. full-time education 5-16 should be compulsory;

b. such education (plus at least education at school until 19) should be available free of charge;

c. an effort should be made to secure minimum standards in what is provided;

d. we should bear in mind the morale of the maintained system since, except under two of the options (and even then for several years), it will be that system which will still provide for the vast majority of children.

9. I attach five technical papers examining in outline five options - some compatible and some incompatible with others - each of which to a greater or lesser extent reduces the part played by local education authorities in schooling:-

Option 1 Transferring responsibility for all education functions now provided by LEAs to directly elected single-purpose authorities.

No - not satisfactory Mrs!

Option 2 Transferring to the centre the responsibility for all LEA functions - in other words setting up a nationalised education service.

No.

Option 3 Converting maintained schools into autonomous bodies competing for parental custom via a system of "credits" - this education credit system is another name for a voucher scheme.

Family Problems Service

Option 4 Creating a new category of school maintained by the Secretary of State and catering either for all abilities or for groups with particular needs. These would be called Government Maintained (GM) schools: they would be a new form of direct grant schools. Under such a scheme new schools could be set up by groups of parents, as well as by existing or new charities and by entrepreneurs. Some of these institutions might have a technological emphasis.

why a new form of direct grant

Option 5 Extending means tested assistance to pupils at independent schools by expanding the Assisted Places Scheme.

Options 1. (Single-purpose LEAs) and 2. (Nationalisation)

10. I am against options 1 (single-purpose LEAs) and 2 (a nationalised education service). Option 1 would destabilise the structure of local government, but the structural change would not in itself do much for quality in schools. Option 2 would be a huge and complex change and damage local government. It is as likely as not that once the Government became the education service's sole paymaster and principal employer it would prove more vulnerable to pressure to spend, and that the harmonisation of spending - as opposed to standards - expected of a centralised service would level up rather than down. I remain opposed to a nationalised education service because it centralises power and bureaucracy to a degree which runs counter to our political philosophy, and would expose government to blame on every detail of education policy and delivery.

Option 3. A "Credits" System

11. i. Replacing LEA-maintained schools by an education credit scheme would embrace only LEA schooling and not the other LEA functions.

ii. The essence of this option is that schools would depend entirely on credits paid to them through the choices of parent-customers. (There is no difference of substance between (a) a credit system under which the parents' decision to send a child to a school automatically entitles the school to a stipulated sum - at present the school's income depends on the decision of the LEA - and (b) a voucher system under which the parent gives the school a piece of paper (the voucher) when the child is admitted and the school is entitled to the value of the voucher.)

iii. Those who argue for such a system believe that most parents wish their children to flourish: they believe that, given a choice - which can never be absolute but can be wider than now - within the state system parents would seek effective schooling and that supply would qualitatively satisfy demand.

iv. They accept that some parents would be indifferent or would make bad choices. But they say correctly that the habit of choice would strengthen dignity and responsibility - and that anyway there are plenty of bad schools in the state system, despite all our paternalism. They argue that we should give parents the chance - which most do not see that they have now - to secure better schooling than exists in many state schools for their children. But it is possible that, by taking the children of concerned parents out of bad schools, those schools would get even worse than they are now. Credits would thus be for better and for worse: much improvement in some schools; but much schooling continuing to be indifferent as now; and some made worse.

v. Long, complex and controversial legislation would be needed. A network of state agencies would be required for a host of functions: to define and make credit payments: to settle capital grants: to monitor standards: to cope with rejected pupils: to cope with truants: to provide special schools: to provide for under-5s: to manage the obsequies of failing credit schools: to monitor the 1944 religious settlement, and other functions as well.

vi. No credit system has been established anywhere. So we naturally in 1983 envisaged that any national credit scheme would be preceded by pilot experiments. We would therefore have had up to 5 years of drafting, legislating and preparing for the Appointed Day:

followed by a 5-year period for a voluntary (if any takers came forward) pilot scheme.

vii. Even an experiment would need complex legislation. Success would probably only be achieved by creating untypically favourable conditions - and failure could well be due to nationally organised opposition frustrating a local venture. To move without a pilot stage direct to an imposed system would be a disproportionate educational and political risk. Yet an experiment would be no good - it's all or nothing.

viii. There would certainly be hostility from LEAs (Tory included): most parents could be misled and scared: our own party would be split: and nearly all teacher unions would be passionately opposed and union officials would intensify member demoralisation just when our other initiatives call for enthusiasm and cooperation.

ix. Moreover only a minority of parents would be eager for the scope being brought. Another large minority is broadly content, even complacent, about standards. Most teachers think that more money for them and for schools is all that is necessary. Vouchers would be unlikely to touch the complacency that is rife in our worst schools.

x. It so happens that Arthur Selden, that credits crusader, has just published a denunciation of my timidity. The book - "The Riddle of the Voucher" - contains many valuable perceptions. In particular it sketches differing forms of vouchers to meet various problems. But the book errs, it seems to me, on three main counts:

(a) it assumes some charging: and we so far have turned our backs on this;

(b) it underestimates the hostility;

and (c) it presupposes, despite such hostility and without evidence, an abundance of school initiators and managers.

12. Despite my original interest in its possibilities, I believe it is now clear that the prospects of a practicable and affordable credit system are dim, simply because of the three constraints that have to be imposed on the operation of the market - compulsory schooling, free schooling and minimum standards of quality. These were the constraints which we felt bound to accept when we looked at vouchers in the last Parliament. I am therefore driven to the conclusion that we must now drop credits. We cannot run them simultaneously with measures to revitalise an LEA-maintained system. Nonsense

Option 4. GM Schools

13. i. This option opens up exciting new possibilities. It would widen choice. The schools could be selective or not. We would require them to provide the curriculum we want which for all schools will of course have a technical component. Some might specially emphasise the technical element within a broad curriculum.

ii. All GM schools will be required to satisfy minimum standards and to make no charge. They would be financed by central government at standard rates. To give ourselves the best chance of a good crop of GM schools we should try to use every variant of this flexible concept. We would look to the Livery Companies and existing charities. We should certainly try to interest business sponsors in setting up new charities.

Village schools

iii. One idea would be a business-sponsored trust which would set up a dozen GM secondary schools in the inner cities, each one with a strong emphasis on the technical element of a broad curriculum.

iv. GM schools might also be set up by groups of parents provided that they could form themselves into a trust capable of accepting enduring responsibility for the school, including compliance with curriculum, quality and no charge - as opposed to voluntary gift - conditions. This might appeal particularly to religious groups or in villages or the inner cities.

v. The best prospect for establishing GM schools on a substantial scale at modest extra cost probably lies in transferring a substantial number of aided schools to a new semi-autonomous status. It would be necessary to persuade the churches and other voluntary bodies of the advantages.

vi. But aided schools in the cities at least tend to be more popular than county schools in terms of perceived standards and discipline, and changing the status of some aided schools might do less to serve our objectives, particularly in the cities, than changing the status of county schools. The latter would require the Secretary of State, after public consultation, to require a LEA to transfer a county school into the GM school category with or without compensation. It is an open question whether we shall find enough groups of people (parent groups and charities - existing and new) with the will, capacity and long life needed to assume the duties of ownership, financial liability and the responsibilities of employing all the staff, particularly in those areas where we would most want to see them established. Potential volunteers might be put off by the political risk of a change of government and the hostility of LEAs and teacher unions.

vii. Legislation would be needed for most variants of this option.

viii. Despite the difficulties, my conclusion is that we should put GM schools firmly on our agenda and should move to establish as many such schools as we can - the number is likely to be limited initially.

Option 5. Extending the Assisted Places Scheme (APS)

14. i. We could either seek to keep the APS on a scholarship basis limited to the secondary phase, and so perhaps rather more than double its planned size and cost. Or we could lower the standard set for participating secondary schools and extend the scheme to primary schools, which might quadruple the size and cost. The limits are set by the number of satisfactory, willing-to-participate independent schools.

ii. Under the latter approach, which would require legislation, the APS would cease to be a scholarship scheme, bring much more of the independent sector within the ambit of state financial support, and to a much greater extent subsidise pupils who would otherwise have been educated at private expense (the dead weight effect). There would be little prospect of off-setting savings in the LEA maintained sector.

iii. Expansion of either magnitude would increase consumer choice and responsibility and the opportunity to benefit from education. But it would cost money, some of which would not give good value because of the dead weight effect.

iv. In logic it might be argued that we should not expand the APS if we are to launch GM schools because in some areas the APS might take away pupils whom we should like to see in the GM institutions. But I wish to see a pluralist approach to our problems and believe that there is scope for both initiatives. I therefore recommend extending the APS retaining its scholarship

character. We might stop short of the maximum potential for expansion (doubling its size). Independent schools will also benefit from the new tax treatment of gifts to charity.

The LEA Sector

15. GM schools and an expanded APS add to parental choice and reduce the LEA's quasi-monopoly. But even within a greater pluralism we are left with a huge preponderance of LEA schools and with the problem of making LEA schools better serve the needs of children, parents and the nation. The more good LEA schools parents have to choose from, the greater their choice. We should advance simultaneously on three fronts. The possibilities are outlined in Technical Paper No 6.

16. First, much solid work - most of it unappreciated by parents and employers - is in train and still to be done to complete our existing programme:

i. injecting vigour and rigour into the selection and training of teachers - the "Teaching Quality" White Paper programme is now in progress.

ii. shaping by consent a national curriculum (not actual syllabuses): this should be broad, balanced, relevant, and above all differentiated (so that every pupil can be stretched to his or her full potential). This has been accepted in principle but to be applied by all LEAs and schools it requires much more effort and better teachers. We are ready, building on the pilot stage, to expand TVEI rapidly if we can find the money. Even in primary schools, science and Craft Design and Technology are growing fast.

iii. introducing the new GCSE this September, requiring higher standards, differentiated, and with more emphasis on understanding and the application of skills and knowledge.

iv. linking teacher appraisal with much more effective in-service training; we are taking powers to secure these aims in our current Education Bill.

v. piloting records of achievement for all school leavers: everybody in the education service is in favour.

vi. setting up new governing bodies stripped of LEA majorities with more parent-governors and more accountable to parents; also in our Current Bill.

17. Second, we need to take strong and sustained action to secure the delivery of our "Teaching Quality" policies. We are successfully making the selection and training of teachers more rigorous and practical through CATE. We are making provision for the systematic development of appraisal and in-service training through the Education Bill. But these measures will only yield their full benefits when vigorously implemented by the LEA employers in association with a new contract-linked definition of teachers' duties and an appropriate pay structure with better differentials. There is no realistic prospect of that being negotiated into place. We need a statutory review body for pay and conditions of service. ? But DES have just opposed one?

18. Third, we shall not achieve our objectives for education without much greater leverage on local government. The Green Paper, "Paying for Local Government" holds out the prospect of increased specific grants bearing directly upon areas of expenditure crucial to the delivery of standards. But we shall have to go further. The Green Paper's theme of local accountability is a recipe for the status quo. We also need to ensure accountability to the wider requirements of national policy. That means a degree of centralisation not hitherto contemplated.

19. It is essential to move to a separate education grant regime incorporating a substantial element of specific grant. What is involved is a fundamental change in the Government's relationship with local education authorities. We would be able to

- lay down clearly what we expect of LEAs in terms of performance and the management of resources by relating exchequer grant to national objectives and policies

is this possible?

- monitor and secure the delivery of national priorities by varying the amount of specific grant to be paid from within a fixed total of grant according to LEA performance

What happens if the school doesn't perform?

- use specific grant to set conditions for performance and target resources to secure greater cost-effectiveness and value for money.

- require that value for money is addressed in every area of expenditure on the basis of a range of performance indicators and output measures

20. There is no half-way house. We need the combination of a separate education block grant and increased specific grant powers to secure the necessary grip over LEA management of the system. A block grant for education by itself would leave local government free to ignore our priorities. More specific grant would help to target resources towards the cost-effective delivery of national objectives but, set within the Green Paper regime for local government finance, it will have only limited effect. We need to be bolder and more far-reaching if a system based on local government is to deliver what we want.

What will this mean?

21. The result of these changes will mean new and better escape routes from LEA schools, and less need to use them. We shall have taken a grip on LEAs and the teacher unions - and they won't like it - to give parents a better deal. Quite new prospects will open up for moving our current policies along much faster and for new initiatives. For example

(1) A properly managed teacher force - well motivated teachers of the right quality sensibly deployed

throughout the school system. Two key issues are the supply of teachers for the shortage subjects such as mathematics, physics and CDT, and the selection and training of and leadership provided by head teachers. We look to pay differentials, appraisal and in-service training as our main instruments: but we are considering numerous small contributions in addition to help relieve the main long standing skill shortages.

(2) The development and use of performance indicators. Examination results do not measure "value added" at school because no-one knows with what intelligence, aptitude and home background (except by area) any particular child starts. But just because we shall not get accurate indicators for all types of performance is no reason for not trying to establish new ones. Indicators will be hard to design but I intend to try. The new financial mechanism will enable us to get LEAs and schools to make much more effective use of whatever performance indicators there are in order to raise standards.

(3) Bright children. Many comprehensive schools hold the more able back. We need in particular to make special provision for able older primary pupils - remedial classes in reverse - and will be able to do so with specific grant under the new mechanism.

(4) An "Open School". This would supplement by carefully designed distance-learning packages crucial parts of the curriculum (such as maths where we are nationally weak and other subjects). Motivation is the crux. We shall need great care in forming and delivering the packages if we are to succeed, but the ability to target funds and attach conditions will help.

22. My proposals cost more money. Within the framework suggested it will be money well spent, targeted to where it can do most good and give most value. More radical options would cost more;

less radical change would not deliver our political objectives. We shall have to find extra resources

- to deliver "Better Schools": our White Paper made it clear that, even if all LEAs were to secure the savings from improved efficiency open to them, our policies would still require some increase in real levels of expenditure per pupil. Our friends in prudent, non-wasteful LEAs are having to cut essential elements. We must make a start in 1987-88.

- to settle teachers' pay on a basis that will endure and on conditions that secure our objectives

- to expand the assisted places scheme (up to £70m depending upon the limits that we set on expansion) and to make special provision for able children within maintained schools (£10-20m)

- to establish an initial tranche of Government Maintained schools.

23. There will also be extra central government manpower costs to implement the programme that I am proposing in this minute. These might amount to about 50 AEC grades and 50 HMI in addition to what the DES needs now to do its present job. If we were to proceed to establish a sizeable number of GM schools beyond an initial tranche, further additional staff would be required.

My proposals

24. I conclude that:

a. We should move from block grant financing to an education grant with a substantial element of specific grant in order to give central government adequate leverage over the education system. With this leverage we could implement our existing policies more quickly

and be able to mount new initiatives for the curriculum and teaching quality (paras 18-20);

b. We should use the education grant particularly to "police" the new teachers' contract. Our aim should be legislation to impose the outcome of the work of a statutory review body on pay and what pay is for. The role of teacher unions as negotiating bodies would be severely curtailed. They would be obliged to become once again professional organisations (para 17);

c. We should introduce new direct grant schools under the name of GM (Government Maintained) schools (para 13), including the possibility of these being run by parent groups. The more successful and popular the schools became, the greater the potential for parental leverage over LEA-maintained schools. As a first step we should move to establish very soon a national foundation with a mix of government and industrial funds charged with the task of setting up straight away ten or a dozen GM secondary schools in the city centres of our older industrial conurbations. We should aim for a couple in London and the remainder in our provincial cities. Each school would have a local governing body. Each would aim to provide a model curriculum embodying the lessons we have learnt from TVEI. We would not sacrifice breadth before 16 but for those who stayed on after that age quality vocational provision and courses should be available. Each of these new institutions should aim to work closely with local industry. I have no doubt that the creation of schools like these would cause howls of outrage from LEAs, though they would have little to grumble about provided the schools were not financed at their expense or at a significantly higher per capita level of funding. I have equally little doubt that parental interest in these schools would bring pressure to bear on the existing primary schools and secondary schools in the maintained sector to raise their standards;

d. We should expand the Assisted Places Scheme while retaining its scholarship character (para 14). This would be complemented in the maintained sector by our intention to make special provision for able children within maintained schools - the "remedial classes in reverse" (para 21(3)). And we should exploit distance learning techniques (para 21(4)).

e. We should publish before the autumn a White Paper with green edges setting out the above proposals, reporting progress on the national foundation GM school initiative (c. above) and explaining fully our reasons for dropping credits;

f. The additional powers for parents provided in our Education Bill and the additional options made available to them by these new proposals should be supplemented by much greater information for parents. We should provide every parent with a booklet, setting out clearly parental duties, responsibilities and rights and setting out too what a good primary school or a good secondary school should be like. In such a booklet, we would naturally want to include not only our views on the curriculum but also on the treatment of politically controversial subjects within it. This would supplement any other measures we may be minded to take on political indoctrination.

Action

25. The programme I have outlined, taken with what we are already doing on teacher training, the curriculum, examinations, appraisal, in-service training, records of achievement and parental involvement in schools, would represent the most radical educational change since 1944. It would seize the initiative. It would cost more money and some manpower. It would get us, for a change, value for money. It would enable us to take some action before the next election, provided the resources were available, and to promise more on the back of legislation in a new

Parliament. It would be open to us to choose how much we needed to do straight away in order to make our promises for future action both more possible and more credible.

26. Whatever we decide, I hope we will not let things drift. Time is not on our side and indecision is not our friend. I would welcome the establishment of a small group of colleagues to carry these ideas forward as a matter of urgency after Easter. I would also welcome some public indication that we intend to accord education a higher priority in our plans including those for public expenditure.

K.J.

KJ
26 March 1986

As agreed I am sending copies of this minute to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster only at this stage.

CONFIDENTIAL

TECHNICAL PAPER NO 1

Single-purpose Local Education Authorities

1. This paper outlines some of the main implications of reorganising local government to create a system of single-purpose local education authorities (SPLEAs) which would be directly elected and would be separate from the organisational arrangements for other local government services.

Functions

2. It would seem appropriate to allocate to the SPLEAs all the educational functions assigned to local government. That approach would offer the best prospect of making their functions sufficiently important to attract elected members and officers of good calibre. The approach would also avoid the difficulties of separating functions which are largely interrelated: for example to make the SPLEAs responsible only for the schools would make much more difficult the effective planning and delivery of 16-19 education.

Areas

3. SPLEAs would need to be large enough to attract elected members and officers of good calibre, and to be able to discharge cost-effectively and economically the full range of functions which would fall to them. Where there are now shire counties, the SPLEAs might normally conform to the areas of the existing LEAs; but elsewhere the SPLEAs might in many cases be formed by amalgamating the areas of two or more metropolitan districts or outer London boroughs.

Financial arrangements

4. A national system of authorities responsible only for education would emphasise the fact that the English education system is a national one "under the control and

direction of the Secretary of State for Education and Science" (the words of Section 1 of the 1944 Education Act).
It seems appropriate that to the extent that SPLEAs are financed by the Government, that finance should come to them from the Secretary of State. The finance arrangements might take the following form:

(1) there would be an education block grant for which the Secretary of State would be responsible to Parliament and on which he would negotiate directly with the SPLEAs.

(2) Education block grant would be based on a separate education needs assessment. Under present arrangements there exist soundly based and generally robust GREs. The Green Paper proposals, which take care of the problem of resource equalisation, are in principle compatible with a wholly separate education needs grant.

(3) There would be an increased power of specific grant - amounting to about 10-15 per cent of total local authority expenditure on education. Such a power would be designed to secure effective steerage of the system by the Secretary of State.

(4) SPLEAs would also raise revenue locally. It would be necessary to consider splitting the proposed community charge between SPLEAs and other local authorities, as it would be split between tiers of local authorities. The Secretary of State might have a power similar to selective rate-capping.

(5) SPLEA capital expenditure would be separately controlled by the Secretary of State, perhaps on a gross expenditure basis.

5. The negotiations between the Secretary of State and the SPLEAs would be directed towards effectively changing local priorities on education spending: to that extent it is likely that they would increasingly be directed towards individual SPLEAs.

6. The financial regime outlined in paras 4-5 would be intended to serve more effectively the Secretary of State's policies for improving the quality of education and the standards attained by pupils and students; to reduce unjustifiable diversity in a national service; and to secure value for money in the expenditure of every SPLEA.

Electoral Considerations

7. The present electoral cycle is:

- election of the whole Council every 4 years for shire counties, London boroughs, the new ILEA and some shire districts.

- election by thirds three years out of 4 for metropolitan districts and most shire districts.

The timing of elections for SPLEAs would need to be decided in the light of the following considerations:

(1) Whether it is desirable that all SPLEAs should have the same arrangements.

(2) Whether it is desirable to hold SPLEA elections at the same time as elections for other local authorities in the area of the SPLEA, having regard to cost (elections held at different dates cost more); the likely effect on turn-out, and whether it is desirable that the elections should focus purely on educational issues.

Effects on local government

8. To remove education functions from the outer London boroughs and the metropolitan districts would leave these local authorities in the present position of the inner London boroughs, whose viability as local authorities is not currently in question. But to remove education functions from the shire counties would leave these with functions which account for only about 30 per cent of their present expenditure. This would call in question their viability as local authorities, having regard to the resultant distribution of functions between shire counties and shire districts.

9. The creation of SPLEAs would substantially reduce the capacity of local government to determine policy and expenditure priorities between services at the local level. The separate authorities would pursue expenditure policies in isolation from each other. But the demands which each made on the ratepayers would be visible and ratepayers could discriminate in their response as electors.

10. Cooperation between local services eg education and personal social services is in principle easier to secure within an authority than between authorities; but effective inter-authority cooperation is also possible.

Central and Local Governments Costs

11. SPLEAs would have to establish for themselves the common administrative services (eg financial, legal, personnel etc) provided to education within existing multi-purpose authorities. At present, administration costs of the order of £250m a year are recharged to education departments in respect of the costs of common services. The creation of SPLEAs involves diseconomies of scale in relation to such expenditure. It is not possible to estimate precisely what proportion of the expenditure would be additional

but it might amount to 50 per cent or £125m a year. To the extent that some existing LEA areas were merged to form SPLEAs, there would be countervailing savings. Separate electoral arrangements would also entail extra costs.

12. There would be some additions to central government manpower. The administration of a separate education grant regime would require an additional 10-20 posts depending upon the role within it exercised by specific grant. Further manpower might be needed if the grant negotiations were brought to bear increasingly upon individual local authorities.

Legislation and timing

13. Legislation would be required to establish SPLEAs and to deal with the transition from LEAs to SPLEAs. The transition - the preparations for new electoral arrangements, for the transfer of property and staff, and for a smooth hand-over - would probably take 1-2 years after enactment.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

TECHNICAL PAPER NO 2

A nationalised education service

1. This paper considers in broad outline what might be involved if the education service were managed and financed centrally. It is assumed that the pattern of the educational institutions now maintained (or assisted) by LEAs - in all its variety - would initially remain as it is now; and that, in particular, there would continue to be county, aided, special agreement, controlled, and special schools, as well as maintained and assisted establishments of further and higher education, all of them retaining their present status, form of government, and functions, subject to the changes in school government and functions to be enacted by the Education Bill 1986. The large change which would take place is:

(1) the transfer from elected local government to "the centre" of all the functions now carried out by local education authorities in relation to the institutions they maintain or assist; and the related functions which they now carry out in relation to pupils, students and parents.

(2) the transfer to "the centre" of all responsibility for financing the public education service.

Organisation

2. In principle the resultant responsibilities of "the centre" could be discharged in one of three ways:

(1) by the Secretary of State and his civil servants.

(2) By a single Central Agency, appointed by the Secretary of State and answerable to him, on the basis of functions formally assigned by legislation or by the Secretary of State.

(3) By a number of Area Agencies on the NHS model, appointed by the Secretary of State and answerable to him, on the basis of functions formally assigned by legislation or by the Secretary of State.

3. The choice between these 3 Options would depend on the weight given to several considerations. In particular:

(1) Option 2 (1) would involve the Secretary of State (and his officials) directly with the management of every aspect of the education service. It would maximise the matters in respect of which he is accountable to Parliament. It would facilitate consistency of administration in a national service.

(2) Option 2 (2) would remove the Secretary of State from the detailed tasks of managing the service. Consistency of administration would be facilitated. But the Central Agency's accountability to the customers of the service would not be easy to establish. There would be a limited possibility of conflict between the Secretary of State and his agent, insofar as the latter possessed entrenched powers.

(3) Option 2 (3) would also remove the Secretary of State from the detailed management of the service. Accountability to the customers might be partially secured by appointing to each Area Agency representatives of local government. But consistency of administration would be harder to achieve; and the NHS experience suggests a strong possibility of conflict between particular Area Agencies and the Secretary of State.

4. Under either option 2(1) or (2) the functions of the centre would need to be discharged by means of administrative

devolution. Many permutations could be envisaged. Under Option 2 (1) the DES would be responsible for policy and finance at national level; and a tier of say 30 area offices (each with sub-offices as appropriate) each of which would discharge the Secretary of State's functions in relation to the institutions in its area in accordance with guidelines on policy and a budget from the DES. Any responsibilities delegated by the DES to its area could be discharged with reference to the DES as the occasion demanded.

5. Under Option 2 (2), the Central Agency would receive a budget from the Secretary of State, and perhaps policy and financial guidelines, but would then administer the service on the basis of its formally delegated powers. It would be the Agency not the DES which would arrange for budgetary and administrative devolution through area or local offices.

6. Option 2 (3) entails a number of Area Agencies. If these were sufficiently numerous, administrative devolution would have been achieved at the same time. Each Area Agency would be given a budget and perhaps policy guidelines by the Secretary of State.

7. It might be appropriate in certain cases to allow an appeal to the Secretary of State against the decision of his agent by an aggrieved educational institution, parent or student. Similarly under Option 2 (1) there might be a formal arrangement in certain cases for appeal to a specially constituted tribunal. Under Option 2 (1), there would be a strong case for giving a right of appeal against the Secretary of State's decisions to the governing bodies of voluntary schools, because the Secretary of State would have assumed the discharge of LEA functions in respect of which these governing bodies can now appeal to the Secretary of State. In either case an appeal to the Courts would be possible on a point of law.

8. The elimination of the locally elected element from the education service would strengthen the case for obliging the Secretary of State, or the Central Agency, to consult - perhaps through formally constituted advisory bodies - at local level on important issues arising out of the application of the central policy, and to consider proposals for development and innovation suited to local circumstances. The local authorities that would remain might be represented on such advisory bodies.

Finance

9. The education service would receive all public finance from the central government, either directly from the Secretary of State or via his agent(s). There would be a corresponding shift from local to national taxation. The total public expenditure on education would be determined solely by the Government. It would have to be distributed among the individual institutions, and for other specific purposes, largely on the basis of formulae designed to meet need. A starting point for distribution formulae could be the existing education GRE which is based largely on identifiable client groups and is already fairly robust. But the present methodology would require refinement to take account of variations in local circumstances to which LEAs can at present accommodate, and would need to be developed to cover aspects of education where local expenditure is at present discretionary eg provision for under-5s, adult education, the youth service and discretionary student awards. It is for consideration how far it would be possible and desirable to delegate financial responsibility to individual institutions.

Management of institutions

10. The governing bodies of schools and colleges would continue to have their present responsibilities for managing their institutions (as modified by the Education Bill 1986). With the disappearance of local education authorities it

would be necessary to consider how far the new paymaster (Secretary of State or his agent) should be represented on governing bodies. In the absence of such representation the governing bodies would often consist only of representative of people (eg parents, teachers, coopted members) with no financial stake in the institution. There would be a strong case for giving the paymaster the right to appoint a proportion of governors but the larger the proportion, the greater the practical difficulties of finding enough suitable appointees. It is perhaps an open question whether such appointments would be made on a political basis. It might also be desirable to introduce a representative local element by allowing the local authority to nominate some of the governors. However these issues were resolved, the Secretary of State (or his agent) would need the information, powers and resources to ensure that institutions spent their allocated central funds properly, effectively and in accordance with the Government's educational policies.

Premises

11. For those institutions where the LEA now owns or leases the premises, the Secretary of State (or his agent) would take over the freehold or leasehold, and would assume the attendant responsibilities for capital and current expediture. Where the Secretary of State now pays grant towards capital or external repairs eg for aided schools, the arrangements could continue. It is for consideration whether the initial transfer of the interest in the premises should involve a payment by the transferee either in respect of the value of the premises or as compensation for past capital expenditure.

Staff

12. The Secretary of State (or his agent) would become the employer of all staff (other than those not now employed by the LEA eg staff of aided schools). In the capacity

of employer the Secretary of State (or his agent) would appoint and dismiss all such staff, subject to the existing arrangements, as modified by the Education Bill 1986, for involving governing bodies, head teachers and principals. The Secretary of State (or his agent) would exercise the staff management functions of the employer (staff deployment, development, training). He would also assume the employer's responsibility for settling the pay and conditions of service of the staff, on the basis of national arrangements for negotiation etc determined either on a statutory or a voluntary basis. The employer's responsibilities assumed by the Secretary of State (or his agent) would extend beyond the teachers to the arrangements for non-teaching staff in respect of which the Secretary of State now has no statutory interest or experience.

Pattern of provision

13. At present the pattern and character of institutional provision for any area is the product of a process over time whereby the LEA and to a limited extent voluntary bodies (particularly the churches) have made proposals which the Secretary of State has been able to accept. That process has involved public consultation and the consideration of objections. The elimination of the LEA would make it necessary to consider, on the assumption that changes in the pattern and character of institutions would continue to be the subject of public consultation, how far the Secretary of State (or his agent) should be the proposer of change and to the extent that he becomes the proposer, whether he should have the power, without appeal, to determine the issue.

14. The enforcement of compulsory schooling would fall on the Secretary of State (or his agent) and with it the determination of the admission arrangements (including the arrangements for parental appeal against non-admission)

for those schools (normally those other than aided schools) for which the LEA now has that responsibility. He (or his agent) would also assume the LEA's responsibility for securing appropriate provision for pupils with unusually marked special needs. All these functions would bring the Secretary of State (or his agent) into a day-to-day relationship with parents.

Curriculum

15. It is now Government policy to promulgate objectives for the school curriculum, and to require each LEA to formulate its own curricular policy, so that both the Secretary of State and LEAs discharge their functions in the light of what would effectively be a national school curriculum (but not going as far as national school syllabuses). If the Secretary of State (or his agent) were to own most of the premises of the institutions, employ most of the staff, provide all the public finance, operate an inspection system, and play a more initiatory role in relation to the pattern and character of provision, it would be natural that all these responsibilities should be discharged in the interest of a national curriculum, centrally determined and reviewed after consultation with governors, teaching staff and the customers of the service; and it would be for consideration whether such a curriculum would increasingly find expression in national syllabuses.

Effect on Local Government

16. The loss of education functions would leave the metropolitan districts and outer London boroughs with the same functions as the inner London boroughs whose viability is not currently in question. It is however questionable whether the shire counties, after losing a service which accounts for about 70% of their expenditure, could be regarded as viable local authorities, having

regard also to the functions of the shire districts. The ILEA would be abolished. The loss of eduction functions would substantially reduce the importance of local government in the affairs of the nation.

Resources

17. The Government's control over total public expenditure on eduction would rest on the fact that it alone supplied public finance for education and actually or effectively employed the great majority of the staff of the education service. It is a matter of judgment how such centralised control would affect the expenditure total. The factors affecting that judgment include political considerations, the scope for increased efficiency and value for money in the use of human and material resources (including teaching staff) and the dynamics of an overtly national system which encourages consistency of provision in all areas.

18. As regards administrative manpower, the current position is summarised below.

LEA	(in full-time equivalents)	Advisers and Inspectors	2,100
		School Meals Organisers	650
		Youth Organisations	1,900
		EWOs	3,000
		Administration and support	18,000
		Recharged Administration	20,000
DES			2,400

19. It is difficult to offer any precise estimates of the manpower consequences of centralisation. A number of factors are relevant:

(1) There is little doubt that LEAs do not at present employ sufficient advisers and inspectors to enable them adequately to monitor and improve the performance of their institutions. To discharge these responsibilities adequately the Secretary of State (or his agent) might need some 4,000 advisers and inspectors (as against the present complement of 500 HMI and 2,100 local advisers and inspectors).

(2) The loss of education functions would create diseconomies of scale for the administrative services of local authorities. This addition might be at least offset by economies of scale in providing the same services for education through a much smaller number of area organisations under the Secretary of State or under a Central Agency, or a much smaller number of Area Agencies.

(3) A centralised education system would need many more DES staff than the present non-HMI complement of the DES (ca 1,700). For example the staff of the DHSS concerned with the NHS (the total expenditure of which is of the order of magnitude of the education service) is about 4,000.

Legislation and Timing

20. The transfer to the centre of LEA functions would require very substantial and complex legislation which would also have to deal with transitional arrangements and the possibility of obstruction from local government and professional interests. The necessary arrangements for, among other things, the transfer of staff and property, and the creation of a new area organisation, might mean that the new regime could not come into operation for 1-2 years after enactment.

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TECHNICAL PAPER NO 3

AN EDUCATION CREDIT SYSTEM

1. This note considers in outline what would be involved in creating and running an entirely new category of schools, which would take the place of those currently maintained by local education authorities. Within specified constraints, the schools would be independent of local and central government, operating as autonomous cost centres. Their main source of finance would be "credits" i.e. grants from public funds calculated on the basis of the number of registered pupils. They would not be allowed to charge fees. why not?

The new structure of the public education service

2. Full-time education would be compulsory from 5 to 16. All county and voluntary schools, primary and secondary alike, would convert to education credit system (ECS) status. Nursery and special schools and LEA-maintained higher and further education institutions would remain outside the scheme - probably, but not necessarily, continuing to be LEA-maintained. The existing category of independent schools would remain, except to the extent that they joined the ECS sector by agreement. The Assisted Places Scheme would be unaffected, and changes to the existing arrangements for independent schools would not be ruled out.

ECS schools

3. Since ECS schools would be independent of the LEA, they would need to have a separate legal existence. Since they would be financed almost wholly from public funds, it would seem appropriate to give them charitable trusts and probably also make them companies limited by guarantee, which in normal circumstances would limit the liability

of the trustees/members to a nominal sum. There are complications in trust and company law which would need detailed consideration, particularly as they apply to voluntary schools. Although ECS schools would have the independence, and permanence, of charitable status, they would not only be funded by a public authority but would have to be subject to a certain amount of regulation and supervision by such an authority, so that for example reasonable value for money is achieved. Paras 30-34 below summarise the main functions of the public authority in relation to ECS schools and discuss whether that authority should be the LEA or the central government. In the following paragraphs the authority will be referred to as the "State Agency".

Governing boards

4. The trustees/members of each ECS school would be the governing board of the school. It is for consideration on what principles the governing boards should be constituted. Since the schools would be financed from public funds, it would seem appropriate that the composition of the governing body should be subject to some statutory limitation, and some control by the State Agency. It might be reasonable to allow the Agency to appoint a proportion of the governors, and it might be necessary in many cases for all the governors to be so appointed initially. Subsequent and perhaps some initial appointments could be largely by co-option and also, if desired, by elections on the part of parents and teachers. The composition of governing boards could vary according to the status of the replaced school eg foundation governors could be in the majority on the boards of former aided schools, and be represented on those of former controlled schools. In general, it might not be easy to find suitable and willing persons for every governing board. During the period of transition, the existing governors of a replaced maintained school could, if willing, form the first board; if they were unwilling,

temporary replacements might need to be appointed by the State Agency.

5. Memoranda and Articles of Association would set out the detailed constitution, powers and responsibilities of the governing boards. The Articles would vest responsibility in the boards for all aspects of running the schools; property matters; employment of staff; the curriculum; admission of pupils; and so on.

Financial mechanism

6. Each ECS school would be funded through "credits". The value of a credit would be determined each year on a standard scale, with variations according to the size and locality of the school and the age of the pupils. This determination would be rough and ready; it would be necessary to make extensive refinements to the GRE methodology, and appeal arrangements might be needed. The number of credits for a school would be determined by the number of pupils on roll at a stated date, perhaps with adjustments where rolls were rising or falling rapidly.

7. Governing boards would be expected to finance all or nearly all the school's current expenditure (and perhaps a 15 per cent element of any capital expenditure - qv para 11) from their credit income. The revenue budget would cover:

a. teaching and non-teaching staff (including any call on occasional eg supply or peripatetic teachers, advisory services, school doctors or psychologists from whatever source; plus costs of in-service training, redundancies etc);

b. books, equipment and other materials;

c. in-school administration;

d. maintenance and internal repairs;

e. rents, rates and services;

f. any subsidy of midday meals and home-to-school transport beyond legal minima.

8. Governing boards would be free to supplement their income from voluntary contributions and (limited) commercial borrowing. They would be required to make proper arrangements for accounting and audit.

9. To minimise transitional difficulties and act as a buffer against unavoidable lumpy expenditure, eg on major repairs or staff restructuring, schools would need to be given a working balance on starting up. This would be a once-off, but clearly large, addition to public expenditure.

Capital assets

10. It would not be possible to devise a single, appropriate model for the governing boards' interest in the school premises. This varies considerably in the case of LEA-maintained schools, and is much complicated in many instances by trust provisions. Where there was not already a body of foundation governors who owned the premises (as generally applies in the case of voluntary schools), it is for consideration whether the freehold should be transferred to the governing board or whether the board should be allowed to rent or lease the premises (in the first instance usually from the local authority). Transferring freeholds would seem to require compensation payments to existing owners, which would probably have to be met by the Government, would probably run to billions of pounds, and would complicate matters if an ECS school

closed for any reason. Unless the freeholders are to be put at a disadvantage, leasing or renting should be at economic rates: but this could put a substantial financial burden on many governing boards.

11. Capital projects for established, and perhaps for new, ESC schools would probably be feasible only with the help of a grant from the State Agency (subject to reversion of net proceeds to the Agency in the event of closure). Since many ECS schools would find it hard to raise money, the grant might have to be at a rate of 100% rather than the 85% now payable to aided schools. Dealing with applications for grants (including settling priorities) from up to 25,000 schools would be a large administrative undertaking. It would give the State Agency an important means of controlling the total resources put into the new system, and their distribution within it.

Changes in provision

12. ECS schools would start at their existing size, character and age range, but it is implicit in the system that these should change over time in response to parental wishes. Some changes, for example in the school's age range or character (selective, single sex etc) could affect the total amount of grant payable via credits, could involve grants for capital projects, and could affect the opportunities of parents in the area to secure the desired education for their children. These considerations argue in favour of retaining arrangements on the lines of those currently in force under the Education Act 1980 whereby certain changes relating to an ECS school would be subject to the approval of the Secretary of State with opportunities for objection by other parties affected (eg other ECS schools).

13. There are similar arguments for such public procedures in relation to the setting up of new ECS schools and to

closure of schools which were failing (eg because of unpopularity or demographic changes). It is for consideration whether in the case of possible closures transitional assistance should be afforded, by way of a top-up grant, to protect the interests of those children remaining at the school; or whether alternatively arrangements should be made in such circumstances for temporary takeover by the State Agency either to restore an ailing school to health or to nurse it decently to its death. In the case of a temporary take-over by the Agency, or if the school closed, all rights in the property would remain with the trust or body previously responsible for the school.

Teaching and other staff

14. ECS governing boards would employ all the staff employed at the school. Since the schools would be publicly funded acceptable standards of teaching and other services would be required in them. It is for consideration whether this would continue to make it necessary that all teachers should be qualified in accordance with criteria laid down by the Secretary of State; the answer to this question would affect the arrangements now made for teacher training. Governing boards would probably have to accept some obligation to admit student and probationary teachers.

15. New arrangements would be needed (national or school by school) for determining the pay of teachers and other staff. The existing Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965 applies only to the remuneration paid to teachers by local education authorities. The main alternatives would be either to leave this as a matter for negotiation between the employers and the employees, who might or might not set up nation-wide negotiating arrangements, or to establish new national arrangements for determining teachers' pay, either on a voluntary or on a statutory basis.

16. Transitional difficulties could arise if staff at LEA-maintained schools were unwilling to transfer to the new ECS schools. Claims for constructive dismissal could be hard to avoid, and the ECS schools could not be expected to bear the costs. Some form of national compensation arrangements might need to be devised, and specially financed.

17. The teachers superannuation scheme could continue to operate broadly as at present, but the governing boards would become responsible for the employers' contributions. Premature retirement and redundancy would become matters for the governing boards, who would be responsible for making all the necessary arrangements and meeting the costs. Mismanaged redundancies or dismissals could prove costly to the boards. Redundancies in the event of school closure could almost certainly not be financed by the governing board.

Admissions

18. Broadly speaking, ECS schools would have complete autonomy as to the number of children they admitted and the basis on which they admitted them (subject to the likely need for public consultation and the Secretary of State's approval to changes of character and size). Existing requirements in legislation as to the publication of information on admissions arrangements etc would remain in broadly their present form.

19. It would be desirable for some sort of clearing house to handle applications in a given neighbourhood, and for the reason set out in para 20 schools' participation in this would need to be compulsory. Normally it would no longer be possible for parents to appeal against a particular school's refusal to admit their child.

Securing compulsory education

20. The State Agency would need to be charged with ensuring that all children of compulsory school age received full-time

education. The Agency would need to be able to obtain from the clearing houses (see para 19) complete information on all eligible children in their area, so that it could identify those who were not in school, either because their parents were withholding them or because all ECS schools in the area had refused them admission. In the latter case the Agency would need to be able to require the admission of the child in a suitable ECS school with spare capacity. It would be desirable for the school to have a right of appeal.

21. Where there was an overall shortfall of ECS places in the locality, the Agency would be required to look initially to schools in neighbouring localities (with implications for transport, and possibly boarding, costs that would need to be considered), and these might have a right of appeal. In other cases it would be necessary for the Agency either to take up places in independent schools or to provide schools of its own for unplaceable children.

Standards

22. In the interest of securing minimum standards, ECS schools wopuld be required to comply with minimum standards as to premises laid down by the State Agency, certainly for reasons of health and safety and probably to permit minimum standards of educational quality. Since ECS schools would be publicly funded, it seems inescapable that the State Agency would also lay down minimum standards of quality. It is for consideration at what level these should be set and who would set them. It is notoriously difficult to establish criteria for educational output as opposed to input (quality of the curriculum, teaching, equipment etc). Any minimum quality requirements would need to be compatible with giving each governing board responsibility for the school's curriculum, but the State Agency might have power to secure a minimum of certain types of provision eg for minority foreign language teaching.

23. ECS schools could be subject to requirements in respect

of religious education on the lines now applying to LEA-maintained schools, but the LEA's responsibility in relation to the agreed syllabus might need to be transferred to another agency (see para 33 below).

24. The State Agency would need to monitor and enforce minimum standards. In the event of default, it would need to be possible in the last resort to close a school (subject presumably to a right of appeal) and secure suitable alternative arrangements for its pupils. The Agency might also be responsible for informing governing boards about good practice and new developments in school education.

Provision for under fives

25. ECS schools could in principle be free to admit under fives, provided they did so free of charge and that the quality of provision for those over 5 was not prejudiced. They could receive credit-funding for them (on scale rates) if they had specific approval for such admissions from the State Agency.

26. Provision for under fives other than in ECS schools could in principle remain as a residual responsibility of LEAs - but see para 33 below. Since such provision would have to be in free-standing nursery schools, it would be relatively more expensive than an under-fives place in an ECS school.

16-19s

27. Current legislation requires LEAs to make provision for full-time education free of charge, either in schools or colleges, to all those aged 16-19 who want it. ECS schools would be permitted to admit 16-19 year olds. They might also be allowed to cater exclusively for those over 16, possibly including part-timers and those aged 19 or over. Any provision made by ECS schools for 16-19 year olds would

attract credits. Alternative provision would be available at maintained colleges catering exclusively for those over 16. The two sectors would compete for custom. How far they should, and could, and the effect on public expenditure and value for money for such expenditure requires further exploration.

Special education

28. The admission of children with special needs to ECS schools involving supplementary payments in respect of special provision by the school would need to be subject to controls on the part of the State Agency. It would be necessary to examine in detail how best to reconcile value for public money with the educational needs of the children in question and the financial viability of ECS schools. It might be necessary to give the Agency power to require admission to, and special provision by, the school, subject to a right of appeal.

29. The State Agency would provide, or to buy from the independent sector, places for those children for whom integration in ECS schools was inappropriate.

The State Agency

30. The preceding paragraphs have identified many functions relating to school education - and further examination would doubtless identify others - which could not be performed by the governing boards of ECS schools, and would fall to the State Agency. It is necessary to decide whether this Agency's functions should, at least in large part, be performed by local government or whether they should be performed centrally. In considering this issue it is helpful to set out the functions involved. They are in principle either financial or regulatory. The main financial functions are:

(1) Determination of the values of credits for all circumstances, including special payments for children with special needs, and grants for

start-up costs.

(2) Adminstration of credit payments.

(3) Supervision of financial propriety in ECS schools.

(4) Rescue or closure of failing ECS schools.

(5) Grants for capital expenditure by ESC schools.

31. The main regulatory functions to be performed by the State Agency are:

(1) Approval of new, or changes to existing, ESC schools.

(2) Appointment of (some or all) governors of ECS schools.

(3) Securing attendance by all children of compulsory age, including the provision of schools as a last resort and of transport to schools.

(4) Determination and enforcement of minimum standards at ECS schools.

(5) Provision of special schools (or purchase of places at independent schools).

32. It seems desirable to establish arrangements enabling governing boards to appeal against certain decisions of the State Agency.

33. It would be convenient to entrust the LEAs with most of the financial and regulatory functions, with appeals

from governing boards to the Secretary of State; though certain functions, eg the determination of the value of credits and capital grants would have to lie wholly or mainly with the Secretary of State. But it is questionable whether politically hostile LEAs could in practice be trusted conscientiously to discharge functions which give ample scope for obstructing or wrecking aspects of the ECS scheme. This consideration points to giving all financial and regulatory functions to the Secretary of State (with appeal, if desired, to independent tribunals) or to an agency appointed by the Secretary of State (with any appeal to the Secretary of State).

34. If the second approach in para 33 is followed (and perhaps even if it is not) it becomes questionable whether the remaining educational functions now vested in local authorities should remain with them or be assigned elsewhere. The most important such functions are:

(1) Provision of education for under-5s.

(2) Provision of further and higher education, adult education and the youth service.

(3) Teacher training.

Resources

35. It is difficult to judge whether an ECS system, once it is fully established, is likely to involve more or less public expenditure than the existing system of LEA-maintained schools. An ECS system of schools would be more fragmented, and less sytematically managed, than the present system. It is uncertain whether the dynamic of the system would tend towards smaller, less cost-effective schools or towards larger, more cost-effective ones. Unit expenditure per pupil would be highly visible, as would differences in

it. It seems inevitable that the transition to the ECS system would be expensive: some extra costs eg for start-up funds (para 9) and for premises (para 10--11) can be identified now. Experience suggests that the frictional problems of a change of this magnitude can be overcome only by the lubrication of additional money. If the central government were to be the State Agency, then public finance for the scheme would presumably come from central taxation only.

36. The effects on total public service manpower are difficult to judge. It seems likely that there would be increases in central government manpower to offset decreases in local authority manpower and that a rather different mix of staff categories would be needed eg more emphasis on inspectors of educational quality and financial propriety and competence.

Legislation and timing

37. The creation of a radically different school system would require long, complex and highhy controversial legislation, designed not only to replace much of existing education law but also to ensure a smooth transition and to prevent hostile LEAs or other from frustrating the change. Several years would be required for full implementation after the legislation has been enacted. It would probably take a whole Parliament to put the scheme into full operation, and more time would be needed before it was soundly and securely established.

Making county and controlled schools (more) like aided schools

38. It has been suggested that it would be possible to move in the direction of an education credit system by legislation designed to give to county and controlled schools some or all of the distinguishing features of aided schools. The main such features are that the governing body:

(1) owns the premises;

(2) employs all staff at the school, subject to a right of veto by the LEA over the appointment and dismissal of particular staff (subject to certain minor exceptions), and on the basis of a complement determined by the LEA;

(3) is responsible for external repairs and maintenance (with the help of a grant from the Secretary of State);

(4) in the case of aided secondary schools, controls the curriculum, though the exercise of this power may be affected by the LEA's overall policy;

(5) determines pupil admissions, under arrangements agreed with the LEA;

(6) is so composed as to be dominated by the voluntary body which brought the school into being.

39. The responsibilities and powers outlined in para 38 are a necessary part of that degree of independence enjoyed by aided schools which enables them to preserve their distinctive, usually denominational, tradition

and ethos. The governing body is an agency of the voluntary body which guards that tradition and ethos, and which has a permanence like that of a LEA, but quite unlike the largely transient character which the governing body of a county or controlled school will have under the Education Bill 1986. It would not be appropriate to entrust, on a permanent and not a merely delegated basis, an aided school's responsibilities for employing the staff, external repairs, the curriculum and admissions to a governing body which neither had the permanence derived from being the agent of a charitable foundation nor possessed the stake in the school represented by the ownership of the premises.

40. It seems, therefore, that if county and controlled schools were to be given the distinctive features of aided schools, there would be little prospect that they would achieve a character, tradition and ethos which was different from that now intended for them by the LEA unless they achieved more or less the full status of aided schools both as regards the composition of their governing bodies and as regards their responsibilities. If that happened, the LEA would be responsible for maintaining schools which (apart from special schools) did not owe their existence to the LEA. It would however be only these schools in respect of which the LEA could exercise its function of securing sufficient and efficient education for all pupils in its area.

41. This new situation would introduce a new tension into the relationship between the LEA and the schools it maintained. The LEA would be dealing with a large number of governing bodies, each concerned only with its own schools and equipped with powers eg in relation to staffing, the curriculum and admissions which would enable it to pursue that concern with relatively little constraint from the LEA. In that situation it would

be more difficult than at present for the LEA to discharge its functions. It could hardly manage to best effect a teaching force it did not employ, or easily ensure that all pupils found a place, preferably on the basis of parental choice, when each school was responsible for its own admissions. Nor could the LEA readily give effect to a consistent curricular policy in support of its distribution of funds between schools.

42. Indeed in this situation of tension the LEA would be liable to make undue use of its remaining powers eg its control over the staff complement, its veto over appointments and dismissals, and its responsibility for agreeing admission arrangements. In many cases the governing body would be at the financial mercy of the LEA, whether in respect of external repairs or otherwise, in a way which would negate the objectives of giving all schools aided status. To avoid these instabilities and conflicts, it would seem necessary to restrict the LEA's freedom to determine the staff complement and settle the finance for each school, eg by requiring it to adopt a formula for financial support determined by the Secretary of State.

43. Accordingly, once the power of the LEA over county and controlled schools is reduced so that it ceases to own the premises of the former and to employ the staff in both, and has very limited power in relation to the curriculum and admissions in both, the need for stability and the effective management of resources would probably make it necessary to give more autonomy to all LEA-maintained schools than is now enjoyed by aided schools. The schools would be more like ECS schools than like aided schools. The resultant system would have most of the principal features of an education credit system.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

TECHNICAL PAPER NO 4

GOVERNMENT MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

1. This paper considers what would be involved in the creation of a substantial new category of schools - Government maintained (GM) schools - which would co-exist with the present local authority - maintained and independent sectors. They would be financed by the Secretary of State; provide education free of charge to all their pupils; would be privately owned; and would be semi-autonomous, in that their independence of action would be subject to some control by the Secretary of State. They would cover both the primary and secondary age ranges. Since GM schools would be maintained by the Secretary of State, he would presumably require them to achieve a standard at least corresponding to that of a comparable satisfactory LEA school and in line with his policies for LEA schools set out in "Better Schools".

Scale of the scheme

2. There are currently some 26,000 schools (other than special schools) in England (see Table A). To give GM schools a significant presence in the system, a preliminary objective might be to establish 500 of them - about 400 primary and 100 secondary. In principle, GM schools might either be drawn from the existing stock of local authority-maintained (LEA) or independent schools, or be entirely new foundations.

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TABLE A: Schools in England

	Primary	Secondary	Total
County	12,800	3,500	16,300
Controlled	3,000	200	3,200
Aided	3,900	650	4,550
All LEA schools	19,700	4,350	24,050
Independent	1,400	900	2,300
Total schools	21,100	5,250	26,350

Notes

1. The number of LEA schools is falling gradually in response to declining pupil numbers. The number of independent schools stays broadly constant, but a score or so of them close each year, and a similar number of new ones open.

2. Independent schools often take pupils across the primary/secondary divide, and the numbers catering for each range are therefore only approximate.

Character of GM schools

3. A GM school might typically have charitable status, and be run by a governing body constituted and incorporated under Articles of Government. The majority of governors might be appointed by the foundation or other interest which owns and controls the premises. There would be scope for elected parents and teacher governors, if desired. The powers of the governing body might in many ways be

similar to those of the governing body of an aided school. Thus the governors would be responsible for the premises and external repairs, would control the curriculum and admissions, and would employ the staff. But, contrary to what now happens at aided schools, the maintaining authority would not determine the staff complement or be responsible for internal repairs and equipment. All current expenditure would fall to be met by the governors, with the help of a grant from the Secretary of State calculated on the basis of the number of registered pupils (though like LEA schools they could receive donations from parents or others which were strictly voluntary). It would be for consideration how far the Secretary of State gave financial assistance towards capital expenditure: if this was at the rate of 85% for all projects (as is now the practice for aided schools), this would be a big (but possibly expensive) inducement to existing independent schools or new foundations to seek GM status.

Finance

4. The financial relationship between the Secretary of State and the governors of a GM school would require much further consideration. In particular:

(1) It would be necessary to devise consistent arrangements for determining the value of the grant per pupil, taking account of variations in such matters as the age of pupils and the size and location of schools. The GRE methodology may provide a starting point but would need refinemen

(2) The Secretary of State would need to be able to satisfy himself that his grant was properly administered.

(3) It would be necessary to establish the limits of the Secretary of State's financial responsibility in relation to a particular GM school.

(4) It might be appropriate to establish machinery to settle appeals by the governing body against the Secretary of State's financial decisions.

Curriculum

5. It is axiomatic that the Secretary of State should apply to schools which he maintains the policies for raising standards which he wants LEAs to apply to those schools which they maintain, and should therefore seek to secure in GM schools the curriculum and the teaching quality envisaged in "Better Schools". This suggests that teachers in GM schools should be adequately trained ie that they should be required to have QT status although this point might be further considered; that their qualifications and experience should adequately match their teaching task; and that the curriculum, although under the control of the governors, should comply with the Secretary of State's policy for the curriculum. It is also for consideration whether the Secretary of State should be associated, formally or informally, with appointments to key posts. It does not seem necessary to require the pay and conditions of service of teachers at GM schools to be subject to national agreements made in respect of LEA schools. But the Secretary of State might wish to apply to schools which he maintains requirements for eg teacher appraisal or in-service training which he laid down for LEA-maintained schools. It would be open to the Secretary of State to cease to pay grant if a GM school failed to reach standards acceptable to him in relation to the curriculum and teaching quality.

6. The Secretary of State's judgment on whether educational standards at a school (including relevant standards in such matters as accommodation and conduct) were acceptable would presumably depend heavily on the advice of HMI, based on regular inspection of the school. Further consideration is needed on how best to reconcile, in relation to schools in which the Secretary of State has a strong, direct interest,

the policy of publishing HMI reports, the need for HMI to give confidential advice to the Secretary of State, and the independence of HMI.

Admissions

7. It is for consideration whether parents should have the same right to appeal against non-admission of their child to a GM school of their choice as they have in relation to non-admission to a LEA school of their choice.

Creation of GM schools

8. The creation of new schools, or the transformation of a school of one type into a school of another, affects the pattern of schools in the area and therefore the duty of the LEA to secure the provision of sufficient and efficient schools. Since GM schools would be financed from public funds, it seems appropriate that anyone who wished to establish a GM school (whether as a new foundation or via a change of status for an existing independent or maintained school) should be required to publish a proposal; and that the proposal should then be the subject of public consultation, in which interested parties (including the LEA) could take part. Such a consultation (including the consideration of objections) might precede a decision of the Secretary of State to maintain (and probably also to cease to maintain or to change the character of) a GM school, under procedures similar to those which now govern and would presumably continue to govern changes in the pattern of LEA-maintained schools. For example the Secretary of State's approval might be required before it was possible to establish a GM school with a specified character or admission scheme or to change the character and admission scheme of an existing GM school.

9. If an existing voluntary school wished to acquire GM status, a formal proposal to that effect might be published by the governing body by virtue of its ownership of the premises, under the consultation procedures envisaged in para 8. If the proposal was approved, it might be appropriate to require the governors to compensate the LEA for capital expenditure it had incurred on the school eg on the cost of extensions in the case of a controlled school. But in the case of a county school there is no voluntary body with a stake in the school (reflected in the presence of foundation governors on the governing body). It is the LEA who own or lease the premises. It is difficult to envisage how anyone other than the ILEA itself could be allowed to propose GM status for a county school. If the LEA made such a proposal, it would presumably be because someone had come forward who had the means to acquire the LEA's interest in the premises of the school and to accept responsibilit for managing the school. In such circumstances, the new GM school would be a new foundation which happened to make use of school premises which the LEA no longer required for a county school. A controlled school could become a GM school only if the Foundation governors wanted such a change of status and could persuade the governing body to propose it.

10. Paras 8 and 9 assume that whoever owned or leased an existing school could not be compelled to transfer it to GM status. It would be possible to empower the Secretary of State, if he considered that someone other than the owner or leaseholder of a school ("the promoter") would be willing and able to run it as a GM school, to publish a proposal to transfer the interest in the school to the promoter, and after a consultation process in which the owner (or leaseholder) could object to the proposal, to transfer the interest in the school to the promoter. Such a drastic power might require a right of appeal for the owner (the leaseholder). It is for consideration whether the power should be limited to county schools, on the grounds

that a compulsory transfer of interest from one public agency to another is more defensible than if it is imposed on a private person or body. There could be a strong case for compensating the LEA for the loss of its interest in the premises, and it is for consideration whether the Secretary of State should be able or required to assist the promoter with the cost of such compensation.

Spread of GM schools

11. It is difficult to judge how many GM schools might be established in, say, the first 5 years. Much would depend on how attractive the financial arrangements were.

(1) Entirely new foundations might be promoted either by charitable or voluntary bodies or entrepreneurs. The first two categories might include bodies already providing schools (for example certain city livery companies) or new trusts: such trusts might be formed by:

i. business interests with a concern for education;

ii. by religious bodies;

iii. or by groups of parents dissatisfied with the maintained schools in their area.

All those wishing to set up GM schools as new foundations are likely to be conscious of the political risks, and hesitant about operating in areas - such as the inner cities - where the LEA and perhaps the teachers would be hostile, particularly if the enterprise involved the compulsory transfer of a county school to GM status. Entirely new foundations are unlikely to be numerous unless the financial conditions of GM status were very favourable, and involved, for example, generous assistance with capital and start-up costs.

(2) Existing successful independent schools represent a relatively small reservoir. Most of them would be reluctant to exchange their autonomy for a degree of Government control over their provision and income. Less successful independent schools would probably not be likely to reach and maintain the standard required for GM schools.

(3) For existing voluntary schools - a substantial reservoir - the transfer to GM status would represent an increase in autonomy for the governing body, even if the new paymaster were significantly less generous - and the reverse might be the case. For an aided school, the change would increase the independence of the governing body in relation to the paymaster. For example, the paymaster would no longer control the complement of the school, nor would the governing body necessarily have to be bound by agreements on pay and conditions negotiated for LEA-maintained staff. For controlled schools the change would additionally mean that, for example, the governing body became the employer of the staff and determined the admission arrangements.

12. The cost to public funds of creating GM schools from LEA schools is likely to be less than if they were created from existing or new independent schools. In the former case the bulk of the cost of maintaining the school would be transferred from the LEA to the Secretary of State, though the extra administrative cost to the Secretary of State would probably not be offset by countervailing LEA savings; and a GM school might come to enrol pupils who would otherwise have gone to an independent school. But the cost of maintaining a GM school which had been an independen school would be a net addition to public expenditure insofar as the pupils would otherwise have been educated at private expense. The cost of maintaining a newly founded GM school

is unlikely to be offset by LEA savings, either because the pupils would have been educated at private expense or because the LEA's savings from not educating them would be marginal and be secured, if at all, only partly and over time.

13. The considerations in paras 11 and 12 suggest that the best prospect of establishing GM schools on a voluntary basis might be to seek to draw them mainly from existing LEA schools, while not excluding the possibility of establishing a few from existing independent schools and new foundations. Initially the best prospect might perhaps lie in transfer from the large reservoir of aided schools. Nearly all of these are denominational and the attitudes of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church would be crucial, though this would not in all cases determine the decisions of governing bodies. This attitude could not be established without consultation. The prospect of establishing many GM schools through the compulsory transfer of county schools to GM status seems doubtful, since even very generous financial inducements to new or existing charities and entrepreneurs may not appear to them to offset the risks.

Position of Secretary of State

14. By assuming responsibility for maintaining a category of schools the Secretary of State would become involved in detail in part of the publicly maintained sector of schools, alongside LEAs, in a way and on a scale which are unprecedented. The Department would have to learn how to discharge direct responsibilities in relation to individual schools, and to discharge them in addition to and in combinatior with the functions which derive from the Secretary of State's more general responsibilities for the education service.

Resources

15. It is difficult to offer estimates of cost until certain

assumptions have been settled, in particular whether GM schools should be sought mainly from existing LEA-maintained schools (and from which class of schools within this category) or from existing independent schools or new foundations.

16. It seems inevitable that additional central Government manpower would be required:

(1) to establish, manage and administer the grant system and the attendant functions which fall on the GM schools' paymaster.

(2) To inspect and monitor the educational quality of GM schools.

Depending on the regime governing (1) and (2), these additional functions might call for something like 150 extra staff, if 500 GM schools were established. There are unlikely to be significant off-setting savings in local government, because these would be too scattered and marginal.

Legislation

17. Primary legislation would probably not be necessary to enable the Secretary of State to pay grants to GM schools, using existing regulation-making powers. But given the political risk of participating in a scheme involving Government support for independent schools, it is likely to encourage take-up if the scheme, like the Assisted Places Scheme were founded on new primary legislation. Such legislation would be required if public consultation arrangements (paras 8 and 9 above) or a right of appeal by governing bodies or parents (paras 4 and 7 above) or compulsory transfer of county schools to GM status (para 10 above) were incorporated in the scheme.

CONFIDENTIAL

TECHNICAL PAPER NO 5

EXTENSION OF THE ASSISTED PLACES SCHEME

1. This paper considers the practicability and costs of extending the Assisted Places Scheme (APS):

i. on its existing basis (ie a scholarship scheme limited to secondary age pupils):

ii. to a wider range of secondary age pupils;

iii. to primary age pupils.

The existing scheme

2. The APS offers means-tested assistance with fees to a set quota of pupils at selected independent schools. There are at present 226 schools in the scheme, and by the time it has built up to its full planned extent in 1987, it will be assisting some 35,000 pupils in the 11-18 range, at a cost of about £50 million a year. About 10% of the places are for boarders, but assistance with fees excludes the cost of boarding. APS schools are required to admit at least 60% of their quota from maintained schools and currently nearly 70% of all places are filled by pupils previously at maintained schools.

3. The scheme is governed by Sections 17 and 18 of the Education Act 1980 and subordinate Regulations. None of these specify that the scheme should be restricted to "scholarship-quality" pupils, although it has been made clear in Parliament that this is the broad intention. The scholarship character of the scheme is secured by the criteria under which schools are selected to participate. All must offer a broad curriculum and have a strong sixth form, so that the school can cater for the needs and preferences of almost any high-ability assisted pupils. Schools admitted to the scheme are entrusted with the selection of their

7. The maximum practicable expansion on the present basis therefore seems to be from the present planned 35,000 pupils to some 80,000 pupils at an extra cost of about £70 million pa. The expanded pupil numbers would be equivalent to about 3 per cent of secondary pupils in maintained schools. The extra numbers drawn from the maintained sector are unlikely to have a substantial impact on the viability of individual maintained schools.

More general extension for the secondary phase

8. A relaxation of the present criteria for selecting schools would bring further schools into scope. The APS would then cease to be a scholarship scheme. As a result the new lower minimum criteria might not be easy to determine and apply.

9. In general, it is unlikely that secondary schools with less than 200 pupils could offer an adequate standard of education for a wide ability range at a reasonably economic cost. 600 independent schools in England catering for secondary age pupils have more than 200 pupils. On the basis of paragraphs 6-7 above, some 265 of these would already be in the APS. It is difficult to estimate how many of the remaining 350 or so schools would meet the new lower criteria for selection, or be willing to join, or whether they would be ready, on average, to accept a quota of 50 per cent, or indeed more, of their intake. These schools are generally smaller than the present APS schools. About 100 of them are likely to be ineligible because they specialise for foreign nationals, pupils with special needs etc, and many of the remainder are unlikely to be able to meet the criteria. The new criteria might however encourage the establishment of new independent schools for the purpose of joining the APS.

10. Taking all these uncertainties into consideration, the lowering of selection criteria might eventually bring 25,000-50,000 extra pupils into the APS. The extra cost

own assisted pupils, subject to the quota of places and the prescribed income test.

Expansion on existing basis

4. There are two routes by which the scheme could be expanded:

i. increasing the pupil quotas of existing participating schools, and

ii. bringing in new schools.

5. At present an average of about 25 to 30 per cent of the intake of participating schools is taken up by assisted places. Some schools take a considerably lower proportion and are believed unlikely to want to go higher; others take a considerably higher proportion, and some might be prepared to increase it. The higher the proportion, the more schools depend on the scheme. Given the known attitudes of participating schools, the highest level to which the average quota could probably be raised is about 50 per cent of intake. This would eventually mean a further 25,000-35,000 pupils (once the new intakes had worked their way through the schools), at an extra cost of some £35-50 million a year.

6. Only a limited number of independent schools satisfy the stringent criteria for admission to the APS. Most of these are already in the APS, and a number of the remainder have previously declined to seek to join. It is estimated that some 40 schools remain which might satisfy the criteria and be willing to join. If the average number of assisted pupils at these schools were also to reach 50 per cent of intakes, a further 12,500 places might eventually be added, at an extra cost of some £18 million a year.

- assuming that the means test and parental income profiles remained unchanged - would be about £35-70 million a year.

Extension to primary age pupils

11. If it were extended to the primary age range, the APS could hardly retain its scholarship character. The criteria for selecting schools could not relate to public examination courses and would have to be much broader. Formulating and applying them would not be easy if selection were to be consistent and on the basis of reasonable quality. It is possible that the reservoir of eligible schools will prove to correspond fairly closely to membership of the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools. There are about 450 schools in England with this status. Many of these cater solely or mainly for boarding pupils, and would be unlikely (subject to paragraph 15 below) to be in a position to offer many assisted places. Since schools for younger pupils are more easily established than schools for older ones, the extension of the APS to the primary phase is likely to prompt the establishment of some new schools for the purpose of joining it. It is also likely that a proportion of preparatory schools would not wish to join. It is perhaps reasonable to suggest that 200-250 schools would be brought into the scheme.

12. These schools tend to be smaller than those in the secondary age range. Assuming an average of, say, 150 pupils per school and an average quota of 50% of the intake, there would eventually be some 17,000 assisted places for the primary phase. The cost of these might be of the order of £20 million a year.

13. The present legislation (which excludes primary age pupils from the scheme - see paragraph 16 below) requires the Secretary of State to have regard to the desirability of a balance between regions and between the sexes in selecting schools to join. The present supply of

preparatory school places is heavily skewed towards certain regions and towards boys. In the short term at least, an extension of the APS into the primary phase would almost inevitably favour those regions where preparatory schools are plentiful, and would likewise favour boys. In the longer term the existence of the APS is likely to go some way to reducing these imbalances by prompting the provision of new places by new schools and extensions or changes to existing ones.

14. Since most pupils at preparatory schools are admitted after the age of 5, a condition that a given percentage of quota places should be filled by pupils from maintained schools is unlikely to have as much effect as in the case of secondary schools in securing that in a substantial proportion of cases the assistance with fees goes to pupils who would not otherwise have entered the participating school. It may therefore be difficult to ensure that assistance is so directed in the case of places gained by pupils of primary age.

Boarding provision

15. Under the present legislation only tuition fees may be charged to the APS. Quite a large number of additional places might be made available to the APS if assistance were to be extended to boarding fees. It is however assumed that this possibility should not be pursued on account of its cost: boarding costs, on average, are about twice those for day pupils.

Legislation

16. No primary legislation would be required to extend the APS within its existing terms. Some amendments to Regulations might be necessary if it were to be extended to secondary provision more generally. Primary legislation would be required to extend the scheme to pupils under the age of 11.

Costs and manpower

17. Annex A summarises the best estimates possible at present of the eventual cost of extending the APS in a variety of ways. If all these possibilities were adopted, the additional annual cost could prove to be up to £160 million. As under the existing scheme, a proportion of this expenditure would go towards costs which would otherwise have been borne privately. It is uncertain what this proportion would be. There are unlikely to be significant savings in LEA expenditure in respect of pupils who would otherwise have attended a maintained school, because their incidence is likely to have a marginal effect on individual schools.

18. At present the APS is run by about 5 AEC-grade staff, and requires a further HMI input. An expansion is likely to require up to twice as much manpower, and perhaps more.

Timing

19. The pace for an expansion of the APS is in principle subject to two main constraints - the speed with which additional schools can be selected (which in part depends on legislation) and the extra funds which can be made available. It would be possible to subordinate the first constraint to the second, or vice versa.

Comparison with scope of the Direct Grant Scheme

20. The Assisted Places Scheme can be seen as being, in large measure, the successor to the Direct Grant scheme. All but five of the 120 Direct Grant schools which went independent are now in the APS. There were in 1975 some 50,000 pupils in direct grant schools who - regardless of family income - had free places. Another 54,000 pupils also attended direct grant schools and the great majority paid the full fees, which were relatively modest because the Secretary of State's grant contributed to the total current expenditure of each direct grant schoool.

21. On existing plans, the APS will next year be providing some 14,000 places to pupils from very low income families, and a further 21,000 subsidised places to pupils from below average income families. If the APS were to be expanded on its present scholarship basis, it would be offering some 35,000 free places to pupils from very low income families, and a further 45,000 or so subsidised places to pupils from below average income families - ie its scope would be wider, and better targetted on those who most need it, than the DG scheme was.

SUMMARY OF COSTS OF APS EXPANSION

	Pupil numbers[1]	Cost per annum[1] (£m)
1. EXISTING SCHEME	35,000	50
2. Expansion on existing basis		
i. increased quotas to schools already in[2]	25-35,000	35-50
ii. additional schools on similar quotas[3]	12,500	18
3. General extension into secondary field[4]	25-50,000	35-70
4. Extension to primary age range5	17,000	20
TOTAL, ALL OPTIONS	114,500-149,500	168-218
of which, additional to existing provision	79,500-114,500	118-168

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1 once fully built up

2 calculated as 50/25 or 50/30 X 35,000 pupils/£50 million

3 calculated at 40/226 X 35,000 pupils/£50m X 2

4 calculated as 80/226 or 160/226 X 35,000 pupils/£50m X 2

5 calculated as 225 X 150/2 pupils and £(225 X 150/2 X 1200)m respectively, with £1,200 as the assumed cost to public funds of a prep school pupil after means-testing.

TECHNICAL PAPER NO 6

Improving the system's performance

1. This paper considers briefly certain changes relating to the LEA-maintained sector of education, with particular reference to the schools, on the assumption that:

(1) The structure and functions of LEAs, school governing bodies and head teachers will be as envisaged after the enactment of the Education Bill 1986;

(2) The functions of the Secretary of State will be as envisaged after the enactment of this Bill, (subject to the modifications considered in this paper);

(3) The financial regime for local government will be as envisaged in the Green Paper.

Does the existing system meet the Government's objectives?

2. The question to be considered is how far the existing system, as defined in para 1 above, serves the Government's aim of raising standards and, in pursuance of that aim, the following objectives:

(1) Responsiveness to consumer wishes.

(2) Responsiveness to national needs identified by the Government.

(3) Avoidance of excessive concentration of power.

(4) Limitation of public expenditure.

(5) Value for money.

(6) Maximum benefit to pupils and students.

3. As regards consumer wishes, the system offers some prospects of responsiveness through the arrangements for giving effect to parental preferences in the choice of school, the reformed composition of governing bodies, the entrenchment of certain powers in such bodies, and the arrangements for making the governing body, and the head teacher and the LEA, answerable to an annual parental meeting. More generally, the LEA is answerable to its electors for how it exercises its wide discretion in adapting a national system to local circumstances, for example in the pattern of school organisation, and its curricular and expenditure policies.

4. As regards the objective of responsiveness to national needs, the system is less than wholly responsive to national needs identified by the Government. LEA policies may contradict the Government's priorities and the Government has only limited financial powers to serve the implementation of these priorities.

5. The system plainly meets the objective of avoiding the excessive concentration of power at the centre.

6. As regards public expenditure, the system has not been performing well in relation to the need to limit public expenditure wherever possible; but the regime envisaged in the Green Paper contains powerful incentives, and removes powerful disincentives, to economy.

7. As regards the objective of value for money, the system has been performing poorly in many respects; the Green Paper proposals and the work of the Audit Commission should substantially improve its performance.

8. As regards the objective of maximising the benefit which pupils and students derive from education, that is the objective which perhaps bears most closely on

the aim of raising standards. What is sought is that each pupil or student should, as a result of receiving education develop, to the fullest extent permitted by his abilities and aptitudes, the knowledge, skills, understanding, attitudes and personal qualities required for adult life, citizenship and work. It is the pupil's or student's attainment in all those matters which should be the measure of the standards which the system achieves; and targets for higher standards should be expressed in terms of pupil or student attainment.

9. It is not possible to be sure what is the highest standard (as defined in para 8 above) of which pupils and students are capable either individually or in aggregate: too little is known about the potential or capabilities of individuals. Nor are there currently available performance indicators which measure attainment in all the matters in which it is sought. Nor is it at present possible to separate precisely the contribution which a school makes towards the realisation of a pupil's potential - the "value added" by the school - from the contribution made by other influences eg the pupil's home. Nevertheless certain performance indicators exist which, properly used, yield valuable information (in particular the results of public examinations at 16+ and 18+, and school attendance records), and it is possible to make broad, qualitative professional judgments about many aspects of attainment for which there are no such performance indicators; such judgments are made nationally by HMI, and locally by the professional staff of LEAs and schools.

10. On the basis of the available evidence it is clear that:

(1) attainment at all levels of ability and aptitude varies greatly between comparable pupils from comparable economic and social backgrounds, and one can conclude that these variations are largely due to variations in the "value added" by schools;

(2) it is in principle realistic to aim at raising the attainment of all pupils at least to the highest level achieved by comparable pupils from comparable backgrounds;

(3) it may be possible to raise attainment still further, i.e. above the best level so far achieved.

Accordingly the Government in "Better Schools" has set an aim - for pupil attainment - which in effect seeks to achieve the realistic levelling-up process in (2) above.

11. The policies in "Better Schools" still need to be fully implemented. Progress is perhaps fastest in the reform of the 16+ examinations system; the reform of initial teacher training (including the establishment of CATE); and, through the Education Bill 1986, the establishment of a new in-service training regime based on specific grant, the reform of school government, and an improved distribution of functions between LEAs, school governing bodies and head teachers. Much more remains to be done on establishing a sound national curriculum (not national syllabuses) which for example, makes available to every pupil the benefit of the lessons of the TVEI and makes full use of the potential of new technology to support work in the classroom; and on establishing records of achievement for all school leavers. On the very important issue of the quality and management of the teachers, other important developments are necessary if well motivated teachers of the right quality are to be deployed to best advantage throughout the school system; much of this depends on developing systematic arrangements for teacher appraisal.

12. These current and prospective measures to improve the performance of the school system so as to realise the Government's aim for higher standards of attainment would become much more effective if LEAs took their responsibilities in this regard as seriously as the

Secretary of State takes his. It is the LEA which should ensure that pupils attainment in the schools it maintains is indeed maximised; that existing performance indicators are improved and new ones devised; that it knows - on the basis of the performance indicators and professional judgments available to it - what pupil attainment in its schools is, and how comparable schools perform in adding value; and that on the basis of this knowledge it makes the most effective use of its powers as paymaster, employer and manager of staff and resources.

13. None of these requirements is frustrated by the Government's policy of giving each school a life of its own, and a degree of independence to the governing body and the head teacher. Indeed the effectiveness of the reformed governing bodies in improving pupil attainment would be further enhanced if they received systematic and continuing training on a much larger scale than at present envisaged under the Education Bill 1986. But giving the governing body and head teachers entrenched powers vis-a-vis the LEA could, as Ministers recognise, create tensions in relation to the LEA's functions of managing the system.

14. Under the existing system it is not open to the Secretary of State to exercise these managerial functions on behalf of the LEA, nor could he conceivably acquire the knowledge and expertise (eg through HMI) to do so. It is neither possible nor desirable for the Secretary of State to undertake this monitoring at the level of the individual school. His task is rather to set the framework; to promote research and development where necessary to provide the tools including new and better performance indicators for use by LEAs and schools; and to undertake national level monitoring through HMI and APU to provide background knowledge against which the local position can be seen more clearly.But the system does place a general duty on him to ensure that each LEA uses its managerial powers in the interest of pupil (and student) attainments. His ability to discharge that

general duty is limited by:

(1) the arrangements for securing the professional effectiveness of teachers;

(2) the mechanism by which LEA-maintained education is financed.

Modifications in respect of both these matters are proposed below. They could serve to improve the performance of the existing system in relation to most of the Government's objectives.

Teachers

15. We need well motivated teachers of the right quality deployed to best advantage throughout the school system. There are three main areas for Government action here. These are:

(1) the supply of sufficient, suitably trained and qualified teachers with appropriate personal qualities, including teachers of shortage subjects such as mathematics, physics, CDT;

(2) the management of the teacher force, including such matters as appraisal, in-service training, career development, deployment, promotion, and the dismissal of those who are incurably ineffective.

(3) a pay structure, pay levels, and forms of contract and conditions of service which support supply and management of the desired kind and quality.

The quality of head teachers is crucial. Measures (within the scope of (2) and (3) above) to help secure the appointment as heads of the most suitable teachers, and to promote good performance from them in post, are therefore of great importance.

16. The supply of sufficient and appropriate teachers, apart from certain shortage subject areas, is relatively well in hand. The provision of initial teacher training courses is steered and partly controlled by the Secretary of State. All such courses are being inspected by HMI, and all are under review by CATE. This work must be watched, but does not appear to be in need of major change or further major development at present. Long term improvement in the supply of teachers of shortage subjects is likely to depend on the achievement of satisfactory pay settlements, but a number of measures to alleviate the shortages, such as bursaries for trainee teachers, specially designed initial and in-service training courses and cooperative efforts with industry, are in hand.

17. The management of the teacher force is in much less satisfactory shape. This raises many complex issues. Moreover, as noted in para 13 above, there is a tension between the importance attached to the degree of independence individual schools should have in staffing as in other matters, and the responsibilities of the employing authorities for such matters as in-service training and career development.

18. The Government has already established an in-service grant scheme for training in national priority subjects, and plans a new specific grant regime for all in-service training from 1987-88. This work must be pushed forward and expanded, but full benefits can only be obtained from it if it is linked to active local authority arrangements for appraisal, career development, and the appropriate deployment of teachers. Appraisal has been caught up in the recent teachers' dispute. For the moment it must be pushed forward in the context of the ACAS-led negotiations on teachers' pay and conditions of service. Despite Ministerial encouragement and exhortation it is still a small minority of local education authorities

who engage in systematic work on career development and positive deployment of teachers with promotion in mind - who identify, for example, teachers likely to make good deputy heads or head teachers in due course and who encourage those teachers to take part in appropriate in-service training and to widen their teaching experience with future promotion in mind. For the immediate future the plan is to make progress across this area through the introduction of the specific grant regime for in-service training. In the longer term wider specific grant powers, or a new education grant (see para 20 below), could be used to make grant conditional on effective local authority arrangements, including the use of the advisory service, for these teacher management matters. This approach could also apply to the removal of incurably ineffective teachers. On this last point it is for consideration whether the introduction of a General Teaching Council (GTC) might be helpful. A short note about the GTC proposition is attached. It must be doubtful whether a GTC largely under the control of the teacher unions could be expected to serve the Secretary of State's purpose. The alternative would be a GTC appointed by the Secretary of State, but it appears likely that such a body might be heavily dependent on local authority cooperation and identification of ineffective teachers. Moreover, any such body would presumably have to have much wider powers than teacher management, and might well conflict with CATE.

19. Neither a satisfactory supply of teachers nor satisfactory management of teachers - including crucial improvements in the selection and training of head teachers - can be expected unless the pay levels, pay structure, forms of contract and conditions of teachers' service are properly supportive of supply and management. The events of the past year provide strong evidence to the effect that it is most unlikely that these matters can be satisfactorily determined through collective bargaining between the teacher unions and the local authority associations, however such negotiations are carried out - free collective

bargaining, collective bargaining within a statutory framework (Burnham), or assisted by ACAS. If Ministers conclude that the only realistic way of determining these matters to match the Government's objectives is through the use of a statutory review body covering both pay and conditions of service, then the question must be how to work towards the establishment of such a body. Ministers will not be able to agree to the local authority request for simple repeal of the Remuneration of Teachers Act 1965. The current ACAS exercise must be allowed its full chance to come up with successful outcomes. But meanwhile it is necessary further to develop ideas for a statutory review body, examining in particular possible terms of reference, methods of operation, coverage (school teachers, FE teachers, university teachers?), and methods of establishment.

20. Much of what is said in the previous paragraph about all teachers applies particularly strongly to head teachers. We need more in-service training opportunities for head teachers and potential head teachers, some of which might best be designed by successful head teachers in consultation with managers from industry and commerce. We need to encourage LEAs to improve their procedures for selecting new head teachers. Specific grant support for schemes to identify and train likely head teachers, and regulations to control appointment procedures, are possibilities. The appraisal of teachers should include provisions for head teachers to propose their own objectives and to evaluate their performance against those objectives. In all this the LEA advisory service has an important part to play, and may need to be strengthened.

Financial mechanism

21. A new financial mechanism is proposed with the following main features:

(1) an education block grant for which the Secretary of State would be responsible to Parliament

and on which he would deal directly with LEAs. The block grant would not be available for expenditure on services other than education. It would be based on each LEA's needs. It would not vary with the LEA's actual expenditure on education, but would be based on a nationally determined assessment of needs. It would assume an explicit local contribution to the financing of education. This would be the same per head for all authorities spending at the level of their needs assessment. Authorities spending below that level would be seen by their electors to be making a deliberate choice to benefit local taxpayers instead of spending on education. Marginal expenditure above the needs assessment would fall to be met entirely by the local taxpayer.

(2) A separate education needs assessment. Under present arrangements there exist soundly based, comprehensible and generally robust GREs. The Green Paper proposals, which take care of the problem of resource equalisation, are in principle compatible with a wholly separate education block grant.

(3) An increased power of specific grant - amounting to about 10-15 per cent of total local authority expenditure on education.

(4) Capital expenditure on education would be separately controlled by the Secretary of State, perhaps on a gross expenditure basis.

(5) A financial management information system based on statutory annual reports by each LEA on performance and value for money related to the objectives for the education system identified by the Secretary of State and using performance-indicators set by him.

22. The Secretary of State's steerage of the education service would be strengthened in the following ways:

(1) The education block grant would be determined in the light of direct discussion between the Secretary of State and the LEAs, bringing a new clarity to the relationship. It would enable the Secretary of State to relate national policies more clearly to the total of grant to be made available for education and in the process to spell out what he expects of LEAs in terms of performance and the management of their resources. The Secretary of State would be better placed than now to reduce divergence of provision unjustified in a national service. The needs assessment for education would become normative in a way effectively prevented by the system of unhypothecated grants which is retained under the Green Paper proposals.

(2) To the extent that LEAs failed to respond to national priorities, it would be open to the Secretary of State to reduce total education block grant and direct resources through specific grant. The support of up to 15% of total education expenditure through specific grant would enable the Secretary of State more effectively to secure and monitor the performance of LEAs in key policy areas and to vary the amount of grant according to his assessment of that performance. Specific grants enable the Secretary of State to set conditions in such a way that LEAs would only receive grant if they undertook to incur a pattern of qualifying expenditure that satisfied national objectives. The power to pay specific grants could be brought to bear directly upon areas of expenditure crucial to the delivery of more effective education. These would include expenditure on in-service

training; appraisal systems for teachers, and local authority advisory services. In every case the Secretary of State would be able to set general and specific conditions relating to the delivery of national objectives. Thus grants for in-service training could be subject to conditions about better management of the teaching force or the development of teaching approaches which will adequately stretch bright pupils; and grants for growth in local authority advisory services to conditions about fully worked out curriculum policies and the readiness of LEAs to act upon particular aspects of HMI reports.

(3) Capital expenditure on education, through individual LEA allocations, could be more clearly directed in support of national objectives: in particular it would be used to encourage rationalisation and statutory reorganisation.

23. The financial regime outlined in paras 21 and 22 would be supported by the features of the Green Paper proposals which are intended to control total public expenditure, in particular the proposals to widen the local tax-base; to ensure that the costs or benefits of any changes in LEA expenditure fall on the domestic taxpayer alone; to remove local authority discretion to finance extra expenditure at the expense of non-domestic ratepayers; and to retain a power similar to existing selective rate-capping powers.

24. As a general rule specific grants tend to promote additional spending, partly because they aim to level up provision. But this need not be so. In the present case the total grant for education would be fixed. If specific grant increased proportionately more than education

block grant, it would be at the expense of the latter, and LEAs would be under pressure to reduce expenditure not qualifying for specific grant because their local residents would have to meet the grant shortfall if no reduction were made (and the equivalent of rate-capping would also remain available).

25. The financial mechanism outlined above can promote value for money in a number of ways:

(1) A separate grant system and the annual discussion with LEAs that it entails ensures a clear and explicit link between national objectives and the national contribution to LEA expenditure. The national policies spelt out in terms of targets (eg surplus places to be removed or NAFE staff-student ratios) would be clearly perceived and would feed through into education needs, assessments and grant. It would be possible to work towards a disaggregation of national targets so that their consequences could be perceived and understood at local level. At present that just discernible process becomes lost in a needs assessment and grant system which is in support of all services.

(2) The conditions attached to specific grants could be used to secure value for money as well as the delivery of national objectives.

(3) LEAs would be required to address value for money directly in every area of expenditure as a result of the statutory requirement to report to the Secretary of State on performance and expenditure on the basis of a range of performance indicators and output measures. This material together with financial outturn information would form part of the analysis for the annual discussion with LEAs on education grant.

(4) Specific grants with precisely defined objectives and explicit conditions would enable the Secretary of State to monitor the effectiveness of the expenditure and the specific grant in question. This would require an extension of the function of HMI as his main source of information about the performance of the education system. Additional manpower would be required to enable HMI to make concentrated inspections of institutions and areas of activity directly affected by the specific grants.

Legislation

26. A decision to set up a statutory review body covering teachers' pay and conditions of service (para 19 above) would require legislation, which might have to be enacted in this Parliament. A separate grant regime for education (paras 21-25 above) would also require legislation. This could conveniently form part of the legislation which will implement the Green Paper proposals early in the next Parliament. If enacted then the separate grant regime would serve to support the objectives of the new arrangements for teachers' pay and conditions of service.

Manpower

27. A statutory review body for teachers' pay and conditions is unlikely to affect administrative manpower in central and local government. The manpower consequences of a separate education grant regime are difficult to estimate and would depend on how the regime was operated. Such a regime might require something like 40 additional administrative staff at the DES, plus perhaps 25-50 additional staff in HMI. There would also be some increase in the administrative staff of LEAs. But the increased value for money and efficiency in the use of resources could lead to significant savings in, for example, teacher manpower.

A GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL AND THE ASSESSMENT OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE

1. There is a long history of attempts to form a General Teaching Council (GTC) to regulate the teaching profession. Successive Secretaries of State have reserved their position, but have never been faced with a proposal commanding agreement among the teachers' unions.

2. Recently the teachers associations have been meeting under the leadership of Mr Sayer (recently President of the Secondary Heads Association) and Professor Ross (recently Chairman of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET)) to discuss new proposals for a GTC. Although there has been no formal agreement amongst them as to its composition and functions, we understand that they envisage a body dominated by representatives of the "registered teaching profession" but with representation on the governing body of central and local government, industry and parents. Such a body might:

(i) grant or withdraw qualified teacher status (QTS), thus replacing the Secretary of State's power of approval of initial teacher training courses and the CATE role in scrutinising such courses against given criteria;

(ii) control procedures for teacher probation;

(iii) advise the Secretary of State in relation to forecasts of teacher demand, superseding ACSET, but still requiring access to DES data;

(iv) advise employers and the Secretary of State on good practice in induction and in-service training;

(v) take over the Secretary of State's role in relation to teacher misconduct.

3. We do not know what the attitude of the local authorities would be to these proposals. It would however seem unlikely that either they or the unions would see such a GTC as contributing much to the solution of the problem of ineffective performance by qualified teachers. In Scotland there has been a Teaching Council for some 20 years and this has dealt with teachers' misconduct matters, but in general has left ineffectiveness to be handled by employers.

4. It does not seem likely that the Secretary of State could steer the current deliberations of the teachers' unions to an acceptable conclusion, or that he could at the present time entrust these important matters to a GTC largely nominated by the unions.

5. An alternative would be a GTC designed and appointed by the Secretary of State. So far as the removal of ineffective teachers is concerned this Council would presumably rely upon employers to draw attention to specific cases of concern arising out of observation by their own advisory services and senior teaching staff. In order to make a recommendation to the GTC that a teacher should lose qualified teacher status, the employing authority or governing body would have to be prepared to take the view that the individual would not be any more effective in a different post. The central body would then have to take a decision on deregistration on the basis of the evidence before it.

6. In considering this possibility Ministers might want to bear the following considerations in mind.

(i) A body which was thought competent to judge whether ateacher is ineffective might logically claim to influence, if not to determine, what makes an effective one and therefore what sort of initial training is necessary for the achievement of qualified teacher status.

(ii) In appointing members of the body there would be an obvious tension (as with CATE) between ensuring that their judgement is respected by teachers and their employers, and ensuring that standards are upheld consistently.

(iii) The system would rely upon employers being prepared to make a general judgement about an individual's effectiveness in any teaching post. Given that all the individuals concerned will have passed probation earlier in their careers, the numbers involved could be very small, even if employers were willing to use the mechanism in principle.

(iv) In practice the Secretary of State could expect strong opposition from all the main interests whose cooperation would be required, partly because of the implication that they cannot be relied upon to tackle these issues at the local level but mainly because of the damage to morale within the teacher force which might be expected to result from a continued focus on the ineffective minority, at a time when it is vital to rebuild confidence and good working relationships in the schools.

SP

CCBG 2

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Prime Minister

Tim Flesher Esq
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

25 March 1986

MS 26/3

Dear Tim,

ACADEMIC TENURE

The Cabinet decided on 27 February that it was not possible to find a place for Sir Keith Joseph's proposed bill to limit academic tenure in the universities in the 1986-87 Session. Responses to the consultative document on the content of legislation have now been received, and bodies and individuals concerned are questioning the Secretary of State about the prospects for legislation. It is inevitably becoming more widely known that the prospects are slight, and we now understand that the Times Higher Education Supplement is planning to run a story this week that there will not be legislation this Session. To stop speculation over a controversial issue that would otherwise attract unnecessary attention, the Secretary of State is confirming that he does not now expect legislation to be introduced next Session. He will stress, however, that this does not reduce the Government's commitment to legislate when the Parliamentary timetable permits. The Secretary of State intends moreover to proceed, in the light of responses to the consultative document, to seek his colleagues' agreement to the detailed policy content of legislation to enable legislation speedily to be prepared once a slot can be found for it.

I am copying this letter to the private secretaries to the Lord President of the Council and the Secretary of the Cabinet.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Smith

R L SMITH
Private Secretary

FILE CAJ

cc CSG

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

24 March 1986

The Prime Minister's attention has been drawn to an article by the Education Correspondent of The Guardian in the April edition of "Good Housekeeping". The article asserts that "proposals have been set before the Department of Education and Science for a definite break in education at 16, and a new start in a college for all those who would previously have been sixth formers in the schools". I attach a copy of the article.

BF

The Prime Minister has asked me to pass on her grave concern if there is any substance in the suggestions in the Good Housekeeping article and has further asked for a note from your Secretary of State commenting on them and on the present position on provision for 16+ education.

TIMOTHY FLESHER

R.L.Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science

DSG

REQUIEM FOR THE SIXTH FORM

BY MAUREEN O'CONNOR

The Guardian's education correspondent looks at the question of separate colleges for 16 to 19 year olds

The English sixth form is dying. For so long the pride of our secondary education system, the traditional sixth form is succumbing to the twin pressures of falling rolls and the fact that young people grow up more quickly these days

Increasingly, sixth forms are being replaced by colleges for the over 16s which, all the evidence shows, are very much to many young students' taste – and have had the added advantage, recently, of protecting examination classes from the effects of strike action. More than half of English local authorities now have at least one 'tertiary' or sixth form college.

The idea of 'junior colleges' for 16 to 19-year-old students has a venerable history. They were suggested in the 1944 Education Act, just one of several clauses of that reforming legislation which has never been implemented. Croydon toyed with the idea again in the 1950s, but it was not until the 1960s that Luton established the first sixth form college to cater for all its A level students. A trickle of other local authorities, looking for economical ways of changing to a comprehensive system, followed suit, and the first purpose-built sixth form college opened in Stoke-on-Trent in 1970.

The trickle has now become a flood with 112 sixth form colleges in existence catering for more than 65,000 students around the country; 35 of the even newer tertiary colleges have also replaced school sixth forms in some areas, amalgamating with local colleges of further education, and this figure will soon reach 50 as plans approved for colleges in places as various as Port Talbot, Swansea and Weymouth are implemented. Nationwide, post-16 colleges, whatever the type, now cater for more than half of the young people who stay in full-time education after the age of 16.

The earliest sixth form colleges saw themselves as wholly academic institutions, catering for students taking A levels and intending to go on to higher education. Initially, some demanded an entrance qualification of four or five O level passes. But as school sixth forms began to make provision for less academic youngsters wanting an extra year of general education, so the sixth form colleges found it hard to remain exclusive. All now provide non-A level courses and nearly one-quarter of young people attending them are non-A level sixth formers.

Tertiary colleges are, by their nature, even less heavily biased towards A level courses. Overall their work is split evenly between GCE and vocational courses. One of their great strengths, of course, is that they offer the unique opportunity for young people to combine A level and vocational elements in their programme.

Falling rolls mean that schools which cater for children from 11 to 18 are shrinking in size and many have difficulty in maintaining adequate numbers of students beyond school-leaving age. Nationally, less than one child in three stays at school beyond 16, and in some urban areas the staying-on rate is considerably lower. The Department of Education and Science recommends that a school sixth form should have at least 150 pupils, and be able to offer a minimum choice of 14 A level subjects.

Students at the South East Essex Sixth Form College, in Benfleet, investigate Newton's laws of motion during an A level physics lesson

Many schools find these numbers impossible to maintain. Some, in an attempt to provide an adequate range of A levels, run classes with only a handful of students in them. This is an expensive shift by any standards and one which takes teachers away from classes lower down the school. Nor does it have much educational justification because there is strong evidence that A level candidates taught in very small groups of two or three lack stimulation and perform rather badly. When money is in short supply anyway, local authorities do not need much encouragement from central government to rationalise their sixth form provision.

Additional strain

To add to these difficulties government policy is to improve and broaden the curriculum for 16 and 17 year olds in the schools. The new AS (Advanced Supplementary) level exam, due to be introduced in 1988, will place additional strain on schools' abilities to provide all the subjects which academic sixth-formers need. And at the same time they are being asked to involve themselves in the new Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) for youngsters who want a one-year sixth form course before looking for work or going on to further education.

As a consequence of these factors, proposals have been set before the Department of Education and Science for a definite break in education at 16, and a new start in a college for all those who would previously have been sixth formers in the schools. A handful of authorities are even proposing to transform existing sixth form colleges into tertiaries as a logical final step towards a comprehensive system of education for 16 to 19 year olds.

It is by no means fanciful to suggest that by the end of the ▷

century the traditional school sixth form will have almost completely disappeared from state education and – because of the attractions of college life as opposed to school – may even be under threat in the private sector as well. Already one or two fashionable sixth form colleges in the south of England recruit up to 20 per cent of their students from independent schools, especially among those who apparently have become disenchanted with boarding and/or single sex schools

Apparent advantages

The financial arguments in favour of post-16 colleges are clear, and local authorities of all political persuasions are finding them attractive. Far more A level subjects can be offered – 30 is not uncommon in the larger colleges, and 20 to 25 is standard – and A level subjects can be taught in groups of an economic size. From the students' point of view these are plus points too. Four languages at A level, taught in groups which are large enough to be intellectually challenging (eight or 10 is the usual minimum) have to be better than one or two languages taught in tiny groups in a school sixth form. And subjects which are seldom offered at school, like drama, textiles, psychology, geology and government and politics, are regularly offered in some post-16 colleges.

Initially, there were some doubts about a post-16 form of organisation which effectively abolished the most cherished comprehensive school sixth forms, modelled on their grammar school predecessors. Parents wondered, understandably, whether academic standards would be maintained. Aware of these doubts, the college principals have kept a very careful eye on their own performance – and have come out of most comparisons with flying colours. The A level pass rate is higher in both tertiary and sixth form colleges than it is in comprehensive schools, and in some areas even compares favourably with the pass rate in selective grammar schools.

But neither sixth form nor tertiary colleges are keen to be judged only in the relatively narrow terms of their A level successes. For some years now the larger colleges have been developing courses for young people of lower ability, who might not previously have stayed in education beyond 16. Others give priority to general studies alongside exam subjects, and most offer a range of optional non-examination courses, ranging from anthropology to cordon bleu cookery, as well as leisure and sporting activities. Several point to A level successes by students who might never have been allowed to attempt such a course on the basis of their O level or CSE results. They have benefited, the colleges argue, from the opportunity to make a fresh start in a different environment at 16.

What interests many colleges rather more than their academic record is the role they are undoubtedly playing in persuading more young people to stay in education after the age of 16 – an area in which Britain performs particularly badly compared to other western nations.

Wherever a college system has been introduced the number of young people over 16 who are prepared to stay in education has increased, according to reports from Her Majesty's Inspectors.

To some extent, principals admit, this is the temporary effect of something new. But in most areas, while the initial surge of enthusiasm may have dropped after a year or so, there have been long-lasting improvements in the numbers of pupils deciding to stay on, and in some instances even a dramatic increase.

This is one reason why both the Liberal Party and the Socialist Education Association (which carries some weight within the Labour Party) are now committed to the general introduction of tertiary colleges for all 16 to 19 year olds. Both argue that they offer an economically and educationally desirable way of encouraging a great proportion of young people to continue in education after reaching the official school leaving age.

Manchester and Sheffield are two of the large Labour-controlled cities planning to 'go tertiary' shortly. The Inner London Education Authority, after years of attempting to support its large number of small sixth forms and experimenting unsuccessfully with a consortia of schools sharing courses and facilities, is now consulting parents and teachers on college options. Elsewhere, Conservative-controlled authorities in York, Worcester and Hull are also introducing sixth form colleges. St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College in Clapham, the first in inner London, takes 16 year olds from 12 Roman Catholic secondary schools in south London. In the first year it offers four languages at A level, 21 other A level courses, the same number at O level, and has 80 students studying for the newly introduced CPVE exam. One of the great advantages, says principal, Brian Snalune, is the more mature environment for study.

Some reservations

But although the tide is now running strongly in a tertiary direction, and a Conservative government is approving an increasing number of reorganisation proposals which include sixth form and tertiary colleges, there are still a few obstacles in the path of a root and branch reform. The DES has turned down some college schemes, generally on the grounds that they have not adequately considered how the schools for younger children are to function without their 'crown' of sixth forms.

It was initially feared that schools for 11 to 16 year olds would prove unstimulating for university-educated teachers. But this has not generally been the case, and some staff now argue strongly that schools which offer seniority and extra responsibility to their fifth formers have fewer discipline problems. The colleges, incidentally, say they find that potential sixth formers are only too pleased to be relieved of the chore of supervising the younger children.

Necessary guidance

Liaison with the 'feeder' schools, and the care and counselling of students who will only be in a college for two years, are aspects which need careful planning. Clearly, fifth formers moving on to post-16 courses need careful advice – particularly if it is an institution offering a wider range of courses than a school sixth form traditionally provides. Most sixth form and tertiary colleges arrange advisory sessions for potential students during their fifth year at school.

Similarly, once in college, students need to settle down quickly. Well-established sixth form colleges generally allocate incoming students to personal or group tutors who will oversee their studies, as well as acting as personal advisers, throughout their time at college.

Given the economic advantages of a concentration of educational resources for post-16 students – at a time of continuing cuts in real educational spending – it is difficult to see what could stop local authorities stepping up the pace of reorganisation. And given that there are proven educational advantages in the college system – and that in many cases young people are voting in its favour with their feet – it is easy to see why so many teachers believe that the traditional school sixth form will have faded away by the year 2000, if not before. □

EDUCATION: Policy: PL6

Await DES minute

PRIME MINISTER,

Since our meeting on 20 March, I have discussed the arrangements for bringing in the new GCSE with senior officials and the Chief Inspector of Schools in Wales and probed very carefully the merits or otherwise of deferring its introduction. Wyn Roberts has also been considering the issue and we have independently reached the same conclusion; that we should adhere to the established timetable. While the introduction of the new arrangements will inevitably not be smooth or trouble-free, I am satisfied that it is right to proceed as planned and I therefore support the line that Keith proposes.

I am copying this to the Lord President, Keith Joseph and Tom King.

24 March 1986

RNE

1

PRIME MINISTER

RADICAL OPTIONS IN EDUCATION

We shall receive the DES paper on radical options this week and we will have an opportunity to look at it over the Recess, with a view to meeting on 8 April. The only question to be resolved at this stage is the procedural one of how widely the paper should be distributed and how wide the meeting on 8 April should go. There are two alternatives:

(i) Keep both the circulation of the paper and the meeting very tight indeed: even limiting it to the Education Secretary and yourself, although possibly adding the Chancellor of the Duchy for the political dimension — and the Chancellor and the Exchequer and (on a personal basis) Nick Ridley

(ii) Distribute the papers to those with an obvious interest ie:

Lord President
Secretary of State for Wales
Secretary of State for Scotland
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Secretary of State for Employment
Secretary of State for the Environment
Chief Secretary
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

To whom would you like the papers distributed?

Whom would you like invited to the meeting? As in (i).

TIMOTHY FLESHER
24 March 1986

CAJ26

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister!

Agree to invite Sir K Joseph's comments at the meeting planned to discuss his paper on radical options?

DRN
21/3.

MT

21 March 1986

PRIME MINISTER

"REQUIEM FOR THE SIXTH FORM":

THE DES AND 16+ EDUCATION PROVISION

I enclose a copy of a seemingly well-informed piece by the Guardian's education correspondent taken from the April edition of Good Housekeeping (Appendix A). I would draw your attention in particular to the following:

> ". . . proposals have been set before the Department of Education and Science for a definite break in education at 16, and a new start in a college for all those who would previously have been sixth formers in the schools. A handful of authorities are even proposing to transform existing sixth form colleges into tertiaries as a logical and final step towards a comprehensive system of education for 16 to 19 year olds."

The Present Position

The present position in 16+ education is shown in Table 1 overleaf. There are less than 30 tertiary colleges, which account for only 5% of students, and just over 100 sixth form colleges.

Table 1

Breakdown of 16-19 Provision in England, 1984-85

Type of Establishment	No of Institutions	Students Attending
Tertiary Colleges†	29	5%
Other FE Colleges	470	43%
Sixth Form Colleges	106	35%
Maintained Schools with Sixth Forms	2,000+ (approx*)	8%
Independent Schools with Sixth Forms	?	9%
		100%

† Tertiary Colleges are defined as those instituitions which are the sole providers in their areas of courses for 16-19 year olds.

* Difficulties of definition (eg some schools only have one or two 16+ pupils) make a precise figure hard to determine

DES Proposals

To the architects of comprehensive education, the traditional concept of the sixth form is narrow, academic and reeking with selectivity. Creating tertiary colleges for the 16+ is the logical consequence of the move towards comprehensive education. Following the establishment of:

- comprehensive secondary schools
- new national curricula and GCSE examinations
- new courses such as CPVE

tertiary colleges are the final piece to be fitted into the jigsaw.

The prospect of falling rolls has given DES the opportunity which it has long wanted. It is itching to issue a circular instructing local authorities to plan their 16-19 educational provision on a comprehensive basis, taking into account falling population and the need to integrate the provision of 16+ education through schools, sixth form colleges and FE Colleges. The objective of the initiative would be to secure "the optimum distribution of staff and accommodation" through the rationalisation of existing institutions.

To achieve this, the DES would lay down three key criteria for 16+ institutions in future:

a. that the minimum desirable size for a sixth form in a non-selective school should be 150, and in a grammar school just "somewhat lower";

b. that a school sixth form needs to offer at least 15 subjects at A Level for there to be adequate choice;

c. they want school sixth forms to cater for non-A Level as well as A Level students.

On the basis of these criteria, the Secretary of State would wish each LEA to review its provision of 16-19 education provision, report back after one year, make the necessary structural changes, and then report again.

The Case against Increasing Tertiary Colleges

i. An increase in tertiary colleges would lead inevitably to a decline in the number of sixth forms in existing schools: 75% of schools with more than 26 students - 1,599 schools in all - would fail to meet the DES criteria. With falling numbers, this proportion would be increased. This would weaken those schools as 11-16 schools, and the morale of staff who enjoy the stimulus afforded by sixth form teaching.

ii. Tertiary schools are not necessarily more economical than sixth forms. There are too many variables and too little hard evidence on which to make a decision. The HMI

Report on tertiary colleges stated that "the question of whether the tertiary colleges are or are not more economical than other sixth form or FE provision is unanswerable". We do know, however, that staff salary costs are higher in tertiary schools than in sixth form colleges.

3. There is no evidence to suggest that tertiary schools are in any way superior academically to sixth forms or sixth form colleges.

The Alternatives

The needs of the 16+ age group are many and varied:

- 2-year course leading to 3-4 A Levels prior to university or polytechnic

- 1 year retaking O Levels

- 1 year CPVE

- different vocational courses.

It does not follow, either in logic or on the evidence, that these varied needs can all be met in a 16+ educational department store. There are "horses for courses". The fundamental weakness of the DES approach is to:

i. lay down rigid criteria (eg minimum student numbers of 150 and a choice of 15 A Levels) as if they were running a Soviet-type educational economy;

ii. suggest that the tertiary college is almost always the right answer.

The present mixed system is more responsive than a tertiary system to student needs. It could accommodate falling rolls through increased co-operation between sixth forms (encouraged by the LEA). If changes are necessary, they would best be achieved by proceeding on a case-by-case approach. Each LEA should examine the effects of change on provision for both 11-16 and 16-19 year olds, and take account of local needs and circumstances. Ministers should be cautious and pragmatic, not meddling and doctrinaire.

Recommendation

Write to the Secretary of State expressing grave concern at the Good Housekeeping article, and invite comments from him. Yes

Brian Griffiths

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

REQUIEM FOR THE SIXTH FORM

BY MAUREEN O'CONNOR

***The Guardian's* education correspondent looks at the question of separate colleges for 16 to 19 year olds**

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Falling rolls mean that schools which cater for children from 11 to 18 are shrinking in size and many have difficulty in maintaining adequate numbers of students beyond school-leaving age. Nationally, less than one child in three stays at school beyond 16, and in some urban areas the staying-on rate is considerably lower. The Department of Education and Science recommends that a school sixth form should have at least 150 pupils, and be able to offer a minimum choice of 14 A level subjects.

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Additional strain

To add to these difficulties government policy is to improve and broaden the curriculum for 16 and 17 year olds in the schools. The new AS (Advanced Supplementary) level exam, due to be introduced in 1988, will place additional strain on schools' abilities to provide all the subjects which academic sixth-formers need. And at the same time they are being asked to involve themselves in the new Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) for youngsters who want a one-year sixth form course before looking for work or going on to further education.

As a consequence of these factors, proposals have been set before the Department of Education and Science for a definite break in education at 16, and a new start in a college for all those who would previously have been sixth formers in the schools. A handful of authorities are even proposing to transform existing sixth form colleges into tertiaries as a logical final step towards a comprehensive system of education for 16 to 19 year olds.

It is by no means fanciful to suggest that by the end of the ▷

◁ century the traditional school sixth form will have almost completely disappeared from state education and – because of the attractions of college life as opposed to school – may even be under threat in the private sector as well. Already one or two fashionable sixth form colleges in the south of England recruit up to 20 per cent of their students from independent schools, especially among those who apparently have become disenchanted with boarding and/or single sex schools.

Apparent advantages

The financial arguments in favour of post-16 colleges are clear, and local authorities of all political persuasions are finding them attractive. Far more A level subjects can be offered – 30 is not uncommon in the larger colleges, and 20 to 25 is standard – and A level subjects can be taught in groups of an economic size. From the students' point of view these are plus points too. Four languages at A level, taught in groups which are large enough to be intellectually challenging (eight or 10 is the usual minimum) have to be better than one or two languages taught in tiny groups in a school sixth form. And subjects which are seldom offered at school, like drama, textiles, psychology, geology and government and politics, are regularly offered in some post-16 colleges.

Initially, there were some doubts about a post-16 form of organisation which effectively abolished the most cherished comprehensive school sixth forms, modelled on their grammar school predecessors. Parents wondered, understandably, whether academic standards would be maintained. Aware of these doubts, the college principals have kept a very careful eye on their own performance – and have come out of most comparisons with flying colours. The A level pass rate is higher in both tertiary and sixth form colleges than it is in comprehensive schools, and in some areas even compares favourably with the pass rate in selective grammar schools.

But neither sixth form nor tertiary colleges are keen to be judged only in the relatively narrow terms of their A level successes. For some years now the larger colleges have been developing courses for young people of lower ability, who might not previously have stayed in education beyond 16. Others give priority to general studies alongside exam subjects, and most offer a range of optional non-examination courses, ranging from anthropology to cordon bleu cookery, as well as leisure and sporting activities. Several point to A level successes by students who might never have been allowed to attempt such a course on the basis of their O level or CSE results. They have benefited, the colleges argue, from the opportunity to make a fresh start in a different environment at 16.

What interests many colleges rather more than their academic record is the role they are undoubtedly playing in persuading more young people to stay in education after the age of 16 – an area in which Britain performs particularly badly compared to other western nations.

Wherever a college system has been introduced the number of young people over 16 who are prepared to stay in education has increased, according to reports from Her Majesty's Inspectors.

To some extent, principals admit, this is the temporary effect of something new. But in most areas, while the initial surge of enthusiasm may have dropped after a year or so, there have been long-lasting improvements in the numbers of pupils deciding to stay on, and in some instances even a dramatic increase.

This is one reason why both the Liberal Party and the Socialist Education Association (which carries some weight within the Labour Party) are now committed to the general introduction of tertiary colleges for all 16 to 19 year olds. Both argue that they offer an economically and educationally desirable way of encouraging a great proportion of young people to continue in education after reaching the official school leaving age.

Manchester and Sheffield are two of the large Labour-controlled cities planning to 'go tertiary' shortly. The Inner London Education Authority, after years of attempting to support its large number of small sixth forms and experimenting unsuccessfully with a consortia of schools sharing courses and facilities, is now consulting parents and teachers on college options. Elsewhere, Conservative-controlled authorities in York, Worcester and Hull are also introducing sixth form colleges. St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College in Clapham, the first in inner London, takes 16 year olds from 12 Roman Catholic secondary schools in south London. In the first year it offers four languages at A level, 21 other A level courses, the same number at O level, and has 80 students studying for the newly introduced CPVE exam. One of the great advantages, says principal, Brian Snalune, is the more mature environment for study.

Some reservations

But although the tide is now running strongly in a tertiary direction, and a Conservative government is approving an increasing number of reorganisation proposals which include sixth form and tertiary colleges, there are still a few obstacles in the path of a root and branch reform. The DES has turned down some college schemes, generally on the grounds that they have not adequately considered how the schools for younger children are to function without their 'crown' of sixth forms.

It was initially feared that schools for 11 to 16 year olds would prove unstimulating for university-educated teachers. But this has not generally been the case, and some staff now argue strongly that schools which offer seniority and extra responsibility to their fifth formers have fewer discipline problems. The colleges, incidentally, say they find that potential sixth formers are only too pleased to be relieved of the chore of supervising the younger children.

Necessary guidance

Liaison with the 'feeder' schools, and the care and counselling of students who will only be in a college for two years, are aspects which need careful planning. Clearly, fifth formers moving on to post-16 courses need careful advice – particularly if it is an institution offering a wider range of courses than a school sixth form traditionally provides. Most sixth form and tertiary colleges arrange advisory sessions for potential students during their fifth year at school.

Similarly, once in college, students need to settle down quickly. Well-established sixth form colleges generally allocate incoming students to personal or group tutors who will oversee their studies, as well as acting as personal advisers, throughout their time at college.

Given the economic advantages of a concentration of educational resources for post-16 students – at a time of continuing cuts in real educational spending – it is difficult to see what could stop local authorities stepping up the pace of reorganisation. And given that there are proven educational advantages in the college system – and that in many cases young people are voting in its favour with their feet – it is easy to see why so many teachers believe that the traditional school sixth form will have faded away by the year 2000, if not before. □

file MJ

cc Master.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

20 March 1986

Dear Rob

GCSE

The Prime Minister held a meeting today to dicuss the new GCSE examination with your Secretary of State, the Lord President, the Secretary of State for Wales and Mr Brian Mawhinney. Professor Griffiths was also present.

The Prime Minister said she was concerned about the introduction of the new GCSE exam later this year. She was aware that many teachers and headmasters believed the timetable for its introduction was unrealistic. These views were held by many in the education world who were strong supporters of the Government, and their anxieties had to be taken seriously. She knew that Baroness Cox, for example, was deeply concerned, as was Mr John McIntosh. She questioned whether the new exam would represent, in any case, an improvement on the existing O'level. In particular, the introduction of course work would put extra influence in the hands of individual teachers and so might prejudice the chances of children whose views did not square with theirs. And O'levels had never been concerned simply with the recall of facts. If the implementation of the new exam were rushed, this could only exaggerate the weaknesses. She understood that many schools had yet to receive draft syllabuses in key subjects. She suggested that the problems might be eased if schools were able to choose whether to start the new courses this year, or to delay their introduction for a year or two, and stick meanwhile with the existing exams. The deferring of the introduction of the GCSE could help ensure that syllabuses were sufficiently rigorous, course work properly assessed, teachers properly trained and text books available. It was vital to avoid giving those in the education world who were opposed to the Government's policies an opportunity to exploit a weakness at such a sensitive time.

Your Secretary of State said that he was convinced the new exam represented a major step forward. With its emphasis on practical skills and problem solving, and away from the the academic bias of the existing system, it would offer fresh opportunities for a very wide range of

hool-children. It would raise, for instance, the level of achievement in subjects like maths, which currently had such a high failure rate. It would promote entrepreneurship. It would replace the existing 20,000 syllabuses for the CSE, run by 19 boards, with 250 syllabuses and 5 examining groups. The course work would have to comply with national criteria and be subject to SEC approval. This would represent stricter controls on teachers than now existed, for instance under the CSE mode 3. He continued to believe that the exam would get off to a good start. As with any new exam, there would be difficulties to begin with. But the opposition would diminish as the new courses were established. To change the timetable now would be to give in to the militant opposition. The extra support for training which he had announced recently would help smooth the way forward.

Your Secretary of State did not believe that it was an option now to allow the existing exams to carry on beyond 1988. The examining bodies had been working on the assumption that they would not.

The Secretary of State for Wales said that he believed the GCSE represented an improvement on the existing exams. He accepted the concerns about the timetable, but he thought on balance that a delay now would cause greater disruption. It would be represented as a great victory for militant teachers.

Mr Mawhinney said that Northern Ireland was committed to following the arrangements introduced in England and Wales. But teacher unions in Northern Ireland were pressing for a delay, because they believed that was necessary to ensure the success of the new exam. The Inspectorate in Northern Ireland had now advised him that they took the same view. He shared the view that it was essential for teachers to be properly geared up to take on the new courses, particularly in-course assessment, and that they were not yet ready.

BF

Summing up the discussion, the Prime Minister said that your Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Wales should obtain, as a matter of urgency, the views of their Inspectorates. Your Secretary of State would also consult John McIntosh. Once those reports were available, a decision would need to be taken on whether the introduction of the new exam should be delayed.

I am copying this to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Colin Williams (Welsh Office), Jim Daniell (Northern Ireland Office) and to Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
Mark Addison

Mark Addison

Rob Smith Esq
Department of Education and Science

PRIME MINISTER

GCSE

The White Paper "Better Schools" published a year ago, set out the Government's decision to replace 'O' level and CSE's with the new exam, and said the first pupils would be taking it in 1988. Sir Keith has subsequently stuck to this policy and timetable through thick and thin. Recent papers you have seen are at Flag A.

You are concerned that the new approach which GCSE embodies will lead to

- lower standards
- a shift away from the traditional approach to learning in favour of a "can't fail" mentality
- assessment by the pupils' own teachers with the consequent risk of introducing more bias.

You have not been impressed by the jargon-soaked justifications to come out of DES.

You are also worried about the rushed timetable, and that resources (the £20m and the two days off next term) should be devoted to this enterprise at this stage.

Baroness Cox reported on Sunday that the Education Study Group at the CPS had from the first been worried about the implications of the new exam for standards in education. She shared your concerns about the "course work" element in the new exam. She also said that, whatever DES officials said, schools were not on course to implement the new exam effectively this year. Some had not so far received any draft syllabuses. DES might argue they are not needed until May, but that was simply not realistic. John Mackintosh's school had had draft syllabuses only in English, Music and PE. She thought it was too late to change course completely, but that many teachers and headmasters, including eg John Mackintosh,

"Orderly recall of facts".

Application.

Practical skills problem solving.

Course work,

would welcome a deferral of the September start date. If teachers were given one or two more years to ensure that the syllabuses were sufficiently rigorous, the course work limited and properly assessed, the teachers properly trained, the textbooks adequately developed, this might make all the difference. Baroness Cox thought it would be possible to justify putting the timetable back on account of the disruption in the schools.

The main points you will therefore wish to put to Sir Keith are:

i) You do not like the sound of the new exam; but you are even less keen that it should be rushed through without proper preparation. That will simply lead to its worst aspects (the "coursework") being worse still.

ii) You are worried that many sympathetic teachers and headmasters do not believe the timetable is realistic; they despair the progress which has been made so far with draft syllabuses;

iii) You suggest the whole programme be put back a year.

If Sir Keith agrees to recommend delay, he will need to write round to H Colleagues accordingly.

Gloucester Schools

You also wanted to have a word with Sir Keith about Gloucester County Council's proposals to secondary school reorganisation. Sally Oppenheim has written to you again about this (correspondence at Flag B). Sir Keith said he would clear his lines with you before any announcement was made.

Education Bill: Indoctrination

You may also wish to touch on the wider question of indoctrination, if you have time. Caroline Cox is seeking Government support for an amendment to the Education Bill (currently in the Lords) to ban political indoctrination in

schools and to tackle censorship in higher education. Baroness Cox says that her legal advice suggests that such provisions could be drafted and would be workable. Sir Keith as you know is also considering an inquiry into political indoctrination and is due to report to you.

Mark Addison

MEA

18 March 1986

BM2AGN

CONFIDENTIAL

File

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

14 March, 1986.

GRANT-AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 12 March. She welcomes the fact that H Committee will be looking at the proposals on grant-aided schools shortly.

On your Secretary of State's point about the timing of an announcement, she thinks it would be helpful to have H Committee's view on the matter. She has suggested it may be possible to secure the co-operation of the sponsors, and to make the announcement only after that.

I am copying this letter to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Colin Williams (Welsh Office), Robert Gordon (Scottish Office), and Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

(Mark Addison)

Rob Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

CONFIDENTIAL

JB

E.R.

PRIME MINISTER

G.C.S.E.

I have made arrangements for you to speak to Baroness Cox at 1230 hours on Sunday morning.

I attach, at Flag A, a copy of Sir Keith's note about the G.C.S.E., together with my covering note and Brian Griffiths' views. You will have seen that DES announced yesterday that an extra £20m was to be provided to schools and a two day school closure (to give training to teaching staff) next term to help preparation for the new exam.

You may like to be aware of the speech Baroness Cox gave in the Lords on 10 March on the Second Reading of the Education Bill. She called for the Bill to include a provision to ban political indoctrination in schools. Sir Keith is considering whether the Government should give any assistance on drafting an amendment (it will be difficult). Sir Keith is also, as you know, at present considering the merits of an inquiry into indoctrination and bias.

Mark Addison

Mark Addison
14 March 1986

BM2AGE

E. R.

PRIME MINISTER

G.C.S.E.

You said you would like a word with Baroness Cox on the telephone, before you see Sir Keith.

Would 1230 on Sunday morning be convenient for you? Baroness Cox would be happy to have a word at that time. If the time suits you, I will of course put the GCSE papers into your Weekend Box.

Yes mt

2047336
2321

MTA

MARK ADDISON
13 March 1986

~~07~~
Cilly Cox (Dorset)
07476?
3436

CC HOME AFFAIRS
Sentencing Policy for

PRIME MINISTER

At his meeting with you tomorrow morning Brian would like to discuss law and order and education. Hartley will be coming to the meeting too.

Law and Order

Hartley's note to you in last weekend's Box raised a number of matters which you asked him to pursue (Flag A). His note at Flag B develops some of those themes, and at Flag C, if you wish to look at it, are the guidelines provided by the Lord Chief Justice on rape sentencing. There are a number of other matters which have come up in the last few days which may come up also including anonymity in rape cases, Jury access to information about previous convictions, and Crossbows.

Education

Brian has done a note (Flag D) urging caution on the closing of universities. DES, as you know, are thinking about this at present. They now await the paper from the UGC, expected next month, on the options for living within their resources. One of the options is likely to involve closures. H Committee will need to look at the matter when DES have had a chance to consider the UGC report; DES will be issuing a White Paper on higher education some time early next year.

You may like to have a word with Sir Keith about this when you see him shortly to discuss GCSE.

Distribution
Duty Clerk.

MARK ADDISON
13 March 1986

SL2AFW

PRIME MINISTER 13 March 1986

CLOSING UNIVERSITIES

Twice in the last week I have heard it said that the Government will have to close 6 universities (including probably Bangor, City, Keele, Lancaster and Stirling) the announcement being made at the time of the White Paper on Higher Education this spring.

Such an announcement would be a disaster: it would generate fierce political opposition, would not solve the basic problems of the remaining 40 universities, and would run counter to the perceived need for expansion in training.

Opposition to closures

We can count on the following groups to lobby their MPs aggressively:

a. existing students at the 6 universities, former students of those institutions who will feel their degrees are being devalued, and the National Union of Students;

b. university teachers;

c. parents of existing, former and potential students of the institutions to be closed; and

d. local worthies who sit on university courts and councils, and local businesses which fund scholarships, research grants and appointments.

The problems will remain

Closing 6 universities at this time will achieve one objective - reduced funding. But the key problems with universities remain. Their central defect is that they are producer, not consumer driven institutions. They are run in the interests of staff who have unspecific but tenured contracts. They are not run in the interests of students who, as consumers, face a classic cartel in which all universities charge the same minimum fees for UK students.

If 6 of their number were closed and level funding extended to the other 40, those remaining would take it as a signal of business as usual and soon settle back to their cosy pre-1980 ways.

More than that, there would be a furious debate over the criteria which the DES or UGC used in choosing the unfortunate institutions. Two likely candidates would be:

Size

All those mentioned are small. The UGC will quote home target figures (ie those receiving government grants) not total student numbers to show they are closing only small

universities. But this takes no account of the universities' success in attracting students funded in other ways. As the table shows, there are differences - compare the first and last columns. As can be seen, Lancaster has nearly 5,000 students, and even Bangor - the smallest - has nearly 3,000.

	Target Home	Actual		
UGC	Students 1984-5	Full-time 1983-4	Part-time	Total
Bangor	2,415	2,673	200	2,873
City	2,030	2,798	536	3,334
Keele	2,240	2,729	404	3,133
Lancaster	3,970	4,438	450	4,888
Stirling	2,100	2,470	350	2,820

Quality

Quality will be judged on "A" Level results, research, and employability of graduates. The last could be tricky. A survey of employers carried out by DEmp in 1983-84 found that companies prefer to recruit from technological universities rather than those doing degrees in engineering sciences - mainly because graduates from the former were more practical and useful. Closing such universities would not be attractive if such criticisms were to surface. Most of the universities closed would be technological.

Alternative proposals

Broadly speaking, the Secretary of state has three ways in which he can achieve the target of a 2% reduction in real funding for the next 5 years:

1. Close 6 universities.

2. Cut each university's budget proportionately.

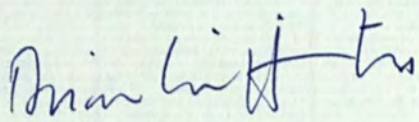
3. Cut funds to the system, but give incentives to those institutions which attract private funds.

The second alternative is more attractive than the first. But best of all, why not get the Secretary of State to develop the third? Many schemes could be developed which involved an overall budget cut, but in some of which funds are transferred from the more to the less enterprising institutions. If, as a result of this, certain institutions were to seek mergers, so be it.

If all institutions were squeezed, more likely is that they would be forced to re-examine their strengths and weaknesses and close departments. After some years, we would have a variety of "universities" some of which would be highly specalised but excellent institutions. In terms of selling the White Paper, this is a preferable route.

Recommendations

Write to the Secretary of State expressing surprise at the possible closure of 6 universities, and invite him to submit alternative proposals which force universities to put their own house in order by closing departments, rather than transform the DES into a Ministry of Educational Planning picking winners.



BRIAN GRIFFITHS

PRIME MINISTER

GRANT-AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS

You agreed that H should discuss Sir Keith Joseph's proposal on grand-aided schools and said that if the committee endorsed the idea an announcement should be made after that. H are now expected to take this on 26 March.

Sir Keith (Flag A) is worried that an early announcement will put off the various sponsors with whom DES will subsequently need to consider the feasibility of the plan. He seeks your agreement that the timing of an announcement should be considered after the feasibility study is completed.

Given that the Government is looking at the idea of grant-aided schools (and we are here talking about a decision to proceed with a feasibility study for a "modest experiment in establishing about a dozen new grant-aided primary schools"), I can see some advantages in publicly confirming what is already widely understood. The story seems bound to emerge in any case once discussion starts up with outsiders, if not before. You may wish to get the Government's approach properly on the record sooner rather than later. It is, after all, a positive and a not a negative message. The announcement would need to be cast in general terms, but should not prevent DES discussing mechanisms in confidence with possible promoters.

There is a case, however, for letting H consider the pros and cons of an early announcement if they decide that the proposal should be proceeded with on its merits.

Agree:-

(i) to welcome the fact that H is to look at this shortly?

Yes mt

(ii) say you think it would be helpful to have H's

advice on the timing of an announcement, on the assumption that they agree to a feasibility study?

Yes

(iii) note that your own view at this stage is that there is a case for going ahead with an early announcement?

It may be possible to secure the co-operation of the sponsors in the announcement. ~~[illegible] to making it~~ There is after all no point in making an announcement unless we are sure the feasibility study can go ahead.

Mark Addison

Mark Addison

13 March 1986

MJ2BQC

CONFIDENTIAL

cc BG

A

PRIME MINISTER

GRANT-AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOLS

I was grateful for your comments (your Private Secretary's letter to mine of 13 January) in response to my minute to you of 9 January; and I am about to circulate a paper to H Committee.

2. I find myself in some difficulty over your suggestion that an announcement of the scheme should be made if it receives H Committee's endorsement. I do not believe that we can decide definitively whether to go ahead with an experimental scheme of GA schools until we have explored its feasibility further; and that exploration requires very detailed discussions with possible promoters, which will be effective only if they are conducted in confidence. Without the necessary assurance on feasibility, we would be very vulnerable in the controversy which is bound to follow an announcement of a specific plan.

3. I therefore hope that you will agree that I should ask H Committee to agree to a feasibility study and to consider the timing of a public announcement only after this is completed.

4. I am sending copies of this minute to the Lord President, and the Secretaries of State for Wales and for Scotland; and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

K.J.

Department of Education and Science 12 March 1986

EDUCATION
POLICY
PT6

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

PERSONAL
PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

FROM THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SALLY OPPENHEIM, M.P.

Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
10 Downing St.,
London SW1

11th March 1986

My Dear Margaret

Gloucester Education

I enclose a copy of my desperate appeal to Keith as there is shortly to be a Court action and a Judicial Review as a result of the delay in his decision to reject Gloucester County Council's proposals to destroy the Grammar Schools in my constituency.

I am sorry that it is such a long letter for you to have to read but I must keep fighting to the bitter end, as I feel that there is a real danger that a wrong and disasterous decision could be made and that we will go down in history as the Government that closed more Grammar schools than Labour Governments have.

I do hope that I can count on your support and realise the difficulties of your position. I know that you will agree with me that such principles must be fought for.

Yours Ever
Sally

Please help!

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

FROM THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SALLY OPPENHEIM, M.P.

PERSONAL
STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph MP
Secretary of State,
Department of Education and Science,
York Rd.,
London SE1

11th March 1986

Dear Keith,

Gloucester Education

I am writing to you because of the recent development in which Gloucestershire County Council have threatend to take you to C ourt because of the delay in your decision regarding the County Council's proposal for secondary school reorganisation in Gloucester.

I must say that I am very concerned that it has taken as long as it has for you to reject their proposals.

N.B. * I realise that you have been under a great deal of pressure from many quarters, no doubt within your own Department as well as from the Gloucester Local Education Authority, as well as the far more important representations from parents themselves, and from myself.

I feel it important to point out once more and to stress the fact that whereas you have received a petition containing many thousands of signatures from those wishing to retain a Grammar School presence in Gloucester, you have not received any similar representations from those wishing a totally comprehensive reorganisation. You have I understand, received " reports " to the effect that a survey had been carried out which appeared to show that a number of parents, favour secondary reorganisation along comprehensive lines. No such surveys have been carried out whatsoever on anything but the most minor basis and certainly there is no way that as many signatures could have been collected from parents in favour of comprehensive reorganisation, as have been sent to you from parents in favour of retaining a Grammar School presence in Gloucester.

I would ask you in particular to find out from officials the precise nature of the surveys which are supposed to have been taken showing that parents favour comprehensive reorganisation, how many people were questioned and how many responded and in what way. My information is that this consultation was derisory.

cont...

I am sure you will have been told by educational experts, that one reason for not rejecting the County Council's proposals is that the general standard of education in Gloucester at all levels is not as good as it should be. I do not dispute this but closing the best schools is hardly likely to improve the situation. Nobody questions the claim that fewer secondary places are needed and that fewer Grammar School places could be justified.

However an alternative scheme has been mooted which would take account of this, leaving three Grammar Schools, the existing comprehensive schools and retaining those secondary modern schools which are most popular with parents and not as proposed by the County Council, closing down one of the most popular secondary modern schools while retaining much less popular schools.

I realise that this is not a matter for you to decide but knowing that such an alternative exists which would cost little or nothing, this must surely be borne in mind, when weighing up the pros and cons of the proposal put before you. In other words rejection of these proposals would leave the County Council with a perfectly viable and inexpensive alternative to put before you if they have the will to do so.

Meanwhile if the status quo is to continue until the County Council come to their senses this will cost very little and will cause no hardship to anyone nor will it in any way undermine education in Gloucester at present - quite the reverse. Acceptance of their plan would be both very costly and entail the destruction of good and popular schools.

The only difficulty will be the remaining uncertainty which is a small price to pay for the preservation of fine schools which parents want to send their children to, as opposed to the destruction of those schools and proposals which would lead to even lower educational standards in Gloucester than those that exist already. I have no doubt you have studied carefully the results of the examinations of the Comprehensive schools compared with those of the Grammar schools.

Given the opportunity to put new and more sensible proposals to you, the County Council could also take the opportunity of widening the catchment area for the Grammar Schools to cover the whole of my constituency on an equal basis, thus helping to raise standards.

I urge you therefore not to delay your decision to reject the County Councils proposals and in the name of better education and the high principles to which our Party subscribes, to reject without further delay the County Council proposals.

Yours,

E. R.

CR

over the w/e
Sunday.

PRIME MINISTER

G.C.S.E.

You thought you might have a word with Baroness Cox about this, before speaking to Sir Keith.

Would you like me to make arrangements for you to have a word with her on the telephone, and to set up a meeting with Sir Keith in the near future?

As you know, time is quite short.

Yes please mt

Julie Bowers

MARK ADDISON
pp 10 March 1986

204.2321. (H)

PRIME MINISTER 7 March 1986

GCSE

The note from the Secretary of State about the new GCSE courses is full of the very highest sounding phrases - "rigour", "stretching", "interesting", "relevant", and "usable learning for life". The fundamental issue, however, is whether it will lead to a fall in standards.

GCSE is primarily an attempt to make secondary school courses more relevant and interesting for the middle grades. It will be assessed in 7 grades. The assumption is that grades A, B and C will be "at least as high as the present 'O' Level", and that standards elsewhere throughout the system will be raised.

I am sceptical of the DES proposals for the following reasons:

1. It greatly devalues CSE: CSE is and should be different from GCE; it is less academic, more practical and techology-oriented. It is something which needs to be built on, not discarded.

2. GCSE is an exam nobody will fail: it is wide and non-selective in character. GCSE does little for the lowest 30% of students. How can one have a useful assessment which encompasses such variety?

3. In terms of timescale, it is far too ambitious to think that it can be implemented in September 1986 - especially in view of the disruptions of the past year.

4. It will hit the selective schools far more than large comprehensives, because the range of options in the syllabi will be more difficult to satisfy.

5. The increased emphasis on project work course assessment is a bias towards certain kinds of parents: it is also open to great abuse from committed Left-wing teachers.

6. Teachers in the end will teach to the standards set by examinations. The most uncertain aspect of the new GCSE is how, given the greater breadth, relevance and awareness which the courses should produce, one will be able to examine such courses in a rigorous and objective manner.

Recommendations

These fears are shared by many teachers. Arrangements for GCSE to be implemented are already at an advanced stage, but implementation by September 1986 is hopelessly unrealistic. It is too late for major changes. Nevertheless, we recommend that you ask Keith Joseph to postpone implementation until he is sure the new system is workable, and can meet the worries of many teachers.

Brian Griffiths

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

E.R.

A

PRIME MINISTER

G.C.S.E.

The Secretary of State for Education has written to you (attached) explaining why he believes the GCSE is the right way forward.

Also attached is a note from Brian Griffiths which questions Sir Keith's view and proposes holding up the introduction of the new exam.

His proposals for the new GCSE were set out in the White Paper "Better Schools", and Sir Keith has publicly committed himself on several occasions, and recently, to introduction of the new exam in September. Postponing the date would be a very major step to take. I think you could only do so after speaking to Sir Keith.

The notes from the Secretary of State and from Brian Griffiths leave unclear a number of questions about the new exam (for instance how easy will it be for pupils to swop levels half way through a course) and I think Sir Keith would vigorously challenge some of the claims in Brian's note.

You may prefer to let the matter rest here for now and raise it with Sir Keith at some convenient moment in the future.

Agree?

No – there is an awful lot of high language – a rather major – and operation in the paper. I really think we should discuss it – but perhaps I will comment Caroline Cox first not

Mark Addison

MARK ADDISON

7 March 1986

SL2AFM

CCBG

PRIME MINISTER

You expressed concern about standards in the new GCSE. With respect, I think that you are misleading yourself. Of course there will be elements that will need improving but I am quite certain that the new examination is more and potentially very much more stretching than the O levels and CSEs it replaces.

2. GCSE is based on differentiation - testing each pupil to the limit of his or her ability: it will thus require differentiated teaching - selection within schools even where there is no selection between schools.

3. Because it stretches at all levels of ability and because it therefore involves differentiated teaching it is the very linchpin of our "Better Schools" policy for secondary education.

4. All papers in the examination, and all examining, must satisfy the national criteria guidelines approved by me and Nicholas Edwards: we have never had such guidelines before. The guidelines require much more emphasis on understanding and on the application of knowledge as well as on the orderly recall of memorised material. For example, the examination, including moderated assessment for a part of the courses, will assess:

- practical, experimental work in science;
- applied mathematics;
- oral ability in foreign languages;
- competence in speaking and listening in English;
- practical problem-solving in craft, design, technology;
- a grasp of risk and enterprise in business studies and economics.

5. All examinations will be on a differentiated basis - with separate papers, separate questions or stepped questions - so that each range of ability will face tests that will be stretching but within reach.

6. Our aim is that 80-90% of pupils should reach or exceed the standards of attainment now reached by the average: the GCSE will stretch pupils of all levels of ability, and both the ablest and the less able will be challenged to show positive achievement. The Secondary Examinations Council (Chairman Sir Wilfred Cockcroft) will have the job of scrutinising syllabuses and assessment.

7. The ablest will be challenged across a wider range of understanding and skills than now. I intend moreover to press ahead with the objective to be served by the proposed Distinction and Merit certificates for abler candidates despite much criticism.

8. Grades A to C of the GCSE will embody standards at least as high as O level - and much more challenging to the ablest - and the present GCE Boards (now responsible for O and A levels) will retain responsibility for the standards of these A to C grades.

9. At lower levels the examination will be far more motivating than now - because stretching though within grasp - and will be taken by a far larger proportion of the age-group than are now O and CSE.

10. The GCSE starts off as a norm-referenced system - putting pupils in groups ranked in order. But each pupil ought to be tested against the levels of understanding, skills and knowledge to be expected of a pupil of that ability and aptitude.

11. So the full development of the GCSE will come only over the next few years as we move towards use of the crucial grade-criteria (already in first draft in 10 subjects). These grade-criteria will broadly define the levels of understanding, skills and knowledge which a pupil must show to earn different grades - A-G. These definitions will give pupils, parents, teachers and employers a clear picture of what must be mastered or have been mastered for any grade awarded.

12. The new examination will then be quite unlike the present norm-referenced O and CSE where pupils are simply ranked in merit order, with little regard to how much or how little pupils understand, know and can do.

13. The new GCSE embodies disciplines which I am sure, contrary to your fears, will inject more rigour, more stretching, more effective, interesting, relevant and use-able learning for life, for work and for individual development than we have ever experienced. I believe that it will be widely copied overseas. It is because it is a key instrument for improving standards that I have made it clear that the GCSE courses will begin as planned in September 1986.

14. The GCSE will reinforce a more demanding curriculum for all pupils and will thus exert, in ways that the present O level and CSE do not, beneficial pressures on what is taught and how it is taught. There are bound to be shortcomings to be corrected but in general I ask you to recognise that this is not only a new examination but is a powerful instrument designed to shape an effective schooling, differentiated but stretching for each level of ability.

KJ.

6 March 1986

KJ
Department of Education and Science

✓6
MJ2 BOX

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

26 February 1986

VILLAGE SCHOOLS

Your Secretary of State wrote to the Prime Minister on 25 February, reporting on the result of the consideration he had given to ways of keeping alive village schools which would otherwise be due for closure.

We agreed that the best way of dealing with this might be for you to cover this point in the paper on education options more generally which you are drawing up.

Mark Addison

Rob Smith Esq
Department of Education and Science

Prime Minister. (2)
This is Oliver's swansong, more's the pity. You may like to look at it over the w/e, I think you will want to discuss with DES Ministers when you consider their forthcoming 'radical options' paper. MCA 21/2

PRIME MINISTER

21 February 1986

EDUCATION: THE LONG-TERM

If I have understood it correctly, the ultimate purpose of this Government is not economic but moral. You were elected to give back to individuals a greater degree of responsibility for the conduct of their own lives.

In many fields, you have succeeded or have at any rate begun to succeed. In education, you have so far failed.

During the past 6 years, the Government has essentially tinkered with education. True, it has tried to clarify lines of responsibility, to establish clearer tests of performance, and to reduce waste. But this has all been done within the framework created during the '40s, '50s, and '60s: there has been no real effort to change the framework itself. Education is still, fundamentally, a nationalised industry, and has all the characteristics of a nationalised industry: the provider decides what the customer ought to have, largely ignoring what the customer actually wants; the 'management' deals with unions, not with individual members of staff; and every problem is attributed to a shortage of public subsidy.

What Can Be Done?

We have known for years that the only effective solution to this problem is to give the customer real purchasing power. This will ensure that institutions depend for their survival on satisfying the customer. It will create a 'bottom line' quality control - a test that no-one can evade.

The only questions, to my mind, are where, when and how the transfer of purchasing power to the customer can best be achieved.

Your education seminar gave us some of the answers. It was absolutely clear that:

a. your supporters in the shires see no need for structural change; they are still living in a world of (reasonably) comfortable illusions - wanting only 'more money' to 'solve' the teachers' pay problem;

b. there was little enthusiasm for a rapid move towards customer-dependence in higher education;

c. your supporters in inner city schools, by contrast, see a clear need for structural change; they are witnessing gradual takeover by the far-Left, and they know that giving parents real choice and purchasing power is the only way to beat that trend.

This suggests that you should, at this stage, aim firmly at inner city schools.

Since starting work in Hackney, I have become even more convinced that the inner cities are the right target. A school, of which I am a Governor, is about to hold a final interview of two applicants for a grade 3-post: one of these is illiterate; her application form contains egregious syntactical and grammatical errors which make her submission exceedingly difficult to understand. But I gather that she is likely to be chosen for the post, because she has been active in 'multi-ethnic' and NUT work. Similar tales are told by Governor after Governor in the area. You already know what Caroline Cox has revealed about the level of political interference in ILEA schools.

The Mechanics of a Solution

Inner City LEAs are, of course, part of the problem, rather than part of the solution. They will not co-operate with

any moves to give parents purchasing power. To make any headway, you would need to find some means of by-passing them.

This could be done by:

i. offering a new form of 'credit' or assisted place' (ie a means-tested voucher by another name) to all inner city parents wishing to move their children out of the local maintained schools, into independent schools in these areas.

ii. giving voluntary-aided schools in these areas the immediate right to declare UDI and to become independent 'grant-aided' schools; (pupils would be given 'fully assisted places' to cover the full cost of fees, and the schools would receive capital grants as at present);

iii. promising to give ordinary maintained schools in these areas the right to become independent grant-aided institutions in due course, if the experiment with the voluntary sector worked well.

Objections to the Scheme

These moves would require primary legislation, and would provoke intense hostility from both LEAs and the NUT.

You would also have complaints from parents in the suburbs and countryside, who would want to know why their children did not qualify for assisted places.

There should not be any extra costs due to voluntary-aided schools switching to independent grant-aided status, since these schools already receive public funds via the local

authorities, and would now receive the same amount of money via parents.

But the 'assisted places' at independent schools could cause additional public spending in the early years, because:

a. you would be subsidising some (though not much) 'deadweight' - ie inner city parents who already send their children to independent schools in the inner city;

b. the emigration of pupils out of maintained schools into assisted places at new independent schools would not, at first, bring offsetting savings in the maintained sector, because maintained schools are slow to adapt to falling rolls.

Assuming that the 'inner cities' were defined to cover about 1 million schoolchildren, and that each fully assisted place was worth the average amount now spent per child by the relevant LEA, the net additional public spending might be something like:

Subsidies for 'deadweight' (ie children already at independent schools in the area) - say 2% of the 1 million school population - at average cost of £1,000 p.a., less average 50% mean-tested reduction:

£10m p.a.

Fees paid at new independent schools in these areas, - assuming there are no ~~not bringing noticeable~~ reductions in maintained sector spending - say 5% of the 1 million school population - at average cost of £1,000 p.a. less average 50% means-tested reduction:

Discussed with Oliver

£25m p.a.

TOTAL ADDITION TO PUBLIC SPENDING £75m p.a.

Advantages of the Scheme

On the other hand, a scheme of this sort would:

i. introduce customer purchasing power in the inner cities, where it is most urgently needed;

ii. receive support from large numbers of religious groups and others who either run voluntary-aided schools harassed by inner city LEAs, or would like to set up new independent schools;

iii. gradually generate helpful vested interests - just as the 'right to buy' has done, since parents with 'Assisted' or 'Fully Assisted' places would want to keep them;

iv. make it clear that the Government recognised the disastrous condition of inner city schools and was actually trying to do something to help;

v. make a dent in the far-Left's efforts to take over inner city education;

vi. act as a pilot for a full national system of 'Credits'.

Conclusion

Although action of this sort would be controversial and expensive, it might - at last - inaugurate long-term structural change of the kind which the Government has so far failed to achieve.

I believe that the game would be worth the candle.

OLIVER LETWIN

10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

"Headmasters have powers at their disposal with which Prime Ministers have never yet been invested."

Winston Churchill
"My Early Life"

DRN

(David Norgrove)
21 February 1986

CP

Pps please

PRIME MINISTER

VILLAGE SCHOOLS

Keith Joseph's paper rejecting the proposed methods of helping parents to keep alive village schools is very disappointing. The proposals would have gone some way towards greater parental choice, control and responsibility, and active life in rural areas.

We suggest a Private Secretary's letter to Keith on the following lines:

> The Prime Minister has noted your Secretary of State's analysis of the options for village schools. Clearly there are political arguments both ways. She is interested, however, in his contention that using Education Support Grant in this way would be less effective than other uses of the money and would be grateful for a costed list of the projects on which ESG was spent in the last financial year for which figures are available.

CM.

CHRISTOPHER MONCKTON

21 February, 1986

VR

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cc BG

BF // spk BG. — no comment

PRIME MINISTER

VILLAGE SCHOOLS

attached at flap PTS

You asked me last summer to consider ways in which parents might be able to keep alive village schools which would otherwise be due for closure, offering as a starting point a paper prepared by Oliver Letwin.

2. He and my officials have since then worked through the possibilities. They considered three possible models designed to form a bridge between the maintained and independent sectors of education by creating a class of village school, which, although technically independent, would be assisted to a greater or lesser extent by the Local Education Authority in whose area it was situated. Under the first model there would be legislation to require LEAs, when proposing to close a village school, to give financial assistance to anyone who could show that they were willing and able to continue running the school to an acceptable standard, provided the assistance did not reduce the savings that would otherwise accrue to the Authority from the school's closure. Under the second model, LEAs would be encouraged, but not required, to offer assistance to keep the school going, but there would be no limit to the assistance and no financial incentives from the Government. Under the third model, LEAs would be encouraged, but not required, to offer assistance, and might receive Education Support Grant or other assistances on a pump-priming basis.

3. I enclose a paper analysing the models. Model 1 is the most radical, but I do not regard it as realistic: it will cause certain hostility among LEAs for very little

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gain, and I judge that in practice there would be very few takers for it. Model 2 is hardly more than a statement of the possibilities which are already open to concerned parents, and I think it telling that so few actually make use of them. Model 3 is effectively a variant of Model 2, and, again, I do not consider that it could generate sufficient take-up to justify the opposition it would provoke.

4. The real difficulty with each of the models - and this would apply to any further variants - is that they run counter to our policies on falling rolls and size of schools. We do already offer positive assistance to village schools which need to remain open for geographical reasons: LEAs can get Education Support Grant on a pilot basis for projects designed to enrich the curriculum and otherwise compensate for the difficulties which arise in such small schools. It would be another thing entirely to offer public money to schools where both the educational and the financial case for closure is clear.

5. The issue has well merited a full exploration, but against this background, I think you may agree that it should not now be pursued further.

K J

Department of Education
and Science

20 February 1986

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VILLAGE SCHOOLS

TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY

GENERAL

1. Because of difficulties of definition, it would not be feasible to limit the scheme to "village" schools which LEAs are seeking to close. It would be best to extend it to all primary schools, certainly as respects Model 1 and possibly also Model 3. Model 2 would by definition be open to schools of all sorts.

MODEL 1

2. An LEA planning to close a primary school would be under a duty:

i. to determine whether there was a group of local people (the proposers) who wished and were able to promote a financially and educationally viable proposal for running the school as an independent alternative, but with financial assistance from the LEA.

ii. if it so determined, to include within the published closure proposal a statement of the alternative proposed.

As a result the necessary consultations would relate both to the LEA's proposal to close and the alternative. The Secretary of State would have both before him. A proposal under (ii) would always fall to be decided by the Secretary of State, and, if he so decided, the LEA would be under a duty to provide financial assistance at the indicated level.

Responsibility for the school following the change

3. The school would be run by trustees who would have to be newly constituted. The previous governing body could not assume this function because it was constituted for a different type of school although some of its members could become trustees. Given that the LEA would have a continuing financial responsibility to assist the school, it could reasonably expect to have some representation amongst the trustees. The LEA representation on the governing body of a voluntary aided school is perhaps a useful model here.

4. The school premises would transfer either to the ownership or tenancy of the trustees. In the case of county schools the trustees would either have to purchase the school from the LEA or pay an economic rent. The Local Authority would face difficulties

from its auditors if it sought to lease the building at a less than economic rent; if the legislation were to empower it to do so, its loss by way of economic rent would still have to be included in the calculation to ensure that the financial benefits to the LEA were no less than would have arisen from outright closure.

5. In the case of voluntary schools (over 60% of schools with less than 60 pupils are voluntary aided or voluntary controlled Church of England schools) the school that closes reverts usually to the ownership of its present trustees; these are most commonly the Diocesan Education Authority. If the current trustees wished to take advantage of the scheme there would be no problem; but if not, in order to override the existing trustees' present rights to make use of their real property at their discretion once it is no longer required for a voluntary school, the existing trustees would have to be required to make the premises available to the new trustees at an economic rent or price. It is for consideration whether in the former case the trustees should be eligible for grant from the Secretary of State towards the cost of repairs and adaptations to the external fabric of the school.

6. Provision would need to be made for any property so gained by new trustees either to revert to its previous owners, or to continue in use for educational purposes, on the trustees' closing their school, to prevent abuse of the scheme by way of property speculation.

7. Difficulties might arise in the case of those voluntary schools whose charitable trusts require that the schools' premises are used to provide education free of charge to the children of one or more parishes, since this would affect the amount of fee income available to the school.

Financial Viability

8. The general requirement placed on the new trustees either to purchase the premises from, or pay an economic rent for them to, their previous owners means that the proposers would have to be able to demonstrate that they could raise the necessary money or the rental required. They would also need to demonstrate that their annual income would be likely to be sufficient, taking account of the LEA's contribution, to meet the running costs of the school and to provide an acceptable standard of education.

9. The principle that the LEA should not lose the savings from closure is best given effect by requiring the LEA to pay to the proposers the full cost which it would incur if it, not the proposers, were to educate elsewhere the pupils registered at the school. It would be for the LEA to determine what this cost was in consultation with the proposers, and subject to appeal by the proposers to the Secretary of State.

10. Provision would have to be made for annual review of the financial assistance made by the LEA to ensure that the overriding

condition that there should be no financial loss to the LEA compared to the alternative of closure continued to be met. This would mean that the level of financial support from the LEA - and consequently the fees that the trustees would need to charge - could fluctuate markedly from year to year.

Fee remission arrangements

11. Since the LEA's financial contribution would be fixed by the criterion set out in paragraph 8 above, it would be illogical for the LEA to finance any fee remission arrangements. As with other independent schools this would be properly a matter for the internal financial management of the institution by the trustees.

Maintaining educational standards

12. As independent schools, the schools would be required to seek provisional registration. Subsequently they would be subject to the normal requirements for independent schools for inspection by HMI leading to formal registration. If a significant proportion of the 100 or so primary schools currently proposed for closure each year were involved in alternative arrangements of this kind, the additional workload on the Inspectorate could be considerable.

13. Since it is desired that the trustees of such schools should be required to meet the minimum educational standards expected of maintained schools - a different requirement than that imposed on the proprietors of independent schools - the requirement would have to be laid down in legislation. The primary responsibility for monitoring compliance with the requirements might rest with the LEA because of its continued financial assistance, but, since the ultimate sanction against non-compliance - removing the school from the register - would rest with the Secretary of State, he would also have some responsibility for monitoring its standards.

14. Many of the schools involved in such alternative arrangements would almost by definition be very small. Even when such schools in the maintained sector benefit from assistance by the LEA's advisory service and from co-operation with neighbouring schools, it is difficult for them to provide an adequate curriculum and the teachers are often professionally isolated. Recognising these difficulties the Department has recently initiated pilot projects supported by specific grant to identify cost- effective ways of enriching the curriculum of, and improving professional support for, rural schools. One- or two- teacher schools in the independent sector would find it more difficult to overcome these problems unless they were able to negotiate (and pay for) some advisory help from the LEA and in-service training for their teachers.

The Secretary of State's role in deciding the proposals

15. As with all statutory proposals the Secretary of State would decide proposals of this kind on their individual merits taking

account of the financial and educational case put forward by the proposers. He would, however, also have to consider the effects of the proposed new arrangements on other schools in the area. An arrangement which works to the advantage of one village should not be to the detriment of another.

Timescale of the procedures

16. The procedures to be gone through by the proposers both on their own and with the LEA (and the voluntary body in the case of a voluntary school) would be complicated and time-consuming. This would be manageable if the LEA (and the voluntary body) and the proposers were united in promoting the scheme. But if they were not, delays and difficulties would be likely to be substantial.

MODEL 2

17. On this model, local education authorities would be encouraged (by means of a Circular) to submit details of the assistance they proposed to give to the new independent school on closure of their maintained school. The Secretary of State would take these into account in weighing up whether the closure proposal itself was justified.

LEAs' powers to assist

18. Existing legislation offers LEAs substantial powers to assist independent schools, or pupils attending them, albeit in ways prescribed according to circumstances. Under Section 81(b) of the Education Act 1944, and the subordinate Regulations, LEAs are empowered to pay the whole or any part of the fees and expenses payable in respect of children attending schools at which fees are payable; the provision is concerned with the prevention of hardship, and therefore presupposes a means test. Section 9(1) of the Education Act 1944 empowers LEAs to assist independent schools where this is necessary to secure a sufficient availability overall of school places. Section 6 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953 empowers them to pay full fees to direct grant schools, or where there is a shortage of places in maintained schools within a reasonably convenient distance (or where this offers the most expedient provision for a child with special needs). More generally, under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 local authorities have the power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions. The annex to this Appendix describes these legislative provisions in more detail.

Responsibilities of proprietors

19. It would not be necessary, as it would under Model 1, to legislate so that the LEA had a right of membership on the school's governing body. As with Model 1, however, the school would need

to be run by trustees (or other body of organisers) who would presumably be newly constituted; and they would have either to purchase or rent the school premises from the LEA or the existing trustees (in the case of voluntary schools) at an economic price, with the same considerations applying as to reverter provisions, conditions of use, financial viability etc.

Standards of provision

20. Here too, the proprietors would have to apply for the school's registration as an independent school, but on this model, whilst they would have to satisfy the Secretary of State that the necessary conditions for final registration were met, it would not be necessary to meet the rather higher standards required of maintained schools. Responsibility for monitoring standards would fall primarily on the Secretary of State.

Timescale of procedures

21. The procedures to be gone through by the trustees and governors of the new independent school, both on their own and with the LEA (and the voluntary body in the case of a voluntary school), would still be complicated and time-consuming, though less so than with the earlier No 10's proposal because in the present proposal the LEA would be a willing partner in any schemes which were introduced locally.

MODEL 3

23. On this model, local education authorities would be encouraged both administratively (by means of a Circular) and financially (by means of Education Support Grant, or something similar) to submit details of proposed assistance to the new independent school along with their proposals to close their maintained school. The Secretary of State would take the plans for the new school into account in deciding on the fate of the old, but the decision to allow the closure of the maintained school could not bind him to give ESG in support of the new one (since the total of ESG cannot be open-ended). The ESG would be intended purely as a pump-priming device, so there would not be any question of extending its availability to schemes under which LEAs already assist successful schools.

Statutory background

24. The LEA's powers to assist would be as set out in paragraph 18 above. As to the Secretary of State's power to pay grant through the LEA to the school, the only power which might be available to him to make such grants is the Education (Grants and Awards) Act 1984 which empowers him to pay Education Support Grants (ESGs) to local education authorities in respect of expenditure "for or in connection with educational purposes which it appears to him that those authorities should be encouraged to incur in the interests of education in England and Wales". It is not certain whether payment of ESGs in support of this sort of venture would

survive challenge: it would need to be demonstrated that the objective of the grant was educational in nature (rather than social or political); it would be unclear what experimental purposes the scheme would serve from the point of view of the maintained system; and there is an intrinsic awkwardness about the Secretary of State spending money to support a school the ceasing of whose maintenance from public funds he has just approved on compelling grounds. Moreover, grant may only be paid to LEAs (although they may claim it in respect of grant to other bodies); it is limited to a maximum rate of 70% of approved expenditure; and there is a limit on the amount of expenditure which may be supported through ESGs in any one year. Primary legislation would be needed if more apt grant-making powers were desired.

Responsibilities of proprietors

25. These would be as set out for Model 2 in paragraph 19, with the rider that a greater degree of financial propriety and accountability would be required to be demonstrated by the newly constituted trustees/governors to justify the Secretary of State's pump-priming grant.

Standards of provision

26. To justify central government grant, the promoters of the school would need to be able to convince the Secretary of State that, on opening, its standards would be at least as high as those of a maintained school. The formal responsibility for monitoring and enforcing standards would rest with the Secretary of State, unless primary legislation were to provide otherwise.

Timescale of procedures

27. Because of the need to ensure ESG (or its equivalent) from the start of the new venture, and because such financial decisions have to be taken in the autumn before the financial year in question, there would have to be a timelag of at least two years between the LEA's first mooting the closure of their school and their achieving it. This might reduce their willingness to engage in such schemes.

STATUTORY PROVISIONS GOVERNING LEA ASSISTANCE TO INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS (OR THEIR PUPILS)

1. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972,

> "Without prejudice to any powers exercisable apart from this section but subject to the provisions of this Act, a local authority shall have power to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their fuctions."

2. Under Section 9(1) of the Education Act 1944,

> "for the purposes of fulfilling their duties under this Act, a local education authority shall have power ... to assist any such [ie primary or secondary] school which is not maintained by them."

(This appears to give a general power to assist independent schools in pursuance of the duty on LEAs to secure the availability of sufficient and efficient schools in their area. Arguably, though, if they had just ceased to maintain the school it would be deemed surplus to their overall requirement, and it is conceivable therefore that a hostile ratepayer could successfully challenge such an arrangemen

3. Under Section 81(b) of the Education Act 1944, and the subordinate Regulations, local education authorities are empowered -

> "for the purpose of enabling pupils to take advantage without hardship to themselves or their parents ... to pay the whole or any part of the fees and expenses payable in respect of children attending schools at which fees are payable."

4. Under Section 6 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953, where -

> "the pupil fills a place in the school which ... is one in respect of which grants are made by the Secretary of State for Education and Science under ... Section 100 of the principal Act"

or - "where the authority are satisfied that, by reason of a shortage of places in schools maintained by them and ... other local education authorities, being schools to which the pupil could be sent with reasonable convenience, education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the pupil ... cannot be provided except at a school not maintained by them or another local

education authority".

or - "where ... the authority are satisfied that the pupil has special educational needs and that it is expedient in his interest that the required ... provision should be made for him at a school not maintained by them or another local education authority" -

"a local education authority shall have ... been to make arrangements for education for pupils at a school not maintained by them or another local education authority",

and where it does so, it shall

"pay the whole of the fees payable in respect of the education provided in pursuance of the arrangements".

CONFIDENTIAL

VILLAGE SCHOOLS

POLICY ISSUES

1. There are a number of important policy considerations which are common to all three models of the scheme, and some that are specific to particular versions.

General issues

2. A central question is whether the promotion of any such scheme could be seen to be compatible with the Secretary of State's policies on school size, teacher effectiveness, and the area-wide rationalisation of provision. There are policy as well as legal implications (cf para 24 of Appendix 1) in the Secretary of State's either encouraging or compelling the offering of continued public finance to a school whose disassociation from the maintained sector he has approved on powerful educational and financial grounds.

3. It is not certain either whether such a scheme is likely to be attractive to local people. Those wishing to mount a proposal would be undertaking a time-consuming, possibly expensive, and certainly risky venture. They would have to ascertain the likely level of support; to prepare a properly worked out financial case based on the likely level of demand; to undertake the legal procedures necessary to establish the trust; to negotiate with the LEA or voluntary body owning the school over the purchase or lease of the premises, and with the Authority over the level of financial assistance. Once the school was established, they would be responsible for ensuring that it met the minimum educational standards for a maintained school. Such a venture is likely to be attractive only where there are parents with some experience in legal and financial fields, or with the money to obtain the necessary expertise.

4. A scheme of this sort might be unwelcome to the voluntary bodies, particularly the Church of England, to the extent that it restricted their freedom to dispose of their own property. (This would be more of a difficulty under Model 1 than under the others, but in principle it applies to them all.) It would be likely to be unwelcome also to LEAs for the same reason, and also because of the extra administrative burden arising from the initial search for proposers, the possible establishment of the school, and its subsequent support and supervision.

Model 1

5. An important question is the likely level of fees and the arrangements of fee abatement. The full cost fee of £750 per annum in the No. 10 worked example would be a significant additional outgoing for a family with an income of £15,000, especially if it had more than one child at the school. The principle that there should be no financial loss to the LEA compared with closure means that in some cases the LEA contribution may prove considerably less than the example in the No. 10 paper, since the local and geographical circum-

stances may be quite different from those there assessed. The calculation in that paper took no account of rent or interest charges on the building. With an average cost of, say £800 per pupil and fee abatement, some parents could be required to pay over £1,000 per year. If the financial difficulties caused the initial parent support to diminish over time, the school could quickly become unviable financially since the LEA support would decline as pupil numbers fell and the required minimum standard of education would limit cost savings. In the example in the No. 10 paper, a reduction of 5 in the number of pupils would require a 30% increase in fee income.

6. LEA opposition would be likely to be intense, not only for the general reasons set out in paragraphs 2 and 4 above, but also, under this model, they would be likely vigorously to contest the principle of being obliged by central government to provide financial assistance to a school which, in discharging their responsibility for their area's pattern of schools, they had decided to close.

Model 2.

7. The principal issue specific to this version is whether, when powers apparently exist and are already made use of from time to time in response to market forces to political factors, much is to be gained by the sort of high-profile encouragement envisaged. LEAs, if already well-disposed to this sort of arrangement, should need little encouragement; but their goodwill, along with that of more hostile authorities, is likely to be eroded by the high-visibility promotion of such a venture in the context of considerations such as those in paragraphs 2 and 4 above.

Model 3

8. However, there would be much more substantial opposition from LEAs if the scheme were linked to an Education Support Grant (ESG). If ESGs were used, the total of relevant expenditure and Aggregate Exchequer Grant were not increased on that account, there would be strong criticism that money held back from Block Grant which would otherwise have been available for spending on other priorities was being used to encourage LEAs to support the independent sector. Even in Aggregate Exchequer Grant were increased, there would be likely to be vociferous opposition to its being used to support the independent sector whilst other pressing claims in the maintained sector remained unmet

EDUCATION

General Policy

note for file.

10 DOWNING STREET

CF

I think we should stop closing a village school. I take it they will be covered in the reduced option paper.

MCA 19/2

CONFIDENTIAL

Rte

cc BG

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 February 1986

EDUCATION

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 13 January about teachers pay and duties and his minute of 16 January about public expenditure priorities for the next Parliament.

BF

I told the Prime Minister that the paper on the more radical options for education is now in preparation. She would be glad to hold a meeting to discuss it, to be attended by all the Education Ministers. She would like to discuss public expenditure priorities at the same meeting.

DAVID NORGROVE

Rob Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

EDUCATION

There are two minutes from Sir Keith Joseph outstanding.

The first discusses public expenditure priorities for the next Parliament. Sir Keith makes a bid for the manifesto to promise higher spending. The Treasury, needless to say, are doubtful about going to the next Election encumbered by expenditure commitments.

The second minute discusses some of the more radical options for improving the education service.

DES are preparing a fuller paper on the more radical options. When this arrives it will provide an opportunity to start the more thorough discussion which you have said several times recently you want to undertake. You could discuss the question of manifesto commitments at a meeting about these more radical options.

Content to proceed in this way?

DRN

David Norgrove

10 February 1986

(DG2AUW)

More money for the sort of education Conservative Con spoke about in the Lords would be disastrous. I have the feeling that DES haven't yet got a structure that is conducive to better education. I think we should discuss with all the dept ministers.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Young): My Lords, the BBC has established a working party to study the cost, contractual feasibility, and potential market for an external broadcasting service in vision. I understand that they will be reporting shortly. We shall consider carefully any proposals which they may put to us.

Lord Gridley: My Lords, while thanking my noble friend the Minister for that Answer, may I ask her whether the people who are concerned in this matter have considered whether, in the event of a television World Service, it would affect the reputation for impartiality gained by overseas radio broadcasts, which is much appreciated throughout various areas of the world?

Baroness Young: My Lords, I am glad to agree with what my noble friend has said in his tribute to the BBC external broadcasts. His original point, of course, is one of the matters which no doubt will be looked at in consideration of the report that has recently been received.

Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos: My Lords, the Government have announced that this service presents a formidable funding and technical problem. Can the noble Baroness give the House some idea of the magnitude of the cost?

Baroness Young: My Lords, I think it would be very difficult to answer the noble Lord, Lord Cledwyn, because it is too early to say how any proposal which might be made for a television service could be funded.

Lord Thorneycroft: My Lords, is my noble friend aware that the British telecommunications industry is technically right out in front in the techniques associated with DBS broadcasting? Although I agree that there are all these problems of funding, does she accept that if anything can be done to accelerate matters it would be of immense advantage to the telecommunications industry in this country?

Baroness Young: My Lords, I note very much what my noble friend has to say about the importance of the telecommunications industry and the fact that it is in the forefront of development. I assure him that the proposals made by the BBC will be studied carefully, bearing in mind the point that he has made. The IBA has recently presented a report to my right honourable friend the Home Secretary on possible options for a United Kingdom DBS service, and those are currently being studied by the relevant departments, too.

Lord Taylor of Gryfe: My Lords, can we take it that in order to secure maximum economy there will be complete collaboration with the independent broadcasting organisations with a view to their sharing the satellite facility?

Baroness Young: My Lords, I note what the noble Lord says. I am sure that that is one of the matters that needs to be considered carefully.

Lord Bruce of Donington: My Lords, can the noble Baroness say at this stage whether the BBC's plans anticipate its independent use of a satellite, or whet it intends to rent part of the services of an exist satellite? That will have a most profound bearing the eventual capital cost of the operation.

Baroness Young: My Lords, I take the point that noble Lord has made, which is an important one have no doubt that that is one of the matters that be considered by the working party that is looking the future possible service

Lord Tordoff: My Lords, may I echo what, I thi the noble Lord, Lord Gridley, said in supplementary question: may we have an assuran from the Government that the expenditure will in way impair the amount of money spent on sou broadcasting, which reaches far more people in t third world than television broadcasting ever cou and which is already under-funded?

Baroness Young: My Lords, I am glad to confirm the noble Lord the importance that we attach to t BBC external services. We recognise their val throughout the world.

As he will be aware, the external services have grant-in-aid of £92 million for 1985-86. That is a su which has been fixed for the next two years. But, a said in answer to the noble Lord, Lord Cledwyn, it too early to say anything about funding for a satellite television service proposals.

Business

Lord Denham: My Lords, at a convenient momen after 3.30 this afternoon my noble friend Lord Elto will, with the leave of the House, repeat a Statemen that is to be made in another place on the privatisatio of water authorities. That will be followed by my nobl friend Lord Long, who, again with the leave of th House, will repeat a Statement on the privatisation c the Welsh Water Authority.

Legal Aid (Scotland) Bill [H.L.]

The Lord Advocate (Lord Cameron of Lochbroom): My Lords, I beg to introduce a Bill to establish th Scottish Legal Aid Board and the Scottish Legal Aid Fund; to make new provision in connection with th availability of criminal legal aid in Scotland; to repeal and re-enact with modifications certain enactments relating to legal aid and to advice and assistance in Scotland; and for connected purposes. I beg to move that this Bill be now read a first time.

Moved, That the Bill be now read a first time.—(*Lord Cameron of Lochbroom.*)

On Question, Bill read a first time, and to be printed.

Education: Avoidance of Politicisation

3.4 p.m.

Baroness Cox rose to call attention to the case for avoiding the politicisation of education, including the use of public funds for partisan political purposes, and

the violation of the principle of freedom of speech, in universities, colleges and schools; and to move for Papers.

The noble Baroness said: My Lords, I rise this afternoon to draw attention to a matter of great concern for the future of our country. That future lies in the hands of the next generation and is to a considerable extent shaped by its education. Those who wish to bring about radical or revolutionary change may try to use education for their ends. I must stress at the outset that this is not happening everywhere. I should also like at the outset to pay great tribute to the countless dedicated and conscientious people in education who are fulfilling their responsibilities magnificently, often in difficult circumstances.

I must also stress that I am not complacent about the serious problems that beset our society, but those problems do not justify what is happening in many of our universities, polytechnics, secondary schools and even primary schools, where there is a violation of education as it is understood in a free society. I refer to deliberate attempts to undermine and to destroy our cultural heritage, our traditional beliefs and values and our democratic freedoms.

To illustrate the nature of my concern let me give your Lordships some examples. The first concerns freedom of speech. That freedom is a touchstone of a free society and is essential for the pursuit of truth and knowledge which lies at the heart of education as we know it. It should be enshrined in our academies, by which I mean our universities, polytechnics and colleges. If it is denied there, there is indeed something rotten in the state of Britain.

It is therefore disturbing that in recent years we have seen numerous instances of censorship of various kinds. For example, there have been many instances when visiting speakers, sometimes Ministers of State, have been prevented from speaking by physical and verbal attacks. Recent cases include the appalling treatment of Mr David Waddington at Manchester University and the denial of platforms to both academic and political speakers at Southampton University.

Such violations of the principle of the freedom of speech are deeply disturbing, but perhaps even more worrying is the recent paper by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals which concedes that censorship might be allowed on occasions in the interests of security. That seems to me totally unacceptable. If our academies condone censorship, we are on a road that once led to Nazi Germany and now leads to totalitarianism such as that found behind the Iron Curtain. I hope that the guardians of our academies will make freedom of speech their overriding commitment, however unpalatable the views of the speakers may be to them or to their militant students.

If disruptions occur, those responsible for them should be disciplined. I realise that the situation may be complicated. The universities do not have their own police and some troublemakers may be outsiders. But these are not insuperable problems and a commitment to protect freedom of speech must override pragmatic concessions to mob hooliganism. A particularly degrading concession occurred at the Polytechnic of North London when students had been disrupting the college and preventing teaching during the notorious Harrington affair. Your Lordships may remember seeing the scenes of violence on your television screens. Staff were ordered by the High Court to identify the students, but some refused to do so. They incurred legal costs of about £30,000, and the court of governors agreed that those costs should be paid out of public money.

Censorship on campuses has also taken other forms. The youth branch of Peace through NATO has been prohibited from exhibiting its publications. At Loughborough University the students' union refused permission on the grounds that student union policy is unilateral in nature; while at Southampton University permission was refused because the students' union happens to be a nuclear free zone.

Also, on a disturbing number of campuses Conservative students have been intimidated, harassed and even physically assaulted. The fact that they are Conservative students is irrelevant. No students engaged in lawful activities should be treated as they have been. Their stalls at Freshers' fairs have been attacked. Individuals have been physically hurt, abused and spat at. Attempts to hold meetings have been prevented sometimes by violence and sometimes by the authorities on the grounds that they are a security risk. A recent report lists 32 universities and polytechnics where such unacceptable incidents have occurred in the past few months, from Strathclyde University in the north to Sussex in the south, from Gwent College of Higher Education in Wales to the Universities of Essex and East Anglia. I would like to ask my noble friend the Minister what steps the Government are taking to honour their commitment in last year's Green Paper to maintain freedom of speech under the law in our universities and polytechnics.

I turn now to the use of money for political purposes by some students unions. As the money entrusted to them is public money, the use to which it is put is of public interest. Most people do not begrudge contributing to the cost of students' education. But they would be very angry if they knew that their money was being used for purposes such as coaches to Greenham Common, affiliation to CND or donations to the miners' strike. The Polytechnic of North London students' union has a budget this year of £214,000, not bad in a time of cuts, especially as it only spends about 10 per cent. on student clubs and societies. If ever there was a time for making membership of student unions voluntary and putting an end to such an abuse of public money, it is now.

I return briefly to the important issue of censorship. I refer to the treatment meted out to Mr. Ray Honeyford, former headmaster of Drummond Middle School in Bradford. He was a much respected head, held in great affection by pupils and staff. But he was subjected to a campaign of hatred and ferocious abuse for daring to write about the difficulties of providing good education for all pupils in a school where high proportions of children do not speak English as a first language. For this, he was hounded out of his post having been subjected to serious death threats and, together with his young pupils, having to run a gauntlet of shouting and jeering crowds on his way into

[BARONESS COX.]

school each day. It is a disturbing portent when an experienced teacher cannot voice legitimate concerns without being dubbed a racist and driven from his job.

That word "racism" introduces my next theme—the politicisation of teaching and curricula. Some local authorities and teacher have adopted specifically political commitments with which they try to permeate the teaching of all subjects or to establish new subjects. Examples include so-called anti-racism, anti-sexism, peace studies and world studies. It is invidious having to criticise subjects with such plausible names. If one criticises peace studies, one feels like a warmonger. If one dares to challenge what is going on in the name of anti-racism, one runs a real risk of being attacked as a racist even though one abhors racism and is deeply concerned about it. But Mr. Honeyford's fate is not unique. Another teacher Mr. Jonathan Savery who had the courage to publish doubts about what is going on in multi-cultural education is now the target of similar attacks.

It your Lordships are wondering why there is concern about what is going on in the name of anti-racism, let me give you some examples from ILEA which is committed to promoting anti-racism throughout the whole curriculum, even developing anti-racist maths. Mr. Singh, one of ILEA's anti-racist team, claims, according to the *Sunday Times* of 25th November 1984, that,

"It is naive to argue that western mathematics teaching is politically neutral".

Subtraction methods of borrowing and paying back reflect mercantile capitalsim. So anti-racist maths has been developed and is being practised in some schools. At the Dick Sheppard School in Tulse Hill, an anti-racist maths lesson was observed by an experienced teacher who has described how it involved comparing the wages of Sri Lankan tea workers with the prices of tea in western markets. The anti-racism message consisted of observing the exploitation that the figures are supposed to imply. This is, surely, arrant nonsense. The figures by themselves are meaningless and their discussion has nothing to do with the teaching of maths.

But perhaps even more disturbing is some of the material produced specifically on racism such as ILEA's teaching pack called *Auschwitz: Yesterday's Racism*. Much of that pack illustrates effectively the horrors of Auschwitz. That is unexceptionable. But education becomes political indoctrination when loaded questions and foregone conclusions are slipped in among discussion of the horrors of the death camp. For example, the teachers' guide suggests that children should make links with today by comparing Auschwitz with recent anti-trade union legislation. Note the prefix "anti" as an example of a typical foregone conclusion! The children are also to link Auschwitz with the behaviour of our police on picket lines and with the GCHQ issue. I am not alone in finding this association of ideas and the trivialisation of the horrors of Auschwitz particularly offensive.

I move on now to anti-sexism. Much of the material here is concerned with promoting equal opportunities for girls. I have no quarrel with this; indeed, I welcome it. But much is also essentially anti-heterosexual. For example, the most recent issue of the magazine, *Teaching London Kids*, funded by the GLC, focus on homosexuality with articles on "Introducing Ga Issues into the Curriculum" and "A White Lesbia Teacher's Experiences in a Boys School" in which th teacher claims:

"I want to engage all the students in becoming aware of, an examining, the conditioning process which damages all of us, whic conditions us towards accepting heterosexuality as the real world"

Presumably, it is this preoccupation that lies behin the poster seen in a London youth club whic proclaims:

"Heterosexuality is a socially transmitted disease".

And, presumably, this preoccupation must als explain events recounted to me by a parent in Nort London whose daughter had to attend compulsor classes in personal and social education at the expens of having to drop either history or geography. In thes classes, 13-year-old girls had to cut out pictures o naked women and fix men's heads to them. It was said that the teacher showed an example of a naked woman with the head of Denis Thatcher. Your Lordships might be thinking that you did not have such fun in your lessons at Eton or at your local grammar school. And, indeed, that example might sound ludicrous. But such practices are surely potentially psychologically disturbing and destabilising for young people especially when their own identities are at a vulnerable stage of development. It is sad indeed when it is in our schools that, in the words of Yeats,

"The ceremony of innocence is drowned".

And, certainly, most parents would not wish their children to be having such lessons at school.

However, some teachers seem to regard parents' values as something to be opposed. According to a parent, the head teacher in a London primary school forbade a little girl to obey her parents' instructions to look after her younger brother because the teacher objected to the parents indoctrinating the girl with ideas of looking after men. These bizarre examples may seem far from the politicisation of education. But there are clear links between anti-sexism and politics. Indeed, those who promote anti-sexism would claim that it is political. And such politics are also consistent with the general revolutionary programme outlined by Lenin and his contemporary followers, part of which is to destabilise society by undermining traditional relationships, especially those of family life.

In other developments the political message is more self-evident—for example, in an anti-police propaganda. Of course the police are not perfect. But the material put out, for example, by the GLC, or the Hackney branch of the National Union of Teachers, is grossly distorted, only showing the police as brutal, racist, and incompetent. There is no adequate account of their merits or of attempts they are making to respond to legitimate criticism. The material—posters, booklets and a video—are indoctrinatory in their gross bias and appear calculated to stir up hatred, conflict and contempt: classic ingredients for revolution. It is also particularly serious in conjunction with policies of keeping police out of the school.

I now turn very briefly to "Peace Studies" and "World Studies". I link them because they are so similar in their political message. Several analyses

have shown how, from university to primary school, the pattern is the same: a consistent anti-Western, anti-NATO, and often stridently anti-American bias, and a consistent lack of any serious discussion of the military and political strategies of the Soviet Union or of the realities of life behind the Iron Curtain.

Much of the material is also educationally inadequate. For example, Exeter Teachers For Peace produced a booklet to encourage teachers to promote peace education across all subjects. It describes how a course on Christian belief might include questions for discussion such as "Young people, which do you prefer . . . atom bombs or charity?" The educational dishonesty of that question as a serious teaching device is, I believe, contemptible. Also contemptible was the behaviour of a teacher who, during the Falklands conflict, told a girl whose father was on active service as a Royal Marine, that he was a "murderer".

In some places there has been explicit refusal even to attempt to teach peace studies in a balanced way. For example, parents at a Manchester school were so worried about bias that they asked the governors to endorse this motion:

"That the governors resolve that whenever peace education is included as part of the curriculum of the school, direct or hiddden, as a separate subject or as an integral part of another subject, it be taught in a balanced way, with presentation of both sides of the disarmament question—for and against."

The motion was defeated, and the teachers abstained.

The result of this bias in teaching peace and world studies is that many of our young people are led to believe that there is at best a moral equivalence between the democracies of the West and the closed societies of the Soviet bloc. In more politicised situations, they are inculcated with disaffection or even hatred for our own society and admiration for the triumphs of communism. They are therefore likely to reject the twin premises of defence and deterrence which underpin NATO because they perceive nothing worth defending and nothing which requires deterrence.

I have tended to concentrate mostly on developments at school level, although such subjects as peace studies reach across the borders from university to teacher training to schools. But there are other areas of politicisation which primarily affect adults in subjects such as sociology or in courses of professional training, for example, teachers or social workers. Not all the critics are Right-wing or Tory. One of the most recent critiques of the politicisation of a subject was written by Professor David Marsland, an SDP member, who attached sociology textbooks for their treatment of war and defence as unacceptably biased and anti-western.

Each of the examples I have given is I believe, cause for concern in its own right. But taken together—with numerous other examples I could have given—they can be seen as part of the long march through the institutions by those on the far left who would destroy democracy. May I stress that I would be equally critical if they came from the far Right, but today it is the Left who are fostering a systematic campaign to politicise education. Mr. George Nicholson, when he was given responsibility for political education in ILEA, claimed that his job was

"like a subversive campaign . . . I don't believe there is any subject untouched by politics".

And Robin Richardson, now Principal Education Adviser for Brent, wrote 10 commandments for educators. His first commandment is, "Never Forget there's a War on" and he commands teachers to remember, "Your commitment should be to justice not to truth".

This view of education as part of the revolutionary struggle is reflected in political activities, such as the distribution of a manual to Liverpool school governors giving advice on how to disrupt meetings and undermine the authority of the head. It has since found its way to other cities. It is no wonder that the London *Standard* recently reported numerous resignations by head teachers from inner city schools under the heading,

"Left blamed as 28 Heads quit early".

It claims that Haringey's Left-wing policies were causing an exodus of head teachers. One of them, Mr. Deverson, who left Down Lane Junior School last Easter claimed that local initiatives on race and sex equality were largely to blame.

He said,

"I am sure we all believe in equality but they have gone the other way . . . they want to turn the Borough into a feminist state".

Such retreat from the field of battle by experienced teachers, although understandable, will leave the field wide open for further politicisation. One head teacher said to me recently,

"I fear for the future of London's schoolchildren".

The plight of pupils in many London's schools and elsewhere is reflected in the despair which leads many parents to make big sacrifices to get their children out of state schools and into independent schools. Many of these parents are not well off but they are so desperate that they sometimes even set up their own schools. One notable example is the John Loughborough School in North London, set up by members of the West Indian community. Dismayed not only by poor academic standards, but also by the lack of moral and spiritual education in local state schools, they set up their own school, with the help of their church. They pay £600 a year for each child, a large sum for families who are not at all well off. I had the privilege of giving the prizes at the last prize-giving and I was deeply impressed. The school clearly gives its pupils an impressive education—academically, morally and spiritually. And I felt a greater spirit of patriotism and appreciation for what is good in our society in that school than I have found in many of our state schools. At John Loughborough School they even sang the National Anthem—something which rarely happens in many of our state schools nowadays.

I should like to ask my noble friend the Minister whether the Government could do something to help initiatives such as this. After all, it is because we have failed to provide adequate moral, spiritual and academic education that parents have been forced to make such sacrifices and pay for alternative education.

The implications of politicisation of education reach far beyond schools and colleges out into the wider society and into the future. We have touched on the effect of peace studies in undermining the political will for defence. Other effects include a "drip" effect:

[BARONESS COX.]

a general erosion of appreciation of, and loyalty to, what is good for our country, in our cultural heritage, in our traditional values and in our moral standards. And in adult education, there is in some places a "feeder effect": a deliberate turning out of committed Marxists into key posts, such as teaching, social work, trade unions, the media and local government.

I repeat that I am not complacent about the very real problems in our society. But attempts to think about remedies are very different from commitment to a revolution which would destroy democracy and freedom. If we care about the preservation of a free society, we will do well to take the politicisation of education very seriously.

As I draw to my conclusion, I ask very briefly, what remedies might we consider? First, I welcome the fact that the Secretary of State for Education has just issued a draft circular on guidelines for teaching politically contentious subjects. But as it stands it is very limited and will need considerable strengthening before meeting the concerns I have expressed this afternoon. Secondly, some consideration should be given to the possibility of changes in the law to protect pupils from indoctrination—a difficult but not impossible task.

Thirdly, many people believe the time is ripe for an inquiry into the nature and extent of politicisation in education. The evidence that I have given is only part of that which I could have given; I could have written the same speech many times over, with different examples. But all of these are only part of the picture. At present we have no systematic way of gathering evidence or of putting it into its complete context. Therefore I ask my noble friend the Minister whether he will ask his right honourable friend to set up a searching inquiry into these matters, in ways which protect parents and pupils from intimidation and victimisation.

Finally, I believe that our young generation should have the education which they deserve in the form of education in a free society and education for a free society. Education in a free society should enshrine the principles of freedom of speech, freedom to pursue the truth and freedom to develop views and interests not predetermined by the political commitments of local authorities or of teachers. To deny them this is a betrayal of our birthright. And I also believe that we should educate them for a free society by encouraging them to think critically and rigorously on the basis of all available relevant evidence about the problems which persist in our society as well as its achievements and advantages, especially our precious heritage of freedom. Such education should also enable them to consider critically alternative kinds of society, which means studying not only the problems of the West but also the realities of Marxism-Leninism, the creed which underpins so much politicised education.

Until we appreciate the nature and extent of this politicisation, and resist it when it violates the basic principles of a free society, we run a real risk of allowing our young generation to take their heritage of freedom for granted. Unless they learn that freedom is both precious and precarious they may realise too late that, once lost, it may be impossible to regain. This is why what is happening in parts of our education system is desperately important and why we ignore it at our peril and at the peril of our children and children's children. My Lords, I beg to move Papers.

3.32 p.m.

The Earl of Swinton: My Lords, this afternoon noble friend Lady Cox has provided us with opportunity to debate an important issue, and very powerful and excellent speech she has put som those concerns before your Lordships. It fundamental to the health of our society that children and young people receive an unbia education, and any threat to this must clearly regarded with the greatest concern. The Motion bef us today refers to all phases of education, but I sh concentrate my remarks on activities in our scho Other issues raised by my noble friend and no Lords who will speak later which are more relevant further and higher education will be answered by noble friend Lady Hooper when she sums up at end of the debate.

This debate is particularly opportune because, my noble friend Lady Cox said in her speec yesterday my right honourable friend the Secretary State for Education and Science and my rig honourable friend the Secretary of State for Wal initiated consultation on drafts of a circular to loc education authorities and of a statement of principl which they believe should inform on the treatment politically controversial issues in schools and college My noble friend Lady Cox was not aware that th would be the case when she tabled today's Motion, bu as matters have turned out this debate is most timely

My right honourable friends have issued the draf circular and statement of principles because they ar aware of disquiet that politically controversial issue may sometimes be tackled in schools and colleges in a manner which amounts to indoctrination. What my noble friend has told us this afternoon is an indication of the degree and nature of the sort of disquiet about which my right honourable friends are concerned. They believe, however, that the education service has a long and honourable tradition of upholding the principles of a free and open society. They are certain that all the partners in the service agree that this tradition must be upheld. Accordingly, it seemed right to them to involve the education service as a whole to agree a set of principles for the treatment of politically controversial issues. Those being consulted about the draft documents include the local authority associations, the school and further education teacher associations, the voluntary bodies and the Society of Education Officers.

The text of the draft statement of principles is short—in fact, it extends to only three paragraphs—and it repays careful study. Copies of the texts of the draft documents, and of the consultation letter issued by my right honourable friends, are in the Library of the House.

The draft documents make it very clear that the Government stand firmly against any attempt to distort or subvert for partisan political purposes the education of our children. There can be no justification for a teacher failing to live up to his professional responsibility to deal with politically controversial issues, when they arise in the classroom,

019/2768

CONFIDENTIAL

CDBG

FROM: CHIEF SECRETARY
DATE: 5 February 1986

PRIME MINISTER

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT PARLIAMENT

I have seen Keith Joseph's minute to you of 16 January, which he copied to Nigel Lawson.

2 I note the points Keith makes both about education spending generally; and in particular about the importance of getting better value for money for what we do spend. These are issues we can discuss in the public expenditure Survey.

3 Whatever decisions we take, our experience of the past few years underlines the need in my view to be exceedingly careful about going into the next Election encumbered by expenditure commitments. We criticise the profligacy of the Opposition parties in this respect. And we must remember that if we give specific commitments about priorities to increase spending, we may also have to indicate our priorities for reducing it if we want to retain the prospect of achieving our overall public expenditure objectives.

4 I am copying this minute to Keith Joseph and to Norman Tebbit.

JOHN MacGREGOR

CONFIDENTIAL

Education: Teachers Pay Pt 6.

CONFIDENTIAL file BM

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary 3 February 1986

Dear Rob

POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION IN SCHOOLS

Thank you for your letter of 30 January. The Prime Minister has seen the draft circular, as further amended by the form of words which has I understand now been agreed with the Home Office. She is content that Sir Keith should publish the draft circular on 4 February.

I am copying this letter to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Stephen Boys Smith (Home Office), Robert Gordon (Scottish Office), Colin Williams (Welsh Office), Alison Smith (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Andrew Lansley (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Jim Daniell (Northern Ireland Office) and Robin Young (Department of the Environment).

Yours ever
Mark Addison

MARK ADDISON

Rob Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science

CONFIDENTIAL

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

CC/G

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SWIH 9AT

3 February 1986

Dear Rob,

MBM

BIASED TEACHING AND POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

at Prep

The Home Secretary has seen your letter of 30 January enclosing a revised statement of principles. You told me on the telephone of the adaptation of the form of words included in the Home Secretary's letter of 29 January which your Secretary of State was disposed to include in the final version.

This letter is to record, as I told your colleagues earlier today, that while the Home Secretary would value the inclusion in the sentence in question of a reference to those who uphold the law, he is content with the version you gave me if in the judgment of your Secretary of State omission of that phrase is necessary.

Copies of this letter go to Mark Addison (No 10), Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Robert Gordon (Scottish Office), Colin Williams (Welsh Office), Alison Smith (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Andrew Lansley (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Jim Daniell (Northern Ireland Office) and Robin Young (Department of the Environment).

Yours,

S Boys Smith

S W BOYS SMITH

Rob Smith, Esq

E.R.

DES Welcome their a say
if HO are content.

PRIME MINISTER

POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION IN SCHOOLS

Sir Keith Joseph has now discussed his draft circular with Professors Hirst and Minogue.

The revised draft is attached, with a covering letter from DES.

The changes which the Professors propose do not add up to much. The draft remains essentially the same: a statement of abstract principles.

DES, and I understand, Professors Hirst and Minogue, nonetheless firmly believe that it is worth issuing. They do not dispute that it does not offer practical guidelines to teachers. But they believe it will have an important symbolic value, will indicate the Government's concern, will encourage those who are trying to maintain standards, and will influence those who risk falling into bad habits for the better. They doubt there is much that can be done about the real malcontent and the malicious.

Personally, I think the circular is a statement of the obvious. But DES may be right that at worst it can do no harm, and at best it may help a little bit. Certainly Sir Keith Joseph is keen that it should be published on 4 February, before the Lords' Debate on indoctrination on the following day.

Content that the circular should issue in the form Sir Keith proposes?

Yes MT

MLA

MARK ADDISON

31 January 1986

CONFIDENTIAL

CGG

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Mark Addison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

30 January 1986

Dear Mark,

BIASED TEACHING AND POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

In accordance with your letter of 16 January at Flap my Secretary of State has discussed the draft statement of principles with Professor Hirst and Professor Minogue. Both supported the proposal of a circular enclosing such a statement. In the light of their constructive and penetrating comments Sir Keith Joseph has amended the draft statement in two places which are side-lined in the attached revised text.

Sir Keith Joseph believes that it would be right to issue a draft circular as soon as is practicable. He has considered the timing in relation to the teachers' dispute. In his view there is no reason why this initiative should affect the dispute. He proposes to publish the draft circular on 4 February: this would strengthen the Government's position in relation to the Lords debate on Indoctrination which will take place on 5 February.

I am copying this letter to Joan MacNaughton, Stephen Boys Smith, Robert Gordon, Colin Williams, Alison Smith, Andrew Lansley, Jim Daniell and Robin Young.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Smith

R L SMITH
Private Secretary

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Draft statement of principles

THE TREATMENT OF POLITICALLY CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

1. One of the principal functions of education is to prepare pupils and students for the active discharge of the responsibilities of citizenship. It has long been recognised that this means, among other things, that issues of a politically controversial character will inevitably figure in some parts of the curriculum and can arise spontaneously in many. In treating such issues the education service in this country applies the principles appropriate to a free and open society.

2. Their application has a positive aspect. It is part of the task of schools and colleges to promote the attitudes, knowledge and skills which are necessary for the preservation of our society's fundamental values, notably its commitment to parliamentary democracy, the freedom of the individual within the law, and the equality of all citizens under the law. Among the attitudes to be promoted are a rational approach to evidence and argument, both informing opinions and in resolving differences; awareness of the duties and rights of citizenship; respect for the law and respect for the rights of others, including their right to hold their own opinions and to express them within the law. Pupils and students need to be equipped with the intellectual skills which are necessary if our society's fundamental values are to be understood, critically appraised, developed and defended.

3. It follows that, within the limits set out above, schools and colleges should be ready, in the interests of good education, to tackle issues which are politically controversial. In doing this teaching staff should at all times seek to distinguish between fact and opinion, be ready to acknowledge personal bias, make clear that on matters of opinion views other than their own may be legitimately held, and encourage pupils and students to form their own

2. Their application has a positive aspect. It is part of the task of schools and colleges to promote the attitudes, knowledge and skills which are necessary for the preservation of our society's fundamental values, notably its commitment to parliamentary democracy, the freedom of the individual within the law, and the equality of all citizens under the law.

~~[illegible] to evidence and argument, both in forming opinions and in [illegible] differences, and respect for the right of others to hold their own opinions and to express them within the law.~~ Pupils and students need to be equipped with the intellectual skills which are necessary if our society's fundamental values are to be understood, critically appraised, developed and defended.

3. It follows that, within the limits set out above, schools and colleges should be ready, in the interests of good education, to tackle issues which are politically controversial. In doing this teaching staff should at all times seek to distinguish between fact and opinion, be ready to acknowledge personal bias, make clear that on matters of opinion views other than their own may be legitimately held, and encourage pupils and students to form their own

conclusions on the basis of evidence and reflection and of discussion with others. How this is best done for pupils and students of varying maturity and understanding is a matter of professional judgment and calls for the exercise of professional responsibility.

EDUCATION PTO

General Policy

CONFIDENTIAL

cc BG

QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

29 January 1986

Dear Keith,

BIASED TEACHING AND POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION
IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on the draft circular and statement of principles attached to your minute of 10 January to the Prime Minister.

The problem of political bias in education is a real one, and I welcome your willingness to tackle it. One aspect of the problem which has been a source of concern to me and my colleagues in the Home Office is the refusal by some authorities and some schools, on political grounds, to allow police officers to visit schools. I would not want to overstate the importance of such visits. They should, in my view, be seen as part of a wider process of establishing links between the school and the outside world, including other statutory agencies and voluntary bodies working in the locality, and should certainly not detract from the role of the teacher in instilling a sense of civic responsibility. But they do have a useful function in helping pupils to understand the nature of the police task in upholding the law.

As you will recall from our exchanges before the Party Conference, I am anxious that we should see the school, so far as possible, as a positive influence steering young people away from delinquency and crime, by helping them to perceive and accept the duties of citizenship and the importance of respecting the interests of others. I think it is important that the statement of principles should convey something of that flavour. I imagine that you will want to recast the statement somewhat in response to the Prime Minister's request, and I may say that I would welcome changes that gave it a more practical thrust. But taking the existing paragraph 2 as it stands, my point would be met if the final sentence were expanded on the following lines:

> "Among the attitudes to be promoted are a rational approach to evidence and argument, both in forming opinions and in resolving differences; awareness of the duties of citizenship; respect for the rights of others, including their right to hold their own opinions and to express them within the law; and respect for the law and for those who are charged with upholding it in an impartial manner. Pupils and students need to be equipped....."

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to the other recipients of your minute of 10 January.

Yours ever
Douglas.

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph, Bt., MP.

CONFIDENTIAL

EDUCATION
POLICY PT 6

file

Boy

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

ack

17 January 19896

I enclose a copy of a letter the Prime Minister has received from Mr. P.K. Burgess of the University, Dundee.

I should be glad if you could arrange for this letter to receive a suitable Ministerial or Private Secretarial reply on the Prime Minister's behalf please. I also enclose a copy of the letter to which Mr. Burgess refers.

(David Norgrove)

Rob Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science

CONFIDENTIAL

CCB/G

BF Prime Minister 2

The Treasury will no doubt be commenting. DRS 17/1

PRIME MINISTER

Public Expenditure Priorities for the Next Parliament

1. At Chequers in the summer there was wide support in Cabinet for higher priority for education. Much has been done under your leadership to devise policies for education and training for improvement. But, as we approach the Election, policies will not suffice: we shall need to convince the electorate that they will be implemented if Manifesto commitments are to be credible.

2. The teachers' pay dispute and higher education pressures obscure and prevent us getting the credit for what has been done and is in prospect - on the curriculum, examinations and training. We agree that radical steps about teachers' duties and pay structure are needed not only to restore order but also to make our education policies possible.

3. If we can achieve those, we shall open up an important political opportunity. Recently the performance of education has been criticised more effectively than before. British employers have been challenged about their training arrangements. Countries abroad are perceived to manage better. An imaginative education and training package could be a central and effective part of our next election manifesto.

4. But such a package would not be credible unless we are seen to be prepared to spend appropriately. Since 1979 we have, for good and proper reasons, given priority to our 1979 campaign pledges - defence, health, pensions and law and order. But we need, it seems to me, to make room to include education and training. Responding to concern about the future would give our manifesto a more positive and optimistic note.

5. You and I agree that more public expenditure will not by itself improve education. Better management, less waste, more selectivity and rigour will continue to be required. That means continuing our efforts to secure a faster removal of surplus school places; to achieve more savings in caretaking and cleaning costs

and in other ways identified by the Audit Commission in NAFE; and to cut the costs of school meals by legislation and by other means. We shall also need other initiatives: institutional changes, wider privatisation; greater use of specific grants.

6. But our friends in LEAs, particularly in the counties, have not been wasteful and they are having to make undesirable cuts. And we have already scored substantial efficiency savings in our public expenditure plans for education. While I shall pursue further savings, I cannot see the scope to free enough resources to achieve our policies for higher standards in attainment, attitudes and behaviour.

7. Success depends on our being able to deal with those aspects crucial to our policies that need more expenditure. In the **schools**

(i) Our White Paper "Better Schools" acknowledged that our plans for a better curriculum which incorporates the lessons of the TVEI, is better taught, and is supported by the reformed examination system, will require a further small improvement in the national pupil/teacher ratio. The objective is not to go on lowering class sizes but to give teachers, particularly in the primary schools, more time away from their own classes in order to prepare their lessons and provide specialist teaching in other classes, and to expand in-service training. (Primary teachers now spend over 90% of their time in their classes compared with less than 80% in the case of secondary teachers).

?

(ii) Higher standards in schools will not be achievable unless the teaching force - including many who were badly trained in the 1960s and 1970s - are taught new teaching and other skills. This is why we have already given priority to TVEI-related in-service training. But so far very few teachers have been reached.

(iii) We need to make possible the evident desire of LEAs to spend more on repairs and maintenance, so that school buildings can efficiently serve our efforts to raise standards; and on the equally necessary books and equipment. Public concern about current deficiencies will be an election issue.

(iv) Local authorities need to spend more to rationalise the stock of schools - in order to remove more surplus places - and to modernise equipment in colleges and polytechnics in line with training, re-training and updating policies.

8. Nor am I concerned only with schools and colleges. In science and in the universities we are losing talent. We have brought greater rigour and selectivity and better management into the Research Councils. In the universities we are in trouble over pay. Academic salaries have been held down in recent years: in one sense this is a success but there is now evidence of failure to recruit, retain and motivate quality staff, with a significant brain drain of good scientists. I shall be minuting separately on this shortly.

9. Pay aside, the universities are short of money to renew and improve equipment (very damaging for scientific research), to maintain buildings and to buy out staff so as to make room for young talent. Following the Jarratt report, action is in hand to improve efficiency, economy and management, but the savings have largely been scored already.

10. The UGC is pushing on with rationalisation and with the concentration of research. One outcome of this process, given present funding totals, ought to be closure of several universities. The UGC will almost certainly recommend that formally and publicly to the Government this year. The future of our universities is thus likely to be an election issue.

11. Finally we need to give a new impetus in the next Parliament to professional updating and continuing education. Skill shortages in key areas are likely to continue to increase. Technical change will give a competitive advantage to those countries that update their workforces effectively. The laggards will go to the wall. Public expenditure has a role to play here. Much could be done by way of loans (to those who seek updating without an employer's backing) at commercial rates and by enlightened self-interest by employers. But experience shows that in this country they will not be enough. To get back into the race with our competitors we need to put public money up front.

12. I am copying this minute to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chairman of the Party.

K.J.

KJ
Department of Education and Science
16 January 1986

FILE CJ (21)

CONFIDENTIAL

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

16 January 1986

Rob Smith to discuss with O/L. I passed his the 3 names on O2's note.
MEA 20/1.

BIASED TEACHER AND POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 10 January. She welcomes the idea of a circular in principle. She has, however, asked that your Secretary of State should have another look at the content of the circular, with help from academics who have worked in this area and thought carefully about the problem of defining bias, with a view to ensuring the text is as much practical help as possible to teachers, headmasters and local education authorities.

I am copying this letter to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Stephen Boys Smith (Home Office), Robert Gordon (Scottish Office), Colin Williams (Welsh Office), Alison Smith (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Andrew Lansley (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Jim Daniell (Northern Ireland Office) and Robin Young (Department of the Environment).

MARK ADDISON

R.L. Smith Esq.,
Department of Education and Science

CONFIDENTIAL

BM

E.R. PRIME MINISTER

1.

BIAS IN SCHOOLS

You asked Sir Keith Joseph to report back to you on how he proposed to tackle the problem of local bias in schools.

His minute, attached, proposes that a circular should be issued, after it has been cleared through the teacher and local authority associations. The draft circular that his Department has come up with is at flag A. Oliver Letwin's advice is at flag B.

Oliver suggests that if that is the best DES can do, it would probably be better to do nothing at all. It is indeed a pretty vacuous draft. Most of it is concerned with establishing that issues of a politically controversial character are legitimate matters for discussions in schools. There is one sentence only which purports to give practical guidance to teachers on the guidelines which ought to be followed.

Personally, I have my doubts that it is possible to do much more than rely on the professional judgement of teachers, to make sure that the right kind of people are selected for the job, and that their training is effective. But Oliver is convinced that a lot of important academic work has been done which would help the DES to draft a circular of substance. It cartainly seems worth asking the Department to see what can be done, with the benefit of the best advice available.

Agree i) to welcome the idea of a circular in principle but

ii) to ask the Secretary of State to have another look at the content with help from academics who have thought seriously about bias, in particular so that it can be of some practical help to teachers, headmasters and local education authorities in the course of their work?

Yes

MEA

MARK ADDISON

15 January 1986

CAJABE

The University
Dundee DD1 4HN

Department of Psychology

Telephone 23181 Extension 4610

R 16/1 PPS

15th. Jan. 1986

GR NT cf.

The Prime Minister,

Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

as you know, the AUT is today on official strike.

I am sure you appreciate how reluctant many of us are to embark on this action, and you must understand what levels of anger and despair have driven us to take it.

ah flap I am dismayed that you have broken your undertaking in your letter to Mr. Hennessy (7th. June 1983) in which you stated that"the period of contraction is now nearing the end" and went on to say that "the intention is to hold the level steady in real terms after 1984/5".

The materialist philosophy which your government has applied to universities and schools has succeeded only in reducing the entire educational system, from top to bottom, to a complete shambles.

You should draw the appropriate conclusion.

Yours sincerely,

P. K. Burgess

P. K. Burgess

EDUCATION PTS

General Policy

CC BG

BF?

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

15 January 1986

MLA

Dear Mark

DES GRANT-AIDED SCHOOLS

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of ~~13~~ 14 January to Rob Smith. I have discussed this with the Lord President and he agrees that the Secretary of State for Education's proposals should be discussed at H Committee. He is content also for the question of a linkage with the MISC 104 work on inner cities, and the context of any announcement about grant-aided schools, also to be considered by the Committee.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Rob Smith (DES), Robert Gordon (Scottish Office), Colin Williams (Welsh Office), Anthony Langdon and Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely

E C Huckle

pp JOAN MACNAUGHTON
Private Secretary

M Addison Esq

EDUCATION PTS
General Policy

FILE WITH MFA

B

PRIME MINISTER 14 January 1986

BIAS IN SCHOOLS

The DES are, at last, proposing to issue a circular on political bias in schools. Although this will not itself cure the problem, it could give sensible teachers and parents a powerful weapon to use against the far-Left.

But there is no point in issuing a circular if it is as confusingly presented and as nugatory as the present DES draft. People like Professor Scruton (who wrote the pamphlet on bias), Professor Minogue (who came to the Education Seminar) and Professor Hirst (who is one of the few sane professors of the philosophy of education) could do much better.

We recommend that you should:

- welcome the idea of a circular; but

- ask Keith Joseph to redraft it with help from academics who have thought seriously about the problem of defining bias.

Ol Lt.

OLIVER LETWIN

EDUCATION
POLICY PT 6

CONFIDENTIAL

CABINET OFFICE,
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Tel No: 233 3299
7471

14 January 1986

Rob Smith Esq
Principal Private Secretary to the
Secretary of State for Education and
Science
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON
SE1 7PH

Dear Rob,

BIASSED TEACHING AND POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

The Chancellor of the Duchy was grateful for a copy of your Secretary of State's minute of 10 January to the Prime Minister.

The Chancellor agrees with your Secretary of State's proposals for the publication of a circular; he believes that it will put those concerned on notice of the scrutiny under which teaching will fall in this respect, and offer a general standard by which it should be judged.

The Chancellor has, however, one amendment he would propose to the draft letter. He regards the use of the word "indoctrination" (line 3, 2nd paragraph) as open to subjective interpretation. He would prefer that it should be deleted and instead the words, "the teaching, openly or covertly, of a particular partisan political view" should be substituted.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, and to the Private Secretaries to the Lord President, Home Secretary, Lord Privy Seal, and to the Secretaries of State for Wales, Northern Ireland, the Environment and Scotland.

Yours Sincerely

Andrew Lansley

ANDREW LANSLEY
Private Secretary

EDUCATION
POLICY
PT 6

CONFIDENTIAL

MS 2B/CT

10 DOWNING STREET

13 January 1986

From the Private Secretary

DES GRANT-AIDED SCHOOLS

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute of 9 January. She strongly supports the view of your Secretary of State and the colleagues with whom he has discussed his proposal that it should be explored further. She believes that it should now be put to H Committee and, on the basis that it receives the Committee's endorsement, that an announcement should be made after that.

The Prime Minister has noted the two reservations expressed by colleagues. H Committee will no doubt wish to address those points in particular.

She also believes that the question of a linkage with the MISC 104 work on inner cities, and the context of any announcement about grant-aided schools, should also be considered by the committee.

I am copying this to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Robert Gordon (Scottish Office), Colin Williams (Welsh Office) and Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

Mark Addison

Rob Smith Esq
Department of Education and Science.

CONFIDENTIAL

ECL

CONFIDENTIAL

CEBG

PRIME MINISTER

BF | CF
Awaiting OL comment.
MCT

BIASSED TEACHING AND POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

There is growing concern about the way in which politically controversial issues are handled by teachers in our schools and colleges, and I seek your agreement to the publication of a circular to local education authorities setting out the Government's view of the principles which should underlie teachers' conduct of this aspect of their work.

2. I have made clear in the past, in the House and elsewhere, that what is provided in schools and colleges should always be education and never political indoctrination, and I have stressed my willingness to look into complaints from parents who are worried about what is happening in a particular educational institution. I have received a number of such complaints, but very few have provided evidence of a quality which is capable of being pursued. At the same time the general anxiety on the issue has grown, and much was made of it at our most recent Party Conference.

3. It seems to me that it would now be right to invite the education service as a whole to agree a set of principles for the treatment of politically controversial issues which reflect the values of a free and open society; and I attach a draft circular and covering letter along those lines which I would propose, with your agreement, to send to the teacher and local authority associations and to the voluntary bodies in England for comment. Nicholas Edwards proposes to take similar action in Wales.

4. The publication of a draft circular in this form would commit us to following through to the publication of a substantive circular. I have no doubt that there will be lively discussion about the text of the draft circular,

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but I am confident that there will be much support for it and that few if any at the national level will come out against the propositions set out in it.

5. I have decided that the focus in our present action should be school pupils and young people under the age of majority. While I do not think we can be free from concern about the position in universities and polytechnics, any action in regard to them would have, I judge, to take a different form.

6. On timing, I think that it would now be right to wait until later this term to issue the draft circular; but even if there is continuing industrial action by the teachers at that stage, I would hope to send the draft circular out by Easter, with an accompanying Parliamentary announcement in the form of a written Answer.

7. I should be glad to know whether you are content with these proposals.

8. I am copying this minute to the Lord President, the Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Lord Privy Seal and to the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Environment.

KJ.

Department of Education
and Science
10 January 1986

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Draft letter to national associations

THE TREATMENT OF POLITICALLY CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

The Government shares the widely held view that preparation for the responsibilities of citizenship is one of education's principal functions; and that pupils and students under the age of majority therefore need to be introduced, as indeed they are, to those issues of a political character which they will come across in the course of their adult lives.

I am, however, aware of disquiet that certain politically controversial issues may sometimes be tackled in schools and colleges in a manner which amounts to indoctrination. The education service has a long and honourable tradition of upholding the principles of a free and open society. I am sure that all the partners in the service agree that this tradition must be upheld.

In my view the public have a right to be reassured on this score. I therefore propose to issue a circular containing a statement of principles on the lines of the attached drafts. The statement sets out afresh the principles which the partners in the education service have long adopted in discharging their functions. [TO ASSOCIATIONS: I believe therefore that your association would wish to endorse such a statement and to commend it to your members.] [TO CHURCHES: I believe therefore that you would wish to endorse such a statement and to commend it to diocesan boards, to governing bodies and to others who may be concerned.]

I should be glad to know whether you have comments on a circular on these lines and whether you are willing to commend

CONFIDENTIAL

the statement in it to your members. As in the case of all circulars issued in draft on my behalf, I would be willing to consider any suggestions you have for amending the text of the draft circular and the draft statement.

I am writing in similar terms to all those on the attached list. [This list will comprise the local authority associations, the school and FE teacher associations, the voluntary bodies who are our education partners, and the Society of Education Officers.]

CONFIDENTIAL

DRAFT CIRCULAR

The education service in this country has a long and honourable tradition of upholding the principles of a free and open society. The Secretary of State is concerned that this tradition should be upheld in all circumstances and at all times. Consultation has shown that his concern is widely shared.

The statement attached to this Circular has been the subject of consultation with the bodies concerned within the education service; it sets out the principles in accordance with which the Secretary of State intends to continue to exercise his statutory functions. He asks local education authorities and the governing bodies of schools and further education establishments to have regard likewise to the statement when they discharge their own responsibilities and in any guidance which they give to the teaching staff.

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Draft statement of principles

THE TREATMENT OF POLITICALLY CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

1. One of the principal functions of education is to prepare pupils and students for the active discharge of the responsibilities of citizenship. It has long been recognised that this means, among other things, that issues of a politically controversial character will inevitably figure in many parts of the curriculum and can arise spontaneously in any. In treating such issues the education service in this country applies the principles appropriate to a free and open society.

2. Their application has a positive aspect. It is part of the task of schools and colleges to promote the attitudes, knowledge and skills which are necessary for the preservation of our society's fundamental values, notably its commitment to parliamentary democracy, the freedom of the individual within the law, and the equality of all citizens under the law. Among the attitudes to be promoted are a rational approach to evidence and argument, both in forming opinions and in resolving differences, and respect for the right of others to hold their own opinions and to express them within the law; and pupils and students need to be equipped with the intellectual skills needed to defend and promote our society's fundamental values.

3. It follows that, within the limits set out above, schools and colleges should be ready, in the interests of good education, to tackle issues which are politically controversial. In doing this teaching staff should at all times seek to distinguish between fact and opinion, be ready to

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acknowledge personal bias, make clear that on matters of opinion views other than their own may be legitimately held, and encourage pupils and students to form their own conclusions on the basis of evidence and reflection and of discussion with others. How this is best done for pupils and students of varying maturity and understanding is a matter of professional judgment and calls for the exercise of professional responsibility.

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SL3ANJ

PRIME MINISTER

GRANT-AIDED SCHOOLS

You asked Sir Keith Joseph to work up his proposals for a feasibility study for establishing grant-aided schools.

Sir Keith has now consulted selected colleagues, and his report is at Flag A. He asks whether you would wish the proposal now to be considered at 'H' Committee before further exploratory work is undertaken (ie. with possible charitable sponsors). Oliver Letwin's advice is at Flag B.

Colleagues have reacted well to Sir Keith's proposal, and it seems sensible now to put the matter to 'H' for their approval, and on that basis to make an annoucement on the Government's plans.

There are also two policy points which Sir Keith raises at this stage. First, he proposes that an announcement on grant-aided schools should not be linked to MISC 104's work on the inner cities. On the other hand, Oliver Letwin believes that the proposals are particularly relevant to the inner city. Oliver's view that the demand for such places is likely to be highest in the cities must be right, and there is in any case no need to require that grant-aided schools can be considered only in relation to the inner city.

Secondly, there is a question as to whether the charging of a small fee should be part of the scheme. Sir Keith recommends not; Oliver disagrees.

If 'H' is to discuss the matter, you do not need to express a view on these points now unless you wished to.

Content that you should strongly support further exploration of the proposal and ask Sir Keith to put his ideas to 'H' for their endorsement, with a view to an announcement after that?

Duty Clerk

pp MARK ADDISON
10 January 1986

Yes MT

PRIME MINISTER 10 January 1986

GRANT-AIDED SCHOOLS

The proposal to establish a dozen grant-aided primary schools has received general support from Ministers outside DES, and should now be explored in depth. Since this will involve talking to private sector entrepreneurs and charities, the move will be public knowledge fairly rapidly.

The questions are:

1. Should an official announcement that the Government is considering the scheme be made in due course to avoid inaccurate rumours and leaks?

2. If so, should the announcement stress the inner city aspect of the proposal (as MISC 104 wanted), or make no particular reference to inner cities (as Keith Joseph prefers)?

3. Should the proposal to charge a small fee for pupils attending the schools be dropped (as Keith suggests), or should this be left as a possible feature of the scheme?

Announcement

We believe that it would be sensible to make a low-key announcement in due course: this would put an accurate account on record, and would give our supporters an opportunity to start persuading people of the merits of the proposal.

Inner City vs General Policy

The education seminar showed both that there was an urgent call from your friends for change in inner city schooling and that change in the shires would be unpopular. It therefore seems entirely sensible to aim this proposal primarily at the cities, and to announce it at the same time as the other MISC 104 policies. The scheme could later be expanded to cover other areas.

The DES say that it may be difficult to find people willing to start such schools in the inner cities. We disagree: we believe that there are plenty of people who would love to provide an escape route from ghastly inner city schools. But the only way to tell is to try: it will only become clear whether people will come forward when DES go looking.

Charges

Elizabeth House is characteristically incapable of understanding what this scheme is really about. They describe the nominal fee as "an earnest of parents' intent". What they fail to see - and have not explained to other Ministers - is that the scheme was meant to create a middle way between public and private provision. If people are willing to put a bit of their own money into education, on top of the amount provided by the state, why shouldn't they be allowed to do so? True, this would mean that the schools had slightly more funds per capita than the average maintained school: but no-one would regard this as grossly unfair if parents had contributed out of their own pockets. There could easily be a means-tested rebate of the fee (with a maximum rebate of 80% like the new maximum Housing Benefit) for any parents who had an income below a given level; this would avoid accusations of 'schooling for the rich' (though a fee of £50 a term could hardly be regarded as prohibitive, even if unrebated).

Conclusion

We recommend that you should:

1. strongly support further exploration of the proposal;

2. ask Keith Joseph to announce when the other MISC 104 policies for the inner cities are unveiled that the Government is considering the establishment of grant-aided schools;

3. retain the charging of a small fee as a possible element of the scheme, with rebates for poorer parents.

OLIVER LETWIN

PRIME MINISTER

GRANT AIDED SCHOOLS

1. With your agreement, I consulted selected colleagues on a possible modest experiment in establishing about a dozen new grant aided primary schools as described in the paper at Annex A. I did this, following correspondence, at a meeting on 4 November (a note of which is at Annex B), and now report to you on the outcome, bearing in mind also the interest shown in this in the context of MISC 104's discussions on inner city problems.

2. Generally, my colleagues found the proposal interesting and, in principle, worth exploring further. They made two particular reservations, however, which I should mention here.

(a) My colleagues saw difficulties in the nominal fee I had envisaged as an earnest of parents' interest. These could jeopardise the success of the scheme. As the fee is not a central feature, I would now omit it.

An 'education credit' could be substituted (i.e. the voucher under a new name)

(b) Before the schools could open their doors, all will turn on the willingness of charitable bodies and entrepreneurs to volunteer themselves as promoters for these untried establishments. This will be affected by not only the climate of opinion but also the fine print of the final scheme. If we decide in principle to proceed, further work will be needed on the details of a scheme as will exploration, in confidence, with likely promoters before any announcement is contemplated.

3. You wished to consider whether the proposal should be further considered in H Committee before any such further exploratory work. Since then it has also been suggested in MISC 104 that grant aided schools might be an integral part of our inner

city policies. I think there would be significant difficulties in this linkage, for two main reasons.

(a) While I would hope that some of the dozen grant aided primary schools could be established in inner city areas, to limit the experiment in this way would remove its intended potential for establishing models of good practice of general relevance.

(b) It may be too difficult to persuade promoters to take the risk of establishing new grant aided schools in the particularly difficult conditions of the inner cities where the LEA is likely to be hostile.

4. In short, I recommend that the proposal should in the first instance be pursued as a general one, and not primarily for the inner cities; the latter course would risk stifling the proposal at birth without at this stage helping in the inner cities.

5. If you would like to have a word about all this, I am of course at your disposal.

6. I am sending copies of this minute to the Secretaries of State for Wales and Scotland.

K.J.

Department of Education
and Science

9 January 1986

Annex A

1

CONFIDENTIAL

Grant-aided primary schools

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Education and Science

1. I ask my colleagues to agree that I should pursue the feasibility of a controversial experiment, designed to help raise standards in primary education, with a view to announcing in our next Election Manifesto our intention to implement it in the next Parliament. If the experiment succeeded, some 2,500 more children than at present would go to good independent primary schools. Parental choice would be increased to that extent. Moreover it would then be open to us to apply the lessons and benefits of the experiment to a larger number of primary age pupils.

2. The proposal is to create a new category of grant-aided primary schools (GA schools), catering for day pupils aged 5-11, which would be privately owned, maintained financially by the Secretary of State and run on principles and lines approved by him. GA schools would be part of the independent sector, but pupils educated in them would normally proceed to LEA-maintained secondary schools. They would be intended as a half-way house between the maintained and independent school sectors and a means of influencing the nature and quality of the maintained sector in the long term.

3. The purpose of GA schools would be to experiment with the circumstances in which a curriculum based on the policies in the recent White Paper "Better Schools" (Cmnd 9469) could be effectively delivered by qualified teachers to children throughout the ability range. One experimental feature of GA schools would be that all parents, except the poorest, would pay a fee of, say, £50 a term as an earnest of their commitment to their children's education and to the school. Other areas

for experiment would include the teachers' pay (freeing the schools from the constraints of the Burnham scales), pupil teacher ratios and class sizes, teaching approaches and methods.

4. So that such experimentation remained relevant to the generality of primary schools, GA schools (1) would be obliged to admit children from their neighbourhood without regard to ability or religious denomination; and would (2) receive from the Secretary of State for their current expenditure in respect of each pupil sums corresponding to the national average current expenditure per primary pupil (including debt charges) incurred by LEAs, with perhaps some local adjustment to reflect eg inner-city factors. The income from fees would be additional but GA schools would not be allowed to charge more than the prescribed fee, although, like LEA-maintained schools, they could receive voluntary contributions from parents and others; (3) would also be required to admit as soon as practicable not less than about 200 pupils, the minimum desirable size for an educationally effective primary school proposed in "Better Schools"; (4) would through their proprietors be responsible for all capital expenditure, though their income from grant and fees could be used to service it.

5. Since existing successful independent schools would scarcely wish to become financially dependent on the Secretary of State, and unsuccessful ones are unlikely to merit his support, GA schools would be new creations. It would be difficult under the scheme to earn a commercial return on capital invested in a GA school, so that GA schools are more likely to be promoted by a charitable trust, particularly one with experience in running schools, than by an entrepreneur. By encouraging the establishment of GA schools in any part of the country, including city areas where parents are dissatisfied with LEA-maintained primary schools, one might aim at setting up some 12 schools initially.

6. The financial support required from the Secretary of State for 12 GA schools of at least 200 pupils each would be of the order of £2m a year, but the cost could be greater if the schools

attracted more pupils than the minimum or were situated in high-cost inner city areas, or took a long time to reach the minimum (see para 8 (3) below). We would need to consider how to find this money in the appropriate public expenditure survey; but the costs could not be offset by savings in LEA-current expenditure, since LEAs could not quickly secure from the places not taken up by the pupils in question savings which would match the cost of each place at a GA school.

7. Since GA schools would be substantially maintained with voted money, the Secretary of State would have to satisfy himself and Parliament, in an atmosphere of controversy, that they would, and actually did, spend the money effectively and secured the standards laid down by him. The arrangements for achieving these objectives would make significant extra calls on DES manpower, including HMI, which could not be met within existing limits.

8. As the main paymaster, the holder of my office would be investing a good deal of political credit in "his" GA schools. The success of the experiment would depend critically on:

(1) The effectiveness of the likely opposition from LEAs and teachers who would, for example, resent the application to the independent sector of money which they would claim could be better applied to the maintained sector in the interest of raising standards.

(2) The willingness of promoters to risk money and enter into a politically controversial scheme. We could not guarantee them against the political risk that a hostile Government might abandon the scheme, though we could make abandonment more troublesome for such a Government by promoting the scheme under primary legislation; such legislation is not technically necessary because the scheme could almost certainly be operated through regulations made under existing powers.

(3) The ability of the Secretary of State to pick for support proposals which would actually result in good

schools - the quality of the head teacher would be crucial. Once he had committed himself to supporting a school, he would in practice find it difficult to withdraw support unless its likely failure to achieve the required size and quality become indisputable; as long as there was a prospect of its becoming successful, the Secretary of State might not be able to avoid giving additional financial support in order to prevent the collapse of a promising project.

9. Since the success of this experimental scheme would then justify its wider application, we would have to be ready to defend our intention of so applying it if it were indeed successful. The public debate about the scheme would therefore relate to such matters as the desirability of extending the independent sector by centralist means and of charging a fee for a State-maintain school. We need to consider the compatibility of the scheme and its wider application within our other educational policies and our policies for local government.

10. In my view, we cannot decide definitively whether to go ahead with an experimental scheme of GA schools until we have explored its feasibility further. Such exploration would require fairly detailed discussions with possible promoters, which in their interest and for the sake of the scheme should at present be conducted in confidence. I have taken preliminary soundings, in strict confidence, from the Haberdashers Company, who run primary and secondary schools in the independent sector and are also responsible for voluntary aided schools in the maintained sector. Their initial reaction suggests that charitable bodies like themselves might be willing to promote and operate GA schools despite the political risk if the terms were right. I would like to pursue the matter with the Haberdashers Company (and probably others) in more detail. But I do not think it right to draw them into substantive discussions, although these would remain without commitment on either side, unless I could tell them that, subject to feasibility, the Government wished to proceed along the lines set out in this paper.

11. I therefore invite my colleagues to agree that the scheme outlined above is acceptable in principle; that I should pursue its feasibility on the basis set out in para 10; and that I should report the outcome to enable us to decide whether to proceed with it. If we proceeded and the experiment proved successful, I envisage the introduction of an analogous scheme for raising standards in secondary education. The much greater scale and complexity of launching new secondary schools make it desirable to experiment with primary schools in the first instance.

ANNEX B

SB05 22/11

CONFIDENTIAL

GRANT AIDED SCHOOLS

NOTE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING ON 4 NOVEMBER 1985

Present:

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph MP
Mr C Patten MP
Mr R Dunn MP

The Rt Hon Lord Young
Mr J Moore MP
Mr M Ancram MP
Mr M Robinson MP

Mr E R Morgan
Mr R L Smith

1. The Secretary of State welcomed colleagues to the meeting which was to discuss whether it seemed worth pursuing further the proposal for an experimental scheme of grant aided primary schools described in his letter of 15 July. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and for Trade and Industry, and the Party Chairman were unable to attend but had circulated written comments.

2. The Secretary of State briefly outlined the nature of the scheme. It was envisaged that there would be about a dozen new independent primary schools, in a wide variety of locations, as like as possible to maintained primary schools except that the schools would not be bound by Burnham scales and gradings, and there would be no LEA control. The aim was to explore whether, in ways that should in principle be attainable by any maintained primary school, the national policies for the curriculum could be delivered more effectively in the classroom: the Secretary of State felt keenly that too few people realised generally how much better primary education could be.

3. In general discussion, the following main points were made.

a. Twelve schools providing some 2,500 places could not be seen nationally as having any significant effect on widening parental choice. Given the resource implications of new provision, it was unfortunate that the nature of the experimentation desired meant it could not be carried out in maintained schools.

b. Secondary education might be perceived by both parents and likely provides as the more needy area of experimentation The greater complexity of secondary schooling and its higher costs could make it difficult to launch the general experiment in this way. If successful, though, it might be extended to secondary schools subsequently subject, as would any expansion in the primary sector, to resource constraints. In any case, the assisted places scheme could be seen as a response to concerns about secondary schooling: primary provision had not had the same sort of exposure.

c. Consistent with the scheme's general aims, schools would not be permitted to select pupils on the basis of ability or religious affiliation. Like county schools, they would be required to accept all-comers: only if they were over-subscribed could they select from the applicants and only then on objective factors such as sibling links and proximity of home to school. There would inevitably be some pre-selection in that only interested parents would apply is the first place. It would be unfortunate for the experiment if these schools came to be dominated by minority groups.

d. There seemed a potential presentational problem over the proposed fee of £50 per term intended as an earnest of parents' interest. If fee income supplemented the intended per capita funding (set by reference to unit costs in maintained schools), the experiment could be perceived as demonstrating only that schools could be better if unit costs were higher by the 20% that the parental fee represented (even if higher unit costs could be defended, e.g. by reference to the loss of LEAs' central purchasing powers). If, on the other hand, fee income only brought the unit funding up to the intended level, the experiment might be seen essentially as one in ways of reducing the public funds applied to education. A good case could be made for arguing that the experiment could be seen as "proving" something about the nature of provision only if the funding (except for any voluntary contributions) were set at national levels. On balance, the meeting came down against a fee.

e. The schools would not be money-spinners and it was open to doubt whether entrepreneurs or charities would find the package, with its significant constraints on their freedom of action, sufficiently attractive to risk their prestige and capital resources in the venture. It was clear that the small print of any eventual scheme would be closely studied before interest in principle became more substantial. One of the details would be the intended long-term future for these schools.

f. The Education Act already gave general direct grant powers to the Secretary of State under Regulations. Like the assisted places scheme, however, it would seem desirable to give these schools the greater protection of specific primary legislation. There could, of course, be no absolute guarantee against the action of some future hostile government: if the schools were successful, though, they should also be protected by intense local goodwill.

g. The scheme would certainly be controversial, regardless of the eventual line taken on the fee. Opponents would characterise the scheme as a distraction or the thin end of the wedge, and would argue that the resources would be better spent on existing schools.

4. The Secretary of State thanked his colleagues for their views. He would reflect on these matters and, later in the year, report his tentative conclusions to the Prime Minister who would then decide whether the proposal should be explored further in H Committee.

5. Both Mr Ancram and Mr Robinson asked for it to be noted that, if a feasible scheme could be worked out, Scotland and Wales would be interested in participating.

Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON SE1 7PH

December 1985

09. 1. AM 8 6

B

PRIME MINISTER 9 January 1986

GRANT-AIDED SCHOOLS

The proposal to establish a dozen grant-aided primary schools has received general support from Ministers outside DES, and should now be explored in depth. Since this will involve talking to private sector entrepreneurs and charities, the move will be public knowledge fairly rapidly.

The questions are:

1. Should an official announcement that the Government is considering the scheme be made in due course to avoid inaccurate rumours and leaks?

2. If so, should the announcement stress the inner city aspect of the proposal (as MISC 104 wanted), or make no particular reference to inner cities (as Keith Joseph prefers)?

3. Should the proposal to charge a small fee for pupils attending the schools be dropped (as Keith suggests), or should this be left as a possible feature of the scheme?

Announcement

We believe that it would be sensible to make a low-key announcement in due course: this would put an accurate account on record, and would give our supporters an opportunity to start persuading people of the merits of the proposal.

Inner City vs General Policy

The education seminar showed both that there was an urgent call from your friends for change in inner city schooling and that change in the shires would be unpopular. It therefore seems entirely sensible to aim this proposal primarily at the cities, and to announce it at the same time as the other MISC 104 policies. The scheme could later be expanded to cover other areas.

The DES say that it may be difficult to find people willing to start such schools in the inner cities. We disagree: we believe that there are plenty of people who would love to provide an escape route from ghastly inner city schools. But the only way to tell is to try: it will only become clear whether people will come forward when DES go looking.

Charges

Elizabeth House is characteristically incapable of understanding what this scheme is really about. They describe the nominal fee as "an earnest of parents' intent". What they fail to see - and have not explained to other Ministers - is that the scheme was meant to create a middle way between public and private provision. If people are willing to put a bit of their own money into education, on top of the amount provided by the state, why shouldn't they be allowed to do so? True, this would mean that the schools had slightly more funds per capita than the average maintained school: but no-one would regard this as grossly unfair if parents had contributed out of their own pockets. There could easily be a means-tested rebate of the fee (with a maximum rebate of 80% like the new maximum Housing Benefit) for any parents who had an income below a given level; this would avoid accusations of 'schooling for the rich' (though a fee of £50 a term could hardly be regarded as prohibitive, even if unrebated).

Conclusion

We recommend that you should:

1. strongly support further exploration of the proposal;

2. ask Keith Joseph to announce, when the other MISC 104 policies for the inner cities are unveiled, that the Government is considering the establishment of grant-aided schools;

3. retain the charging of a small fee as a possible element of the scheme, with rebates for poorer parents.

OLIVER LETWIN

JPM02D4

cc BG

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Iain Mackinnon Esq
Private Secretary to Lord Young
Secretary of State for Employment
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NF

NBPM.

2 January 1986

Dear Iain,

As we discussed earlier in the week I attach for information a copy of the main text of the speech that Sir Keith Joseph is to make at the North of England education conference on Saturday 4 January. I understand that the draft text was circulated for comment at official level during the week before Christmas.

The Secretary of State will be considering in the course of tomorrow what he will say in addition about teachers' pay.

I am copying this letter and the attachment to Rachael Lomax and John Mogg, to John Graham and Colin Williams, and to Mark Addison and Joan Macnaughton.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Smith

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Elizabeth House York Road London SE1 7PH
Telephone 01-934 9880 (24 hrs) Telex 23171

NEWS

NOT FOR USE BEFORE
12.00 HOURS ON SATURDAY
4 JANUARY 1986

1/86

FIRMS URGED TO IMPROVE TRAINING POLICIES
Education Secretary at North of England Education Conference

British firms were today urged by Education Secretary Sir Keith Joseph to do much more to improve their training policies and personnel management so that they could become more competitive in the world market.

Sir Keith told the North of England Education Conference in Huddersfield that by comparison with their competitors British firms on the whole contented themselves with an under-trained workforce.

"They may save money in the short term but lose markets later," he said. "Many go out of business.

"Whole areas of the home market have been surrendered to the Japanese, the Americans and the rest of Europe. There is evidence for a causal connection between our lack of competitiveness and the failure of our firms to insist on a properly trained workforce and to take steps to secure it."

Sir Keith said that a combination of low investment in research and development and training, and higher than inflation pay increases, could prove to be a suicide pact between employers and workforces in the longer term.

The Government could not stand aside and ignore the problems. The lack of competitiveness of firms would, unless corrected, destroy jobs in the UK and make people poorer, said Sir Keith.

MEETING MARKET NEEDS

Many in the education service and many of its customers were striving to make education and training more responsive to market needs, said Sir Keith. The Government had a special role as a facilitator at the national level and as a pump-primer at the regional and local level.

One example of this was the £43 million, three year, Engineering and Technology Programme to increase the output of graduate engineers and technologists in return for greater help by firms in the form of grants of equipment and loans of teaching staff.

Another was the Youth Training Scheme which was intended to lay the foundations for a universal scheme of work-related education and basic training for all 16 and 17 year olds who were not staying on in full-time education.

INDUSTRY NEEDS CULTURAL CHANGE

"These are mere beginnings," said Sir Keith. "You and the world of education can do a great deal to help secure the cultural change that is needed in British industry.

"I would ask you to encourage further education colleges to:

- market their courses
- think out with the help of representatives of local firms what type of course is most needed by local employers
- check the design of those courses with the best advice available from national sources
- sell the courses to local employers
- adapt courses over time in the light of experience and the reactions of students and employers to them.

"This is the way to secure the right relationship between the worlds of education and employment."

Sir Keith dismissed fears that the Government's concern with the performance of the economy would enforce a "narrow vocationalism" on the education system.

He believed the world of education was right to resist pressure from employers to produce narrow specialists to fill immediate vacancies.

"Our job is not to produce narrow specialists for jobs that technical change may soon destroy. It is rather to ensure that post-16 courses provide breadth and balance as well as prepare students for a technical career. It is the responsibility of the employer to train his staff - often in further and higher

education institutions - in specialised skills."

Sir Keith said the principles of breadth, balance and relevance - outlined in the White Paper 'Better Schools' - applied as much to post-16 education as to the school curriculum.

"I now ask whether local education authorities should start to give more attention to curricula in vocational education and whether you think it would be helpful for the Department to stimulate more discussion at national level about the common features and necessary differentiation of such courses."

Sir Keith recognised that work was already being done to provide a more effective and efficient non-advanced further education service - including the joint efficiency study being carried out by the DES and local authority associations.

But last year management conceded an end-loaded pay settlement for further education lecturers which did not secure the savings needed to finance it, said Sir Keith.

"The savings have to be achieved and the Government will plan future expenditure on the basis that they will be."

Sir Keith said that the further and higher education service could play a major part in helping firms to keep their employees up-to-date with technological developments and other changes through PICKUP (post experience vocational education and training).

But this had always been a marginal activity, said Sir Keith.

"I would like to set institutions a target for at least a five-fold increase in this self financing activity."

Speaking about 1986 being Industry Year, Sir Keith said:

"Let us all resolve to make 1986, not just another year with a special name and special activities - here today and gone tomorrow - but one after which we shall be able to look back and say that something changed.

"Let 1986 be the year which saw the end, once and for all, of the damaging estrangement between education at all levels on the one hand and industry and commerce on the other," said Sir Keith.

NOTE TO EDITORS

The full text of Sir Keith's speech is attached.

NORTH OF ENGLAND EDUCATION CONFERENCE,
4 JANUARY 1986

SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE, THE RT HON SIR KEITH JOSEPH MP, ON "EDUCATION AND TRAINING POST-16"

Introduction

1. My previous speeches to the North of England Conference have been devoted mainly to education in schools; and what I had to say, on education up to 16, especially at Sheffield two years ago, was developed and consolidated in the White Paper "Better Schools" published last March. Last year I cast my net more widely, to talk about teachers in all sectors of education, though still my emphasis was on the schools. This year my theme is education and training post-sixteen with the exception of higher education about which I have recently spoken to other audiences.

2. From 5 up to 16 education is compulsory - reflecting the general view of society that all adult citizens should have received a certain fundamental level of education depending on their ability but otherwise regardless of what they are going to do in life. Beyond sixteen education and training are voluntary and the education and training systems respond to student and employer demand. There will always be students who will choose their studies for scholarly reasons or for preparation for a professional career: or as a mind sharpening and widening background to careers of many sorts - and it is of obvious benefit to society that they do so. Some young people of high ability will have as their ambition a business of their own and they may or may not choose to enter full-time education on the way to that goal. These budding entrepreneurs are of special value to a thriving economy.

3. Then there are employees of all types ranging across every level of skill and responsibility. To be competitive our firms need a steady supply of new people trained in a variety of skills. Market forces ought to achieve that supply. Firms have every incentive to equip themselves to be competitive. One would expect each firm to make an appreciation of the skills and qualities they need for staff of all types - managers, technologists, technicians, craftsmen and clerks - and then adjust their recruitment, pay, promotion, training and updating policies to attract and retain that mix of staff. One would expect young people choosing their careers to respond to such incentives. And one would expect firms to supplement general education at school, and further education and training provided by the FE colleges and polytechnics and universities, by more specific training within their own premises - or elsewhere under their own contractual arrangements.

4. The best firms in this country do in practice exactly as I have described - and they are competitive. IBM (UK), Marks and Spencers, BP, Shell, the National Westminster Bank, Sainsbury's and others are well known for the excellence of their personnel management and training policies. But, in general, for industry, and commerce in the United Kingdom as a whole, market forces fail to produce such a benign result. By comparison with their competitors British firms on the whole content themselves with an under-trained workforce. They may save money in the short-term but lose markets later. Many go out of business. Whole areas of the home market have been surrendered to the Japanese, the Americans and the rest of Europe. There is evidence for a causal connection between our lack of competitiveness and the failure of our firms to insist on a properly trained workforce and to take steps to secure it.

5. Another dimension of the problem is that pay settlements in the private sector are running ahead of increases in productivity with the result that, at a stable exchange rate, our firms are bound to lose competitiveness continuously. The reaction of business to this phenomenon has been very complacent so far. We hear much talk of an increased willingness of British managers to manage. That improvement - and I do not for a moment deny that it has taken place - needs to go a lot further if our prosperity is to be sustained and our employment increased. The way to reconcile higher earnings with profitable competitiveness is via higher productivity. We have on average ample scope for higher productivity because our average productivity is far below that of firms that compete with us. British managers and union leaders could, moreover, with advantage to jobs, competitiveness and profitability, study the example of our overseas rivals. A combination of low investment

in research and development and training, and higher than inflation pay increases, could prove to be a suicide pact between employers and workforces in the longer term. Some American firms and unions are negotiating survival packs instead: lower pay increases in return for increased investment by firms in training. I know of no examples in this country and I wonder why the unions have not sought to further their members' interests in this way. Where such a bargain is struck a firm replaces an increase in money costs that threatens competitiveness by an investment perhaps of equal current cost - but one in future productivity resulting from a better trained workforce.

6. The problem which I have described places a Conservative Minister, who believes in markets as I do, in something of a dilemma. The Socialist solution would no doubt be to put large sums of the taxpayers' money

into education and training schemes designed by administrative officials and professional teachers and trainers. Such people are not always well qualified to know what it is that business needs in order to be competitive and they lack the incentive that an entrepreneur has to get the answers right. The cost of large state-financed schemes adds to the fiscal burdens on firms and individuals. It is not a policy in which I can have confidence.

7. And yet the Government cannot stand aside and ignore the problem. The lack of competitiveness of our firms will, unless corrected, destroy jobs in the UK and make our people poorer. If we do not hold and win back markets we shall lose such prosperity as we now have. The Government clearly perceives the need for a modification of cultural attitudes. Yet exhorting firms to change their behaviour is of limited value - even so, I intend to go on exhorting. Tax incentives cost money

which has to be made up by increases in other taxes - and they are expensive because they benefit training schemes that would have taken place anyway as well as new ones created in response to the new incentives.

8. Many in the education service and many of its customers are now striving to make education and training more responsive to market needs and I shall refer to some examples in a moment. The Government has a rather special part, as a facilitator at the national level and as a pump-primer at the regional and local level. Let me take as an example the engineering and technology programme which I announced last March - an extra £43 million over three years to increase the output of graduate engineers and technologists in return for greater help by firms in the form of grants of equipment and loans of teaching staff. Another is the two year YTS announced by Tom King on the same day which

is intended to lay the foundations for a universal scheme of work-related education and basic training for all our sixteen and seventeen year olds who are not staying on in full-time education.

9. These are mere beginnings. You and the world of education can do a great deal to help secure the cultural change that is needed in British industry. I would ask you to encourage FE colleges to market their courses; to think out with the help of representatives of local firms what type of course is most needed by local employers; to check the design of those courses with the best advice available from national sources including the Engineering Council, the validating bodies such as BTEC and CGLI, the Departments of Employment, Trade and Industry, my own Department and the Manpower Services Commission; and then to sell the courses to local employers; and finally to adapt them over time in the light

of experience and the reactions of students and employers to them. This is the way to secure the right relationship between the worlds of education and employment.

10. The Government has much work to do. Among other things, we need a policy for management education and training. The quality of management is crucial - for big firms and small; for the manager who is an employee and for the manager who owns his own business. The lack of training in management is said to be one of the weaknesses of British firms compared with their competitors overseas. I believe that is right. It may be that we need more managers with MBAs; it may be that in-company or outside short courses on a wide scale would bring more benefit. I am consulting employers and the education service widely on this issue at the present time and I hope that, with the support of my colleagues at the DTI and the Department of Employment,

I shall be able to make a policy statement on management education later in the year.

Breadth, balance and relevance

11. In discussions of this sort, much is heard about the conflict between education for personal development and education for the world of work. Educationalists express anxieties that the Government's concern with the performance of the economy will enforce a "narrow vocationalism" on our education system.

12. I do not believe that there are valid grounds for such an anxiety. May I remind you of what was said in paragraph 47 of "Better Schools":

> "In 1984, the Secretary of State for Education and Science asked selected employers' organisations to identify

those capabilities which their members look to the schools to have fostered in recruits to industry and commerce. Respondents gave widespread support for a broadly-based education in which academic achievement should be complemented by the capacity to apply knowledge and by the development of personal qualities and skills, including motivation and commitment, self-discipline and reliability, confidence, enthusiasm and initiative, flexibility and the ability to work both individually and as part of a team."

13. Now these are all qualities which are important for the general development of the individual. They are also what employers want the schools to concentrate on. And in our discussions about post-16 education and training with employers' representatives at the national level, we receive similar advice - an emphasis on the need to give students a broad foundation in their subjects.

14. There are times when individual employers, and occasionally employer representatives at the national level, ask the FE colleges, polytechnics and universities to produce narrow specialists in order to fill immediate vacancies. I believe that we in the world of education are right to resist such pressures. Our job is not to produce narrow specialists for jobs that technical change may soon destroy. It is rather to ensure that post-16 courses provide breadth and balance as well as prepare students for a technical career. It is the responsibility of the employer to train his staff - often in further and higher education institutions - in specialised skills.

15. Breadth, balance and relevance are all fundamental principles of our policies for the curriculum up to sixteen. They are also vitally important post-16 although they require a fresh interpretation in their application to curricula for older students. They underline

a number of the Government's policies for post-16 education both in schools and in the FE system.

Examination reforms

16. Our reforms of the national examinations at 16+, 17+ and 18+ are all of a piece with the changes which we seek to bring about in the curriculum; together they are aimed at giving pupils and students a more balanced and more relevant education.

17. At present too much of the education offered in examination courses - not, perhaps, as much as used to be the case, but nevertheless too much - has or attempts an academic flavour. As you know, I am the last man to use the word "academic" in a pejorative sense, and I do not do so here; nevertheless, we do need to encourage a swing of the balance

in order to support the desperate national need for enterprise.

18. The ablest pupils and students can do splendid things academically, but are often given little insight into practical applications: we are better at winning Nobel Prizes than at winning customers - and we need to do both. And across the spectrum of ability, many are insufficiently challenged and therefore do not do the best that they can, with the result that many become bored and disillusioned. Most pupils and students need more insight into the practical and the applied; many need to learn <u>fewer facts</u> and to understand more of what they do learn.

19. The GCSE examinations - which will be taken by candidates over 16 as well as at the age of 16 - will be good for enterprise and for employment because they will give

due weight to the practical application of knowledge and understanding and will place new emphasis on reasoning and problem-solving. The new CPVE has a strong vocational bias as a foundation for further specialisation. But for those mainly following A level courses, much remains to be done. Our pattern of education at this level (south of the Border) is I think uniquely narrow among the main European countries and our other industrial competitors: we need to secure a more balanced education for those on A level courses, whether they are aiming at higher education or directly at employment.

20. We have made a start in our decision to introduce the new AS level examinations in 1989. AS level courses will widen the choice of subject combinations available to A level students, and by this very fact help to prepare them better for adult life

and employment. Although there will be no compulsion, I hope that these students will make as much use as possible of courses which contrast with their main A level study. It will help to secure this if the courses themselves are appropriate to the non-specialist: for example, practically useful rather than literary Italian, Spanish, French and German; practical and applied mathematics and science.

21. As for A levels themselves, the Government acknowledges that they set standards of excellence which need to be preserved. Equally, the principles of breadth, balance and relevance should apply also to courses at this level. I welcome the start which the GCE Boards and the Standing Conference on University Entrance have made in developing cores of content for the 11 most popular subjects: this provides a useful basis for further developments.

22. And some of those developments are indeed interesting. I have time for only one or two examples. Cambridge's Technology A level has been in operation for several years and is well respected. London's Design and Technology A level has a module on computer-aided engineering which encourages projects with industry. In foreign languages the JMB has a new common syllabus at A level which will place emphasis on practical language skills. And earlier this year the Joint Mathematical Council held a conference to consider the promotion of a new A level mathematics course that would take full account of changes in the place of mathematics in the modern world and of the widespread presence of computers in schools: I am pleased that the Department was able to give some financial assistance to this conference.

23. All this is only a beginning. I am sure that the discussions among those concerned

to improve A level courses will continue; and most particularly I urge schools and colleges to use the new courses, and I ask higher education institutions, professional bodies and employers to give them the credit that they fully deserve.

NAFE: curricula

24. A great deal is happening on curriculum and examinations for other client groups. The last decade has been a period of rapid change in the environment of non-advanced further education. I expect Mr de Ville's Review Group to recommend important improvements in the structure of vocational qualifications in order to create a simpler framework and better opportunities for the individual to move from one level to another, or to other vocational areas, without unnecessary repetition or delay.

25. We should not, however, let new structures or the pressure of events distract us from preserving and developing the kind of curricula that have served us well in the mainstream of vocational education and training. MSC has a role to play, not only as an agent of change in improving the marketing and the pattern of courses to meet local needs, but also as a proxy for employers' views on the curriculum. Leadership in curriculum change must come from within the education system. The system must adapt to meet changing needs while maintaining standards and successful practice.

26. The second point is important. I said on another occasion that I was impatient for change in NAFE. Ideas can outlive their usefulness and any system can become a prisoner of its past if it believes that what it already does well is automatically what all its customers want. New kinds of students need new approaches;

and in particular those who have not previously taken advantage of what FE has to offer present a difficult challenge. Many colleges have responded well to the challenge of the YTS. It would, however, be mistaken to jettison the combination of training, relevant vocational and general education and work experience which have been robust and effective components of traditional apprenticeship and Joint Committee programmes. Just before Christmas, an article in 'Education' referred to a Chief Education Officer (long since retired) who emphasised the importance of telling the difference between established trends and mere fashion. It is easy to sloganise about curriculum change in FE. Those of us who give guidance to the FE system must beware of confusing fashionable slogans with the careful thought necessary to secure real improvements.

27. For example, it is plain that the education and training system needs to come to grips

with new approaches to assessment and certification. In particular, if we are to make the best of the opportunities created by the Youth Training Scheme, it will be necessary to think through the implications of assessing and giving credit to achievement in work-based assignments and in the course of work experience. But good intentions are no substitute for rigour if we are to take matters forward. No useful purpose is served by expressing unfocussed aspirations or by devising schemes of assessment which incorporate no practicable method for controlling standards. The value of the work-related route to qualifications and the place of skill training and supervised work experience is clearly established. This does not mean ignoring the need for a sound theoretical knowledge or doing without an effective system of quality control.

28. I said earlier that the principles of breadth, balance and relevance apply as much

to post-16 education as to the education of pupils aged 5-16. It seems to me that a vocational course achieves the necessary breadth and balance when it combines general education with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the chosen field of occupation. For the 16-19 age group I would emphasise the importance of developing as an individual and as a citizen as well as developing further the speaking, writing, and mathematical skills and the capacity for independent learning which are necessary for any future employment and provide a foundation for continuing education and training. And I would want to add that all post-16 curricula should, as far as possible, provide opportunities for acquiring some experience and a better understanding of scientific method, good design and information technology. I would want them also to have a good appreciation of business and economic activity, of how

to tackle practical problems as part of a team effort and how to set targets and achieve results.

29. The best vocational courses display most of these characteristics. They are found in business studies (where information technology has had a marked impact) and in education and training for agriculture, the hotel and catering industry and for child and community care. The main challenge is to combine breadth, in the sense in which I have just described it, with an approach which motivates young people who are relatively less interested in concepts and formal learning. I commend the progress made by the CGLI towards restructuring craft studies so that young people can choose between traditional approaches and those incorporated in the Youth Training Scheme, and I am glad that a work-based variant of the CPVE is currently being developed.

30. Vocational curricula are already highly differentiated: indeed the elegant variations are so numerous that the system is less cost-effective than it might be. One result of the entrepreneurial tradition is high unit costs. I believe these could be brought down without undue restraint on choice. I hope that a new structure of vocational qualifications will eliminate excessively narrow curricula. Quite apart from considerations of efficiency they are unlikely to be the best preparation for an uncertain future with frequent changes of employment.

31. A moment ago I spoke about leadership in curriculum change. Over the last 5 years the Department and HMI have set out their stall for the 5-16 school curriculum and LEAs have published their own statements of policy. I now ask whether LEAs should start to give more attention to curricula

in vocational education and whether you think it would be helpful for the Department to stimulate more discussion at national level about the common features and necessary differentiation of such courses.

NAFE: students and staff

32. Before moving on I want to refer to the students and to the staff in further education.

33. The system aims to realise individual potential. This may be a time-worn aim, but it is no less valid for having long been valid. Of course the variety of needs and demands is very large; and the consequence is a complicated pattern of provision. This puts pressure on good information, guidance and counselling. It is an essential element in better marketing.

34. There is no virtue in making the system so simple that it can easily be described to an uninterested observer. The system has to be complex to serve its customers. But there is virtue in enabling the customers to understand those bits which concern them. That kind of intelligibility will be helped by greater coherence in the pattern of qualifications. It is also important that LEAs give young people and their parents clear and impartial information to make the right choice. One simple device - not yet universal - is a booklet which lists the post-16 institutions and the courses they provide, backed up by a programme of visits to schools. I hope that it will be increasingly recognised - by pupils, parents and teachers alike - that for some young people the best route to higher education is through vocational qualifications. Repeating "academic" O and A levels for the sake of prestige and with small chance of success can actually set back a young person's career.

35. It is important, if we are to serve students well and to use resources responsibly, that students should be accepted only for courses appropriate to their needs and abilities. We are not doing our job properly unless the overwhelming majority of students pursue their studies to a successful conclusion. High drop out or failure is not only wasteful, but damaging to students and teachers alike.

36. As in all parts of the education system the volume and rate of change are putting pressures on staff. I share with the professional associations and others the view that staff development is a key to effectiveness and efficiency in many circumstances. NAFE figures in the present system of specific grants for in-service training. We have consulted you on the proposal that NAFE should also be included in the TRIST and subsequent arrangements - I can see advantage in that.

We have also started to give some thought to the way in which LEAs might introduce arrangements for the appraisal of FE lecturers.

NAFE: Efficiency

37. I now turn to other action which I believe necessary if the healthy traditions of NAFE are to be developed.

38. Following the Audit Commission report, the local authority associations have joined with the Department in a joint study of NAFE efficiency. I welcome this because I believe that much could be achieved - for example by a more effective deployment of teaching staff and better management of building space. I recognise that the joint study is only the tip of the iceberg and that many authorities are already hard at work seeking efficiency gains which were suggested by auditors or

already known to them. Even so, the joint study will give new impetus and I am slightly concerned about the pace at which it is being conducted.

39. The Burnham Further Education Committee and the National Joint Council for Further Education have for some time now been looking for ways of achieving a more effective and efficient service. Despite those good intentions, I am far from convinced that the local authorities made the right decisions on 15 July and 29 November last year. The end-loaded settlement reached and confirmed on those days did not secure the savings necessary to finance the cost. The cost includes that of the 7% increase for all staff and also the cost of granting automatic progression from the first to the second band of the lecturers' scale which brings the total long-run costs of the settlement up to 11%. The management side conceded this

in return for a report which provides an agenda and a timetable for "without prejudice" discussions. It is a good agenda - I do not doubt it. I do not doubt that talks will take place. But the savings have to be achieved and the Government will plan future expenditure on the basis that they will be.

PICKUP

40. I want to say a word about post-experience vocational education and training (alias PICKUP). Effective competition requires a rapid response to technological developments and other changes and, as I said earlier, firms cannot respond in this way unless they have a well-trained, up-to-date and committed workforce. I believe that the further and higher education service can play a major part in producing this result. Of course, many colleges have provided short vocational

updating courses for business and industry long before PICKUP was launched. But it has always been a marginal activity. There needs to be a re-direction of activity to achieve a substantial increase in volume. I would like to set institutions a target for at least a five-fold increase in this self financing activity.

41. So far as the PICKUP Programme as such is concerned, its first task has been to raise awareness among employers and colleges of the need for growth in this area. The second is to encourage development and spread good practice. The third is to try to provide the right administrative and financial framework and I hope that the Education Support Grants have been helpful here. Finally, we are trying to provide a national information system that will ensure that employers are fully aware of what the further and higher education

system has to offer. I hope that all colleges will ensure that every course that they offer is recorded in the PICKUP Electronic Directory together with full information about their capability to run other courses on demand.

The Youth Service

42. I come now to the important area of the Youth Service. We are all conscious of the range of social pressures on young people - drugs, employment difficulties and housing problems - they all give the youth service an added importance. Its plans for tackling social problems must be firmly built on broad and varied programmes for young people - including those who do not belong to organised clubs. The Youth Service can offer stability and a sense of purpose to many young people who would otherwise fail to find either without help.

43. Much has been achieved, particularly at the local level, though there is always room for more. You will be responding to our circular on the youth service, and we hope that your response will be the first of many exchanges of information about good practice such as in the relationship between the local authority and the voluntary youth sectors. The new National Advisory Council on the Youth Service meets for the first time later this month. I wish it well.

PERORATION

44. 1986 is Industry Year. Both start this week. The education service is well prepared. All local education authorities in England and Wales now have Industry Year representatives. Excellent materials and guidance have been provided by the Industry Year team. Our secondary schools are responding with enthusiasm

and energy. They will soon be well on the way to achieving the Industry Year targets including the establishment in every single secondary school of a two-way link with a local firm. Primary schools are playing their part, and I am also encouraged by their response. Amongst older pupils "mini-enterprises" are springing up throughout the land, and we hope that, as part of their Industry Year programme, all secondary schools will be able to offer some real business experience to those pupils who are keen to have it. Universities, polytechnics and FE colleges are joining in with a particular emphasis on exchanging personnel with industry. The potential for new and extended forms of co-operation between business and education can be seen on all sides and I am confident that the impetus will grow as the Year proceeds.

45. Let us all resolve to make 1986, not just another year with a special name and

special activities - here today and gone tomorrow - but one after which we shall be able to look back and say that something changed. Let 1986 be the year which saw the end, once and for all, of the damaging estrangement between education at all levels on the one hand and industry and commerce on the other.

46. What I have said to you this morning gives many grounds for optimism. But I have also shown how much progress still needs to be made - especially in awakening the majority of our firms to the need for a well educated and fully trained workforce. Without that, customers, markets, jobs and prosperity will continue to evade us.

CONFIDENTIAL

File

20 December 1985

The Prime Minister has asked for progress reports on the steps being taken to prevent political indoctrination in schools, and on the proposals for grant aided primary schools.

I should be grateful if you would let me have a short note setting out the current state of play as soon as possible and in any case no later than 10 January 1986, please.

(MARK ADDISON)

R. L. Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

CONFIDENTIAL

CMA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

NBPM

Private Secretary
to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

19 December 1985

Dear Mark,

AT BACK OF FILE

My Secretary of State thinks that the Prime Minister may be interested to see the enclosed Directory of organisations involved at national level in the promotion of school/industry links. The Directory has been produced by the Department as a contribution to Industry Year 1986. It will complement the efforts which are being made by the organisers of Industry Year, with our encouragement, to link every secondary school (including independent schools) and as many primary schools as possible with an industrial or commercial firm by the end of 1986.

The Directory has been produced in the form of a pack to facilitate updating and other changes. It will be mailed directly to secondary schools and made available to primary schools and special schools through the LEAs. We also plan, with the help of Industry Year, to send 2,000 copies of the Directory to the named representatives of firms who have expressed a readiness to facilitate school/industry links during the Year.

I am sending the Directory and a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Lord President, ~~and to~~ the Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry, Employment, Environment, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,
Rob.

R L SMITH
Private Secretary

MR. LETWIN

We have now heard back from DES on the question about Croydon's pilot scheme on educational assessment.

As you know, I also spoke at length to DES about this last month.

The Secretary of State seems to resist the idea of encouraging other authorities to conduct similar experiments, despite the fact that I specifically pointed out to DES that this was the original purpose of our letter. At least, I deduce that he is resisting it because the DES letter does not refer to the point.

On the other hand, we seem to have made some progress. Their Secretary of State has "some considerable sympathy with the basic aims of the proposed work". I suggest we leave it there.

Agreed with Oliver Letwin that we should let this rest for now.

(MARK ADDISON)
17 December 1985

SRW (61)

L2SS22

cc BSt

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

16 December 1985

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your further letter of 27 November in response to mine of 21 November about developments in Croydon on educational assessment.

My Secretary of State has now had the chance to consider the proposals made by Croydon along with advice from officials. He is unwilling at present to provide funding of the order asked for by this Authority. Among the points which concerned him were the ambitious character of the work, the resulting high cost (£225,000) and doubts as to how far the experience gained in it would be transferable to other local authorities.

However, my Secretary of State had some considerable sympathy with the basic aims of the proposed work which he saw as being relevant to policy areas of interest to him. Accordingly, the local authority have been invited to reconsider their proposals, with a possible slimming down of the exercise particularly in mind, and to have further discussions with officials in the first instance. These discussions have now begun.

Yours ever,

I M HUGHES
Private Secretary

Mark Addison Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

File

PGDAQR

bc OL.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

27 November 1985

Thank you for your letter of 21 November about developments in Croydon on educational assessment, which we spoke about yesterday.

The Prime Minister's concern was, as Tim Flesher's letter explained, to see whether there was a way of encouraging other authorities to introduce or to pilot ideas of the kind being considered in Croydon. One reason for doing so would, as I explained, be to assess whether the approach was applicable in other authorities with different kinds of catchment area. It may be that seeking effectively to influence authorities in this way might involve ESG support, but there may well be other routes open to you as well, which I am sure the Prime Minister would be grateful if you would explore.

I am sure the Prime Minister would also hope that your Secretary of State will give the Croydon proposal favourable consideration, against other competing claims on the Department's resources, when it is put to him for decision. I should, accordingly, be grateful if you would let me know the outcome when that stage has been reached.

Mark Addison

Ian Hughes, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

ECL

CRFCP
Cereal Lane
~~copy~~ ppy
please?

10 DOWNING STREET

MBA
do you wish to deal?

Mr Flesher

My view is that Croydon's testing scheme deserves support far more than many of the 'ethnic' and other projects sponsored by Education Support Grants: I would switch the money to Croydon.

But can the Prime Minister really overrule Keith Joseph?

But every other amt

Oliver Letwin.
25.xii.85

ESD/125

22a/11

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

21 November 1985

Dear Tim,

Thank you for your letter of 7 November with which you enclosed a cutting from the Daily Telegraph about developments in Croydon on educational assessment, which had been drawn to the Prime Minister's attention.

We are at present considering a proposal from the Croydon authority that we should provide financial assistance to the development of some work in this area though it seems that they are running quite a number of innovations simultaneously. Their initial proposal to the Secretary of State has been judged to be over ambitious, at least as regards funding by the Department, and we are inviting them to consider whether it would be worth their while putting to us something rather more appropriate in size and scope.

Yours ever,

I M HUGHES
Private Secretary

Tim Flesher Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

CHECK LIST FOR

PARENTS TO SHOW PUPILS' PROGRESS

By JOHN IZBICKI Education Correspondent

A CHECK list of what children should have learned by the ages of seven, 11 and 14 is to be sent to parents by Croydon education authority.

The decision to keep parents so closely involved in their children's schooling by sending them the list and test results is believed to be the first of its kind.

The borough also plans to assess its teachers annually and assess each school.

Mr Donald Naismith, Croydon's director of education, said that schools will be expected to follow the guidelines listed so that children's progress can be properly measured at the various stages of their schooling.

"The first question a parent usually asks when a child comes home from school is 'what did you l earn at school today?'. This must be the only country in Europe where such a question is necessary. The parents of other countries know what their children are learning because the schools keep them informed," he said.

"Each child has a right to be assessed and every parent has the right to be kept in the picture."

The check list, to be contained in a 27-page booklet for parents of the borough's 48,000 pupils, will explain that:

Every seven-year-old about to transfer from the infants to junior school should be able to tell the time to within five minutes and use the calendar; use a ruler properly for imperial and metric measurements; add, subtract and multiply numbers up to 20.

Grade 4 CSE

Every 11-year-old on transfer to secondary school, should be capable of simple calculations to two decimal places (for pounds and pence) and three decimal places (for grammes and kilogrammes); use a calculator for the four mathematical functions; use simple fractions and percentages. Their reading and writing should be neat and their punctuation and spelling good.

The tests at age 14 are meant to establish what course the boy or girl should be following in preparation for national examinations.

Mr Derek Loughborough, education committee chairman in the Conservative-controlled borough, said that the nation's average educational achievement is a Grade 4 at CSE.

"We shall be assessing our schools to see how their pupils are doing, what degree of examination success they have, how many of their leavers get jobs, how many go on to further or higher education. It will be a complete assessment, but I hope it won't produce some kind of school league table."

Consideration will be taken of the catchment area and the material the schools have to deal with.

Croydon already uses checklist for infants, where teachers can tick boxes showing whether a youngster can retain a short message, speak properly, draw a straight line and so on.

Difficulties are noted and the list—not among those to be sent to parents—becomes a guide and early-warning system. Problem children are given immediate remedial help.

Mr Naismith said the test results would be sent to parents.

Teacher unions have voiced suspicion of the scheme. They fear that check lists for detailed syllabuses would encourage teachers to pay attention only to minimum requirements and would throttle innovation.

Education Column—Facing Page

EDUCATON

PTG

Gen. Policy

SRW

7 November 1985

The Prime Minister has had drawn to her attention the attached report in the Daily Telegraph about an experimental scheme for involving parents more closely in their children's schooling. She believes that on the basis of this report, and of comments from Mr. John Moore, the local Member of Parliament, it may be worth encouraging other Authorities to follow Croydon's example. She would be grateful therefore if your Secretary of State could look into this possibility and let her know whether he thinks this would be worthwhile.

BH

TIM FLESHER

Rob Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

Prime Minister
Agree to write to DES?

DCN
6/11

Yes

PRIME MINISTER 5 November 1985

The attached describes an imaginative scheme now being tried in Croydon. John Moore, the local MP, is enthusastic and says it is as good as it sounds.

Is it worth encouraging DES to encourage other authorities to go this way?

Yes

JOHN REDWOOD

Daily Telegraph.

5.11.85

CHECK LIST FOR

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By *JOHN IZBICKI Education Correspondent*

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Teacher unions have voiced suspicion of the scheme. They fear that check lists for detailed syllabuses would encourage teachers to pay attention only to minimum requirements and would throttle innovation.

Education Column—Facing Page

CC BG

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
1-19 VICTORIA STREET
LONDON SW1H 0ET
TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-215 5422
SWITCHBOARD 01-215 7877

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

4 November 1985

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph BT MP
Secretary of State for
Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON
SE1

NBPM

Dear Keith,

GRANT-AIDED SCHOOLS

I am writing to send my apologies for my absence from your meeting on the above this afternoon and to let you know my views.

In principle, I am very sympathetic to the aims and objectives of the scheme you propose and would like to see us proceed in this direction. However, I share the concerns expressed by Nigel Lawson in his letter of 2 August. We need to consider now the implications for expenditure on maintained schools which any significant expansion of the experimental independent primary schools would clearly have.

Attflap PG5

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Nigel Lawson, Nicholas Edwards, George Younger, John Biffen, Kenneth Baker, David Young and Norman Tebbit, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours,

Leon

LEON BRITTAN

DW1ABH

999.1

Education: Policy Pb

2153/73

CC36

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON
SE1 7PH

NBPM.

29 October 1985

Dear Keith,

Thank you for your letter of 17 October to Nigel Lawson about the draft response to the Gregson Report. I have also seen Leon Brittan's letter to Nigel of 23 October.

Nigel and I agree that it would be sensible and constructive to review the information currently available on tax reliefs for donations to educational institutions, and to assess the need for more comprehensive and easily assimilable guidelines. My officials will be in touch with yours to set this task in hand.

I am content for the draft response to be amended in the way you propose; I can however see no compelling reason for making the further change Leon Brittan suggested in his letter and should prefer to stay with your version.

I am copying this letter to Leon Brittan and to the recipients of yours.

Yours ever
John

JOHN MOORE

Education: Policy. Pt 6

CS/SG

Department of Employment
Caxton House Tothill Street London SW1H 9NF
Telephone Direct Line 01-213 5949
Switchboard 01-213 3000

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON
SE1 7PH

MBPM

29 October 1985

Dear Keith,

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 17 October to the Chancellor about our response to the Gregson Report's recommendations on tax relief.

Unless Nigel Lawson has been able to accept more wide-ranging action, I agree that it would be a useful first step to examine information and guidance on current tax reliefs, with a view to increasing their take-up by industry. As Tom King said, we should like this examination to cover training as well as education institutions. I would be happy for my officials to be involved in this study, which will of course also need to be aware of the study of the funding of vocational education and training we have asked the MSC to carry out.

In view of the forthcoming funding study, I would also prefer not to close the door on debate on tax reliefs more firmly than necessary. I suggest therefore that we amend the final sentence of paragraph 45 of our response to read:

> "The Government is not convinced of the case for introducing new tax reliefs in addition to those already available to businesses donating money and equipment to education and research institutions".

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor, Members of H Committee, the Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry and for Defence, Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir Robin Nicholson.

Yours ever,

KENNETH CLARKE

Education: Policy. Pt 6

CC NO

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 7089

From: Sir Robin Nicholson FEng, FRS
Chief Scientific Adviser

W. 0720

MBPM

Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON SE1 7PH

23 October 1985

Dear Secretary of State

File with MEA

In your letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of 17 October, you suggest a working group of officials and industry representatives to review the information available to industry on current tax reliefs for educational donations.

I believe that such a review would be most useful in ensuring that industry is fully aware of the nature and extent of the assistance which is available, and consequently is encouraged to provide support for educational institutions, and I support the establishment of a group along the lines you suggest to carry out the work.

I continue to be impressed on visits to the USA by the enormous scale on which American industry is re-equipping American Universities with high technology facilities by means of donations. The same companies with subsidies in the UK certainly believe that the arrangements for similar donations to our Universities are much less tax effective.

I would welcome the opportunity for a member of my staff to be involved in the review.

Copies of this letter go to recipients of yours.

ROBIN NICHOLSON

Yours Robin

LCNO

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
1-19 VICTORIA STREET
LONDON SW1H 0ET
TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-215 5422
SWITCHBOARD 01-215 7877

JU383
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

23 October 1985

The Rt Hon Nigel Lawson MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
Parliament Street
London SW1

NBPM

Dear Nigel,

I have seen a copy of Sir Keith Joseph's letter of 17 October to you about the draft response to the Gregson Report.

It is important to encourage a much closer involvement of industry with the education sector and I support Douglas Hurd's request in his letter of 15 October that serious consideration be given to Adam Ridley's proposals for new tax incentives and other measures to increase giving to charities.

However, as Keith points out, these provisions would not help those institutions in further and higher education which do not have charitable status. I therefore strongly support his suggestion that officials should identify the information and guidance currently available to industry and commerce on the tax measures applicable to donations to educational institutions and should assess the need for any changes or improvements. This would enable us to make a much more positive and constructive response to Lord Gregson's recommendations.

I support the redrafts of paragraphs 45 and 46 proposed in the Annex to Keith's letter, although I feel that paragraph 45 is rather sweeping and would be improved by a slight amendment to make the last sentence read "The Government is not persuaded of the case for introducing ... etc".

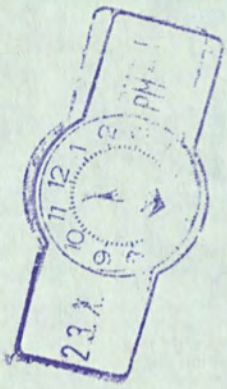
I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Members of H Committee, the Secretary of State for Defence, Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir Robin Nicholson.

Yours,

Leon

LEON BRITTAN

Education : Policy on Expenditure Pt 6.



cyco

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

NBPM

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The Rt Hon Nigel Lawson MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
Treasury
Parliament Street
LONDON SW1P 3AG

17 October 1985

Dear Nigel.

In his letter to me of 9th September, John Moore set out the Treasury's general agreement to the draft response to the Gregson Report I circulated with my letter of 31st July.

He did not, however, share my view that the climate would now be right to establish a working group of officials and representatives of industry to assess the scale and value of current tax reliefs for industrial donations to the education service. This idea did find favour from Tom King (who saw merit in covering training as well), David Young, Michael Lucas and Allan Stewart. Quintin Hailsham, joining with John Moore in resisting the idea, observed that education is a charitable purpose. The laws governing charitable donations certainly help those institutions which have charitable status. In this connection, I have now seen a copy of Douglas Hurd's letter to you of 15th October, drawing attention to Sir Adam Ridley's proposals for tax incentives and other measures to increase giving to charities. I believe that more should be done to stimulate giving to charities and I hope you will be prepared to give these proposals serious consideration. However, the bulk of further and higher education institutions maintained by local education authorities (including all polytechnics except the 5 maintained by ILEA) do not have charitable status, and it has in any event been represented to us frequently that greater stimulus is required.

I am fully sensitive of the need to avoid raising unrealistic expectations about the extent to which companies may become eligible for more generous tax arrangements. And I note John Moore's argument that present tax reliefs, taken in the round, are on a par with those of other countries such as the US - but may perhaps be insufficiently exploited as they stand. At the same time I am bound to say that this message has been repeated to representatives of industry and commerce in the past but has failed to satisfy them, either because they cannot understand the argumentation underpinning it or, perhaps, because they have insufficient knowledge about the particular reliefs available and how these might help their

wish to increase the current scale of industrial donation - a goal which we all share.

It does seem to me, therefore, that if you continue to oppose the establishment of a group on the lines of that I proposed and irrespective of any further action that you may on reflection feel able to take in the light of Douglas Hurd's letter, it is incumbent upon us to take other steps to ensure that our position is fully understood and, in particular, that current arrangements for assisting industry and commerce in pursuit of this important goal are widely appreciated and used to the full.

Substantial progress in this direction could be made by an urgent re-examination of the material currently available offering advice to industrial and commercial firms on the tax measures applicable when donations to education institutions (and other charitable and voluntary objects) are in prospect. Some material of this kind is made available through the Charities Aid Foundation, whose seminar on the subject I addressed a fortnight ago, and the Inland Revenue may themselves make material available. But more or clearer material may be needed. Could I therefore suggest that officials of your Department and others involved should come together to identify the information currently available and assess the need for more comprehensive and easily assimilable guidelines to be made available? We could at the same time present this in our response as a positive step, fully consistent with the view that existing arrangements are adequate, and make suitable reference to it in the Report by means of the revised drafting passage attached.

Perhaps you would let me know whether you would now agree to take matters forward in this way including, in particular, by the change I have suggested to the draft response. As you will know, the latter is now somewhat overdue and Lord Gregson is pressing us. I would be grateful if you could let me have your response, and learn of any further views from colleagues, by 22 October.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, Members of H. Committee, the Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry and for Defence, Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir Robin Nicholson.

Yours ever,

Ken

RESPONSE TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 17 and 19 - AMENDMENT

1. Delete : last sentence of existing paragraph 45 and

replace by:-

"The Government sees no case for introducing new tax reliefs in addition to those already available to businesses donating money and equipment to education and research institutions."

2. Delete existing paragraph 46: insert a new paragraph 46 as follows:-

"The creation of closer links between the business community and higher education institutions is, however, an objective to which the Government attaches high priority. Such links can be both to the mutual benefit of the respective partners and to the wider benefit of the economy and they can be stimulated by a variety of means - not all of which directly involve government. The role of the taxation system in this regard is not, however, underestimated. The Government is accordingly anxious to ensure that the scope of tax relief is fully appreciated by those concerned. It is therefore examining the information currently made available on such relief with the intention of ensuring that potential donors in industry and commerce can readily obtain clear and comprehensive information."

Education: Expenditure Pt 6

Fld

DA

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

30 September 1985

The Prime Minister has seen the exchange of correspondence between your Secretary of State and the Lord President about the consideration of grant aided schools. She was glad to know that discussion on these proposals is being taken forward and she looks forward to being informed of the outcome of these discussions and, in due course, to a full report from H Committee.

I am copying this letter to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office).

(Timothy Flesher)

Rob Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

E.R.

PPS please

PRIME MINISTER

GRANT AIDED SCHOOLS

Sir Keith Joseph, with your support, is arranging for a small group of colleagues to have a preliminary discussion about the feasibility of setting up grant aided schools.

The Lord President is keen to make clear to Sir Keith that the discussions will in the end go into the normal H machinery. He thinks it important that Sir Keith's report to you, after his informal group have had an initial look at the proposal, should be essentially for information, and should not seek your endorsement at that stage of a particular approach. He wants to be sure that H gets to grips with the practical problems before decisions, in effect, get taken on how to resolve them.

The Lord President's concern is understandable. Ensuring the matter goes to H will avoid devaluing the normal machinery and the Lord President's position, and foster full consideration of what will inevitably be tricky issues. Of course, if Sir Keith's preliminary discussions conclude that the idea should not be pursued, you will no doubt wish to arrange a meeting of Ministers to discuss.

Content I should indicate to the Lord President and Sir Keith Joseph that:

i. you are glad to know discussion on the proposals on grand aided schools are being taken forward;

ii. you look forward to being informed of the outcome of Sir Keith's preliminary discussions, and to a full report from H in due course.

Mark Addison

Yes mt

MARK ADDISON

27 September 1985

VC4ABY

VC

MR LETWIN

HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES

This is to confirm that DES do at present have in mind to challenge the Treasury's reluctance to consider tax concessions for companies donating equipment to educational institutions.

Rob Smith thinks Sir Keith Joseph is very likely to write back to John Moore asking him to think again. But if DES do decide not to pursue the matter, they will let us know in advance.

MARK ADDISON

27 September 1985

VC4ABX

MR ADDISON 24 September 1985

HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION: TREASURY RESPONSE TO KEITH JOSEPH

We still believe that there is merit in the idea of further tax concessions for educational donations - since this might help to break down the barriers between private and public activity. But, unfortunately, the Treasury response seems final. If the Chancellor and the Financial Secretary are unwilling even to consider steps in this direction, there seems to be little chance of reaching any satisfactory conclusion.

We reluctantly recommend that the Prime Minister should let the matter pass without comment.

OL

OLIVER LETWIN

OL Comments?

cc NO

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

coming 24/9

21 September 1985

Spec O/L

Dear Keith

HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE: REPORT ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES

You wrote to me on 31 July with a draft of your proposed response to this Select Committee report. You will have seen Michael Lewis's letter of 19 August, David Young's letter of 27 August, Rodney Elton's letter of 27 August and Allan Stewart's letter of 5 September all broadly in favour of your proposals but making some detailed points. I understand that Leon Brittan and Nick Edwards are also content. You will also have seen John Moore's letter of 9 September strongly objecting to the idea of a Working Group on tax incentives and Quintin Hailsham's letter of 13 September supporting this view. Except on this point, you may therefore take it that you have H Committee approval to the course you propose.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, the members of H Committee, Leon Brittan, Nigel Lawson, Sir Robert Armstrong, and Sir Robin Nicholson.

Yours
Willie

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP

EDUCATION : Policy : Pt 6.

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The Rt Hon Viscount Whitelaw PC CH MC
Lord President of the Council
68 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AT

20 September 1985

MEA

Dear Willie,

GRANT AIDED SCHOOLS

Thank you for your letter of ~~11~~ 20 September. I agree with you that my proposals require much further thought and discussion. The objective of the meeting which the Prime Minister has asked me to arrange is to explore the political and financial aspects with a view to a decision whether to proceed with the necessary further work on the proposals' feasibility. The Prime Minister has asked me to report to her the outcome of that meeting. It seems to me that it is only then that a decision is possible on whether to put a paper to H Committee.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours, Keith.

EDUCATION : Policy Pt 6

CCOL

NBPM

HOUSE OF LORDS,
LONDON SW1A 0PW

13 September 1985

My dear Keith,

HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE
REPORT ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES

PTS attached

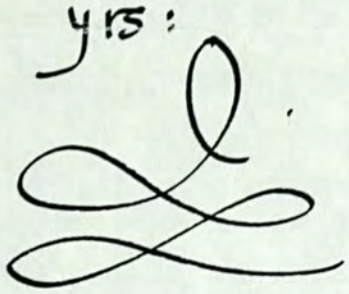
I have read your letter and draft response of 31st July and the subsequent correspondence including, in particular, John Moore's letter of 9th September.

PTO with G.R.

I back your general approach to the Select Committee's recommendations and I think the suggestion of donations of equipment by industry has attractions. However, I support the draft as it stands on recommendations 17 and 19 (subject to any widening to encourage further involvement of industry). Education is a charitable purpose. Surely industry can already covenant directly, or through some simple foundational device, which would give continuity for at least four years without raising false hopes of special tax reliefs by setting up another Working Group.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of H Committee, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and to Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir Robin Nicholson.

yrs:



The Right Honourable
Sir Keith Joseph, Bt., M.P.,

EDUCATION Pt 6

Gen. Policy

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

11 September 1985

Dear Keith

GRANT AIDED SCHOOLS

Thank you for your letter of 15 July enclosing a paper on grant aided primary schools. I have also read with interest the comments by Nigel Lawson and George Younger.

I think it will be clear to all of us that this is an extremely difficult and complicated subject which requires very considerable thought and discussion before it can be taken very much further. I take it therefore that what you have in mind is a preliminary discussion of the issues and problems raised by your proposals with a view to putting the matter into the normal machinery thereafter, with referral to H Committee if in the light of your discussion you conclude that it should be pursued. On that basis, I doubt if I need come to your preliminary meeting. I shall, of course, await hearing your initial conclusions with great interest.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Secretary of State for Wales, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Secretary of State for Employment, the Secretary of State for the Environment, and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever
Willie

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP

EDUCATION POLICY
PAT

2150/12

CC NO

NBPM
DGS
10/9

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP
Secretary of State for Education
and Science
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON
SE1 7PH

9 September 1985

Dear Keith,

HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE
REPORT ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES

You copied to Nigel Lawson your letter of 31 July to Willie Whitelaw which comments on the draft response to Recommendations 17 and 19 of the Report. I have also seen Michael Lucas' letter of 19 August and David Young's letter of 27 August.

I am afraid that I cannot go along with your assessment of the response. Far from being wholly negative by outlining the existing tax reliefs it illustrates the significant assistance which is already available for industrial contributions to higher education. I think that you accept that these reliefs are not fully taken up. If you judge it necessary to make this section of the response more positive might I suggest that you extend the final paragraph by describing whatever measures your Department and DTI are taking to encourage further involvement of the private sector in financing higher education.

I really do not see why our rejection of the specific forms of tax relief recommended by the Committee should cause any more difficulty than your own rejection of a number of other recommendations. These are, after all, only two proposals from among more than sixty and surely it is the Government's overall response which is important.

Your proposal for a working group to consider the scope for tax concessions repeats a suggestion you made to Nigel Lawson in the context of exchanges on "the switch" last year. I am sorry to strike a negative note here but am no more persuaded now than Nigel was then that there is a case for further tax reliefs in this area which would run counter to our general policy of broadening the tax base and reducing special reliefs. Setting up a working group as part of our response to the Report would only raise false hopes that we were willing to consider new tax concessions for higher education.

I am copying this letter to recipients of yours.

Yours ever
John

JOHN MOORE

Policy: Education PCS

10 DOWNING STREET

CC

Await Treasury & SO Rotn

Agreed

No comment

Meanwhile replies. Then bf to me.

MCA 9/9

CF
7pts please.

MR ADDISON

5 September 1985

RESPONSE TO HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NEW TECHNOLOGY

Most of the Response is suitably anodyne. Keith Joseph is clearly right to reject the idea of a new "Central Board" for manpower forecasting: manpower planning has an abysmal history.

The one contentious issue is the tax treatment of industrial money given to educational institutions. The Select Committee recommends special forms of tax relief for the funding of research and donations of equipment. The Inland Revenue opposes this suggestion on the grounds that it is fiscally impure, and we understand that the Treasury is likely to take the same view. But Keith Joseph and David Young would like to set up a working group on the issue; Robin Nicholson will support them.

We recommend that:

i. You should wait for replies from the Treasury and Robin Nicholson before seeking the Prime Minister's views.

ii. Unless the Treasury have overwhelmingly powerful objections, a working group on the tax issue should be

set up, since this might lead to companies diverting money from socially useless racing car sponsorship etc to socially beneficial research funding in universities and polytechnics.

iii. The Prime Minister should raise no objection to the other parts of Keith Joseph's response.

OLIVER LETWIN

010

CC OK

FROM THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY AND EDUCATION

SCOTTISH OFFICE
NEW ST. ANDREW'S HOUSE
ST. JAMES CENTRE
EDINBURGH EH1 3SX

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON
SE1 7PH

MBM

5 September 1985

Dear Keith,

HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE
REPORT ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Thank you for copying to George Younger your letter of 31 July and the draft of the Government's response to the Select Committee's report. I am replying in the Secretary of State's absence on holiday.

Comments & requests required

We entirely agree that the arguments for the establishment of an Education and Training Board and a National Training Levy are unconvincing and should not be supported. We also agree that it would be appropriate to establish a Working Group of officials and representatives of industry to examine the present scale of relevant tax concessions to industry and commerce, and the possible scope for their extension. A fresh look at the system of tax incentives might lead both to rationalisation and also to better targeting of any incentives system to areas of special need. Whilst the question of tax credits is clearly one for consideration on a national basis, we attach some importance to this issue and would be grateful if, when you come to consider the membership of the Working Group, you would include an official from the Industry Department for Scotland.

My officials have, as you acknowledge, had an opportunity to comment on an earlier draft; there are however a number of drafting amendments or insertions we would like to see included in the White Paper which would better reflect the Scottish position. For convenience these are listed in the attached annex.

Copies of this letter go to the Prime Minister, members of H Committee, Nigel Lawson, Leon Brittan, Sir Robert Armstrong and Sir Robin Nicholson.

Yours ever,

Allan

ALLAN STEWART

ANNEX

HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE

REPORT ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES: DRAFT INSERTIONS

Paragraph 5: add a further sub-paragraph "- completely reform non-advanced education in Scotland through the 16+ Development Programme, following publication in January 1983 of '16-18s in Scotland: an Action Plan'."

Paragraph 10: this paragraph appears to have lost something in the re-drafting and should be revised as follows: "10. In Scotland, the Government has made it plain that it expects all pupils to study English, Mathematics and Science throughout the years of compulsory education. The new Scottish Standard grade courses, including those in mathematics and physics, emphasise practical investigation by the pupils and problem-solving approaches to learning and a number of the new courses, for example Technological Studies, Craft and Design and Computing Studies, are specifically designed to give boys and girls an understanding of the new technology. Moreover, many school pupils, primarily those in the fifth and sixth year, also have the opportunity of studying a number of technical and vocational subjects through the new National Certificate."

Paragraph 68: add "In Scotland a great deal of work has been done in this field, not least by the Scottish Council Development and Industry which has produced a report on industry/academic collaboration in Scotland entitled 'Profit Through Partnership'."

Paragraph 76: amend final sentence to read "...society. In Scotland, consideration is being given to a degree in technological education, which would include industrial placements as part of the course."

Paragraph 78: amend final sentence to read "in Scotland, both the new 4 year BEd (which began in October 1984) and the revised postgraduate courses which will be introduced shortly require instruction in mathematics and environmental studies."

Paragraph 80: insert "in the UK as a whole" at the end of the second sentence.

Paragraph 82: should read "In Scotland, a specific grant scheme for in-service training has been introduced covering courses in, among other subjects, micro-computing and the re-training of teachers in surplus subject areas. In addition,

MSC funds will be available in 1985-86 and 1986-87 under the scheme described in paragraph 80, and arrangements thereafter are under review."

Paragraph 110: add "In Scotland, the Government is encouraging the development of open learning and has set up a Scottish Committee on open learning to identify needs and priorities for development in open learning, to encourage research and development work in training, and the use of the new technology. Scotland is well represented in the MSC's Opentech Programme and open learning for unemployed people is being actively supported."

Education: Expenditure Pg

cc OL

Qf 00014

1. MR LANGDON
2. MISS MACNAUGHTON

cc Mr Unwin
Mr Addison

MEA

GRANT AIDED SCHOOLS

1. Sir Keith Joseph wrote to the Lord President on 15 July enclosing a paper which he had shown to the Prime Minister proposing the setting up, on an experimental basis, of independent primary schools financed mainly by the Secretary of State for Education. The letter was given a fairly restricted circulation and the Secretary of State proposed that he should hold a meeting to discuss the matter further.

2. His Department believe that the restricted nature of the circulation was dictated by the extreme political sensitivity of the subject matter at the express request of the Prime Minister. However, the situation has now changed in that the Prime Minister herself raised the question of the reintroduction of direct grant schools in a television interview. The Prime Minister does not herself wish to chair a group to consider this issue and it would seem appropriate that it should now come to H Committee. The precedent of the student support discussions (which were also held outside the normal Cabinet machine) indicates the need for full consideration at an early stage of such difficult political issues.

3. I suggest, therefore, that the Lord President might like to reply to the Secretary of State's letter indicating that he sees the problems involved but, in the light of the changed circumstances, he would see no objection to the issue coming before H Committee. I suggest the following draft.

"GRANT AIDED SCHOOLS

Thank you for your letter of 15 July and the enclosed paper on grant aided primary schools. I have seen the comments by George Younger and Nigel Lawson and it is clear that this is a difficult subject which requires considerable thought and discussion.

In the light of the Prime Minister's comments on television about the reintroduction of direct grant schools, I believe that this is no longer such a sensitive issue that its consideration has to be restricted to a limited range of Ministers. I think, therefore, that the best course of action for the future is to bring it to H Committee in the normal way, where our colleagues can examine it in all its aspects. Unless you or any of the other recipients of this letter disagree with this proposal, I will ask the Secretaries to arrange matters accordingly.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Leon Brittan, Nigel Lawson, Nicholas Edwards, George Younger, John Biffen, Patrick Jenkin, Norman Tebbit, David Young and to Sir Robert Armstrong."

R. Watson

R WATSON

4 September 1985

EDUCATION Pt 5

Policy

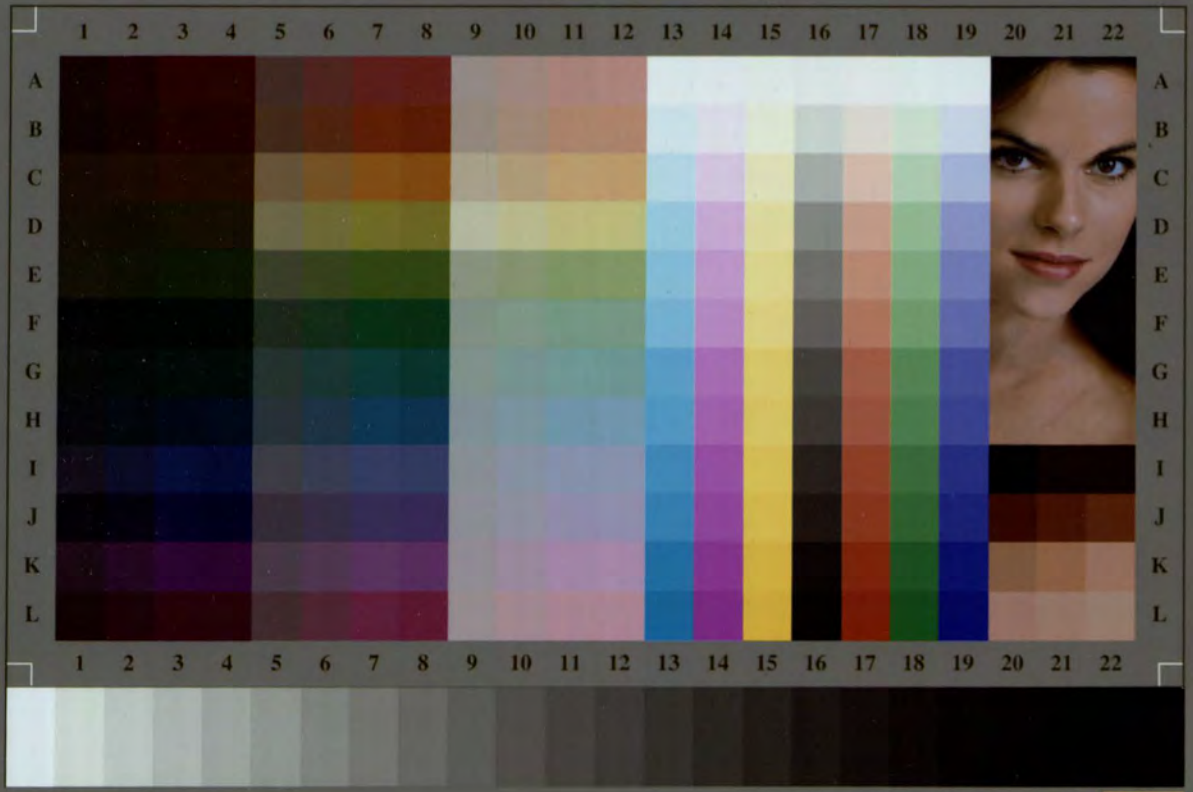
PART 5 ends:-

Min DOE to LPC 27/8/85

~~DEA to MEA 30/8/85~~

PART 6 begins:-

Watson to Langdon 4.9.85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