

RECLAIMING EDUCATION

EDUCATION POLICIES FOR THE LABOUR MANIFESTO 2019

A manifesto for 2019 needs to start from a clear analysis of what is wrong. Reclaiming Education believes that:

- International evidence shows our children are **less happy and more stressed** than in many comparable countries.
- a **funding crisis and a teacher retention crisis** are developing in our schools to a level not seen since the Tory government of the 1990's.
- support for children with **special educational needs and disabilities** is inadequate
- our system **reinforces inequality**. International evidence also shows that, while our ablest children do well, too many of the others don't achieve as well as they do in other countries.
- too many people are **denied opportunities** –because of cost, lack of locally accessible provision or because the pressures faced by schools and colleges lead them to deny access.
- for too long the British economic model has been based on **low wages and low skills**. This needs to change especially in the context of Brexit.
- the growth of **gangs and youth crime** in some areas is of great concern.
- schools and colleges are **no longer properly accountable** and vital decisions are made without any sort of transparency to parents, learners and local communities.
- the current approach of **marketising and privatising** education is ineffective, hugely wasteful and has led to growing financial mismanagement and corruption.
- current **curriculum and examinations are too narrow** and don't properly engage or prepare young people for the challenges of adult life.

The policy announcements already made will go a long way towards addressing these issues. In particular **Reclaiming Education is delighted** to see that the party is committed to:

- **reducing inequality** as a central aim of the National Education Service
- **expanding early years education** and restoring Sure Start so that children and families are properly supported in the critical early years.
- **adequately funding** education and training at all levels
- ensuring learners with **SEND are adequately supported**
- providing education and training that is **free at the point of use** throughout life
- **ending high stakes testing** in early years and primary schools
- **ending the academy and free school** programmes and restoring local democratic accountability in education
- reforming accountability including **ending the current Ofsted inspection** regime
- **removing charitable status** and other tax perks from private schools.



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Next Steps

However, we recognise that the current five year policy making cycle is likely to be curtailed by an early election. As a result there are issues that have not yet been fully addressed which need to be part of a radical Labour programme for government. We would urge that these issues are addressed in the manifesto which is no doubt under active debate. They include:

1. Restoring the ethos of **"Every Child Matters"** and ensuring that the provision is there to support it. In particular supporting schools to manage challenging behaviour and ending the **scandal of off-rolling**. It will be essential to **restore youth services** and other out of school provision which can both promote informal learning and support young people at risk of involvement in gangs and crime. There needs to be **long term support** in areas where social and economic challenges are greatest as part of a comprehensive regeneration programme.
2. recognising that current curriculum and assessment arrangements **do not adequately support young people** in gaining the knowledge, skills, creativity and personal qualities needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Immediately, Labour should **replace the EBacc** and give greater priority to creative, artistic and technical subjects. It should reassert the principle that curriculum and examinations should not be determined by the whims and prejudices of ministers and should reduce the level of central prescription of curriculum content and pedagogy
3. engaging schools, universities, employers, trade unions, learners and parents in a **review of what is taught in schools and colleges** and how the full range of achievements can be recognised.
4. ensuring that clear **alternatives to high stakes testing and inspection** are identified and publicised so as to ensure that parents and children are informed about progress and future challenges and so that all concerned can have access to accurate and contextual information about all schools and colleges.
5. reviewing the 14 to 19 phase with a view to reducing the volume of testing at 16 and developing **a unified curriculum framework** that does not separate academic and technical courses. The implication would be to not endorse the establishment of rigidly separate pathways in post 16 education including the current T level programme.
6. committing to **ending academic selection** such as the 11+ throughout the state system and **reforming admissions** so that the intakes of all schools, including comprehensives, are properly representative of their local community.
7. specifying exactly how local accountability arrangements for schools and colleges and central services will work, given the motion on accountability passed at conference. Urgently restructuring local and regional government, devolving responsibility and resources to **locally elected authorities** to ensure educational opportunities are available to all, that schools and colleges are supported and that their performance and financial management are appropriately monitored. These processes should enable the active participation of the full range of local stakeholders in educational decision making.
8. ensuring that there are systems in place to enable all adults to access **education and training throughout life** and that adult education focuses on enabling learners to adapt to a rapidly changing world.
9. **going beyond the ending of higher education fees** to reverse the marketisation of higher education, radically reform higher education accountability systems, widen access to universities (especially Oxbridge and the Russell Group) and address the growth of casual and zero hours employment in higher education.
10. addressing the crisis in teacher recruitment and retention not just by restoring national pay and conditions, addressing workload pressures but also by respecting professional expertise, ensuring high quality initial and continuing professional development is available to all employees, simplifying entry routes into teaching and restoring the role of **higher education in initial teacher education**.



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