MT

PART 12

Confidential Filing.

Policy on Education Expenditure.

General policy on education.

— In attached folder "Our Schools - A Radical Policy."

EDUCATION

Part 1: May 1979

Part 12: March 1987

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
~~2.3.87~~							
~~3.3.87~~							
~~4.3.87~~							
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~~10.4.87~~							
~~23.4.87~~							
~~24.4.87~~							
~~28.4.87~~							
30.4.87							
PART ENDS							

PREM 19/2119

PART 12 ends:-

DES to PAB 30.4.87

PART 13 begins:-

DRN to DES 1.5.87

From: J B UNWIN, CB, Deputy Secretary

CCB/87

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-270 0240

CONFIDENTIAL

P 02659

David Norgrove Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

30 April 1987

BETTER SCHOOLS: FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR OPTING OUT

You may like to see for information the attached paper which is in pursuance of the remit in your letter to Rob Smith of 8 April reporting the outcome of the Prime Minister's meeting that day.

2. As you will see, I have asked Departments (whom I have also asked to consult their Ministers) to let me have any comments by 1 pm next Tuesday, so that I can put the paper to you later that day. This may not prove possible, but you may want to earmark a spot for a further meeting held by the Prime Minister on a contingency basis later in the week. There is no immediate operational reason for settling these issues, but the sooner they are settled, the sooner the whole package can be taken forward for formal decision.

J B UNWIN

From: J B UNWIN CB, Deputy Secretary

CABINET OFFICE
70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01 270 0240

CONFIDENTIAL

P 02658

N W Stuart Esq
Department of Education & Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON SE1 7PH

30 April 1987

Dear Nick,

BETTER SCHOOLS: FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR OPTING OUT

I enclose a short composite paper we have prepared drawing on the previous notes prepared by you and by the Treasury/DOE, and taking account of the discussion at my meeting here earlier this week.

2. As you will see, the paper points in the direction of the least worst options we identified, pointing out the disadvantages. I should like to submit this to No 10 by next Tuesday evening (5 May) so that the Prime Minister can hold a further discussion with the small group later next week if she so wishes. I should be very grateful, therefore, to have any comments from you and from the other recipients of this letter by 1 pm next Tuesday at the very latest.

3. I am copying this letter and enclosure to John Anson and Brian Gilmore at the Treasury, to Ken Ennals at DOE, and to Anthony Langdon and Andrew Wells here in the Cabinet Office.

Yours ever,

J B UNWIN

Better Schools: Financial Arrangements for Opting Out

Memorandum by the Cabinet Office

At the Prime Minister's meeting on 8 April, officials from DES, DOE, Treasury and Cabinet Office were asked to give further consideration to the financial arrangements for schools to opt out of the local authority sector, and in particular:

i. the incentives and disincentives to schools to opt out, arising from variations in the level of spending by different education authorities;

ii. the options for adjusting local authorities' grant entitlements, and their implications for the burden on central and local taxpayers.

This Memorandum records the outcome of consultation between the Cabinet Office and the Departments concerned.

INCENTIVES AND DISINCENTIVES: SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

2. The problem of disincentives for schools to opt out arises because some local education authorities (LEAs) spend well in excess of the levels which a per capita funding regime for Grant Maintained (GM) schools would support. The note by DES at Annex A assesses the scale of the problem. It estimates that perhaps 300 out of the 4,000 secondary schools, and 150 out of the 2,000 large primary schools which would initially be allowed to opt, have unit costs more than 10 per cent above average. This suggests that there might be a serious problem with about 450 schools. But of course these would be concentrated in a small number of high spending Labour controlled authorities, and particularly in the ILEA's area. They are therefore just those schools which might be

most attracted to opting out of local authority control.

INCENTIVES AND DISINCENTIVES: POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

3. Officials have considered three options which might reduce or remove these disincentives:

Option 1: making the national per capita formula more flexible and lengthening the transition period;

Option 2: moving away from the formula approach entirely, and making each school's budget subject to an annual review;

Option 3: applying to each school, instead of a notional formula, the same formula which would have applied under the financial delegation proposals if it had remained in the local authority sector.

Option 1

4. The first approach, a more flexible formula, would rely on extensive use of special needs allowances to reflect the high levels of spending in inner city areas. It could narrow the differences between the formula and existing spending levels in these areas, and therefore reduce disincentives for opting out. A longer transition could also help. But this approach has some substantial disadvantages:

i. it would appear to validate spending levels in these areas - there would no doubt be pressure to use the new formula to calculate needs grant for local authorities under the new local government finance system;

ii. it is unlikely that any formula could cater for ILEA's very high spending levels, so the disincentive for ILEA schools to opt out would remain;

iii. it would give high grants to schools in areas like Birmingham where the existing level of spending is not high.

For these reasons we do not recommend this approach.

Option 2

5. The second option, an annual budget review, would involve setting each GM school up at its existing spending level, and reviewing the scope for reductions individually each year. This would remove the automatic disincentives to opt out. But it would involve very high administrative costs for DES, and conflict with the financial delegation proposals for schools remaining in the local authority sector. We do not therefore recommend this approach.

Option 3

6. The third option, applying the local authority's own financial delegation formula, as opposed to a national formula (as originally proposed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science), would mean that each school would continue to get exactly the same level of funding as if it had remained under local authority control. This would apply in both the first year and subsequent years: if the authority increased its expenditure, grant to all the GM schools in its area would rise, and if it cut spending grant would fall. This option would certainly achieve financial neutrality for the school, and remove any possible disincentive to opting out, which primarily concerned Ministers. But the level of spending and grant for each school would continue, at least for a time, to be determined by decisions of the relevant local authority, not by the Government; and pressures might arise from GM schools in low spending areas to be brought up to the level of those in high spending areas. In the early years (between 1990 and 1993) the financial delegation arrangements will not be in place in all authorities, and a more rough and ready interim system of indexing grant to the overall level of the relevant

authority's expenditure would have to be adopted.

7. If Ministers still attach priority to removing any disincentives to opting out, we recommend Option 3 above. It is the only approach we have been able to identify which offers a real solution to the problem of disincentives identified at the Prime Minister's meeting. But Ministers will wish to consider the disadvantages carefully before agreeing to this option.

ADJUSTMENTS TO LOCAL AUTHORITY GRANTS: FINANCIAL NEUTRALITY

8. Ministers were concerned about the financial implications of opting out as between central and local taxpayers, and as between local taxpayers in the area where a school opted out and those elsewhere. We have therefore considered the effects of three options to deal with the situation where a school opts out in a particular authority's area:

Option A: to reduce the authority's own grant by the GRE attributable to that school, but to reduce aggregate grant to all authorities by the actual spending on that school (which would be the amount it would get from the Exchequer as a GM school);

Option B: to reduce both the authority's own grant and the aggregate grant by the GRE figure;

Option C: to reduce both the authority's own grant and the aggregate grant by the actual expenditure on the school.

Option A was originally favoured by the Education Secretary, and Option B by the Environment Secretary. Option C is new, and is designed to achieve complete financial neutrality, but at some cost to the integrity of the new local government finance system.

9. Option A is neutral as between central and local taxpayers, because aggregate grant is reduced by the full amount of spending on each GM school. But it reduces the individual authority's grant by the GRE amount, which might be more (in a low spending authority) or less (in a high spending authority) than actual spending. The rationale for this is that the GRE figure is effectively the amount which the Exchequer pays in support of the school - any additional spending has to be met entirely by community charge payers and is not covered by grant. Where a school opts out, community charge payers will be relieved of this additional burden under this option. But because aggregate grant will be cut by the actual spending on the school, all authorities would lose some extra grant when a high spending school opted out, and gain when a low spending school opted out.

10. Option B is similar, but prevents these gratuitous increases and decreases for all authorities by cutting aggregate grant by exactly the same amount as the grant entitlement of the individual authority. This means that it is not neutral as between the Exchequer and local authorities. Where a high spending school opts out the Exchequer (ie the taxpayer at large) will lose, and where a low spending school opts out it will gain.

11. Option C avoids all changes in the financial position of central and local taxpayers, both in aggregate and in each area. But this is achieved by reducing a high spending authority's grant by more than GRE, ie by more than the Exchequer is contributing to the school in question. Conversely a low spending authority's grant is cut by less than GRE. The result is that community charge payers continue to pay for the high spending policy of their authorities in respect of opted out schools as well as those which they still control. In effect it amounts to a continuing levy on those community charge payers for opted out schools. Ministers might wish to consider whether in such circumstances it would be preferable; if only for reasons of transparency, to impose a direct levy instead of the grant arrangements, which would conflict with some of the aims underlying the new grant

system (in particular, that grant should be stable and predictable, and that there should be clear and transparent accountability). However this option does have a certain logic if it is taken alongside the proposal in paragraph 6 above that funding for GM schools should be determined by the local authority's decisions. It would then be consistent for community charge payers to meet the full cost of high spending on schools in their area. This is therefore on blance the option we recommend.

RECOMMENDATION

12. No option which we have been able to identify meets all the problems. Nevertheless if Ministers wish to put in place arrangements which will encourage authorities in all areas to opt out of the local authority sector, we recommend:

- Option 3: in paragraph 3 above, which will link funding for GM schools to the level they would receive under their local authority's own formula for financial delegation;

- Option C: in paragraph 7 above, which will reduce both individual and aggregate grant by the actual expenditure on schools which opt out. (Alternatively the same result might be achieved by leaving grant unchanged but imposing a levy or precept on each local authority to meet the cost of GM schools in its area.)

13. Such a system will, however, have the effect that decisions by local authorities about the schools they control will directly affect the funding of GM schools in their areas. This could attract criticism, especially if a large number of schools opt out. It therefore seems unlikely to be a long term solution to the problem of GM schools, and may need to be reviewed within a few years of a 1990 start.

RINGFENCING EDUCATION EXPENDITURE

14. The Prime Minister's meeting also touched on the possibility of ringfencing local authority education expenditure as a way of reducing the budget of high spending education authorities. This would of course reduce the problem of disincentives to opting out, although it might not remove them entirely. We have not considered this possibility in detail. But it is clear that ringfencing could not work in the same was as is propoed for council housing. Housing is a trading service with large amounts of income from rents and other sources, and it could be ringfenced by simply preventing authorities from making rate fund subsidies. In contract education is a service where the great majority of expenditure is funded from local taxes. Ringfencing would have to work by limiting the amount of money spent on education. This would raise very considerable problems of defining what counted as education spending and designing a mechanism to control it. The Environment Secretary may bring forward his own proposals on this in due course.

Cabinet Office
30 April 1987

EDUCATION

POLICY

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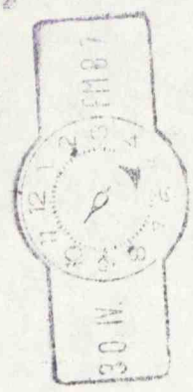

CCBS

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Prime Minister 2

Brian Griffiths has discussed this with DES ministers and is quite content with para 8.

30 April 1987

PAR 30/4.

ELIZABETH HOUSE
YORK ROAD
LONDON SE1 7PH
01-934 9000

P A Bearpark Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Andy,

TERTIARY COLLEGES

You asked in your letter of 25 March for a note about tertiary colleges in response to the Prime Minister's comments during the preparatory meetings for her Central Council speech.

2. As the Prime Minister's comment recognises, although both tertiary colleges and sixth form colleges involve the removal of sixth form provision from schools, they have different characteristics. A tertiary college is a college of further education which is normally the sole provider of post-16 education, part-time as well as full-time, in its area, apart from voluntary and independent institutions and those providers for students with special educational needs. There are at present 35 such colleges. They are generally open to all and tend to offer a broader range of provision than either sixth form colleges or other kinds of further education college. They have to be large to be viable. Sixth form colleges, of which there are now 107, are legally schools and therefore generally provide for full-time students up to the age of 19 studying the range of subjects normally available in schools. Tertiary colleges have existed since 1970 and sixth form colleges since 1966; the Annex to this letter shows the historical pattern of this establishment.

3. Demography and the changing demands in 16/19 education have been significant factors in the growth of separate 16/19 institutions. Falling secondary school rolls pose a difficult educational and financial challenge to local education authorities: the 16-19 population in England will fall by one third from a peak of 2.4 million in 1983 to a trough of 1.6 million in 1995 and although numbers will recover slightly after that, they are likely to be 25% below the 1983 peak for the rest of this century. In the light of this my Secretary of State encourages local education authorities to look at their 16/19 provision in the round in order to maximise educational effectiveness and value for money. If local reviews lead to statutory proposals

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which fall to him to consider under the Education Act 1980, his policy is to consider them on their merits with no pre-conceived view on the ideal organisational solution. His concern is to preserve the best of the provision which exists already and improve the rest. Authorities are aware that he would not normally be willing to approve the closure of a school of proven worth. Indeed, my Secretary of State gave a clear signal of this last December when he announced his decision on major proposals by Sheffield to reorganise its secondary education by closing sixth forms and establishing 8 tertiary colleges. In that case, he required the Authority to retain 6 successful sixth forms while approving the creation of tertiary colleges in other parts of the city.

4. As to the particular points raised by the Prime Minister, my Secretary of State recognises that the concentration of all 16/19 provision in a single tertiary college can be seen as restricting students' and parents' freedom to choose between different types of institution. In practice, it is seldom the case that there is no alternative provision available within a reasonable distance either within or outside the LEA and only one Authority - Richmond upon Thames - at present bases all its post-16 provision in a single college. A tertiary college is, however, able to offer a wider choice of A levels and other qualifications than any but the largest of school sixth forms. The judgement in each case has among other things to weigh up whether what is lost in institutional choice would be balanced by gain in curriculum choice.

5. The evidence from a number of LEAs and from HMI inspection does not suggest that there is any unavoidable association between an organisational pattern which provides for a break at 16 and a difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified teachers for 11-16 schools. There have, of course, been difficulties for some years in recruiting teachers of some specialist subjects for all types of secondary schools and my Secretary of State has already announced measures aimed at overcoming those.

6. My Secretary of State, when considering statutory proposals for reorganisation, pays close attention to such issues as whether the institutional arrangements are likely to prove conducive to study; whether examination performance can be maintained, and preferably improved; and whether the arrangements for pastoral care are satisfactory.

7. Examination performance is always a difficult indicator of institutional performance because it is complicated by socio-economic factors and by the existence of other provision in an area. In general, however, the A level results of full-time students in tertiary colleges appear similar to those in schools or sixth form colleges. The last full inspection report on a tertiary college (in Crewe) showed a 75% pass rate at A level overall and 82% in Mathematics. On teaching style and quality, HMI inspections in the early 1980s found much of the teaching in tertiary colleges to be sound and competent and there was also evidence in some places of exciting and stimulating work.

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8. While there has been an increase over the years in the numbers of tertiary and sixth form colleges, my Secretary of State privately views proposals for further development in this direction, and particularly those involving tertiary colleges, with some scepticism. In particular he is mindful of how these colleges may differ from traditional sixth form provision in atmosphere, in the ways in which students and staff relate, and in the codes of behaviour and discipline. He agrees with the Prime Minister that there will always be a place in the system for successful school sixth forms and considerable reliance also on sixth form colleges. He will continue to look particularly carefully at any reorganisation proposals seeking to introduce tertiary colleges.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Smith

R L SMITH
Private Secretary

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ANNEX

ESTABLISHMENT OF SIXTH FORM COLLEGES AND TERTIARY COLLEGES IN ENGLAND BY YEAR, 1970 TO 1986

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Sixth Form Colleges	3*	1	7	14	20	7	9	9	5	10	4	1	6	5	4	2	-
Tertiary Colleges	1	0	2	2	4	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	2	9	2	5

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NOTES

* Plus 9 already established.

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

2. Tertiary and Sixth Form Colleges are spread across 54 Authorities:

   i. as regards Sixth Form Colleges, Hampshire (10), Cleveland (9), Surrey (7), Manchester (3), Birmingham (4), Harrow (4), East Sussex (4), Leicestershire (4), Bury (3), Cheshire (3), Kirklees (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), 21 Authorities in all having such colleges.

3. The total of 116 sixth form colleges approved include 9 which have since closed; and in one or two Authorities they have been replaced by tertiary colleges.

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LPO

hlc

bc BG

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

28 April 1987

Dear Mike,

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The Prime Minister has seen a paper on the National Curriculum circulated by the Secretary of State for Education (H(87)18). She noted particularly the estimate given in paragraph 5 that additional revenue expenditure by LEAs rising to £150 million per annum by the early 1990s would be needed to meet the costs of the proposed national curriculum. The Prime Minister believes this to be an absurdly large figure and has commented that the local education authorities should be able to re-allocate existing spending.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of H Committee and to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours,

David.

David Norgrove

Mike Eland, Esq.,
Lord President's Office.

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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

27 April 1987

Dear Rob,

NATIONAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Prime Minister has seen your Secretary of State's minute which revived the proposal to bring A levels within the scope of the proposed legislation on the national curriculum.

The Prime Minister remains opposed to this proposal. Your Secretary of State asked in his minute whether all the present 382 syllabuses, 62 of which are taken by fewer than 100 students, are needed. The Prime Minister believes they may be, subject to any proposals which emerge from the committee Mr. Baker has already set up to review A levels. Wide choice, provided there are minimum standards of excellence, is as desirable in this area as elsewhere. In the Prime Minister's view the proposals which emerge from the committee should give your Secretary of State adequate powers which could be used to iron out inconsistencies and anomalies between different examining boards.

Secondly, the Prime Minister detects no major dissatisfaction with A levels amongst either pupils or employers. She fears that the results of your Secretary of State's proposal could be to bring A levels in line with GCSE. This would increase breadth at the expense of depth and could lead to a dilution of standards.

Thirdly, the teaching profession is already at risk of being overwhelmed with curriculum innovation and new examinations, including GCSE, AS levels, CPVE and TVEI. There seems no reason now to add to the burden on teachers.

I am copying this letter to Alex Allan (H.M. Treasury), John Shortridge (Welsh Office), Robin Young (Department of the Environment), Robert Gordon (Scottish Office) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours,

David.

DAVID NORGROVE

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

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10 DOWNING STREET

H(87)18

Prime Minister 2

You should see the sentences marked in paragraphs 5–8 of this paper. N Baker did not give these figures in his discussions with you.

DHS
24/4.

This is absurd. What are the LEAs doing with the money they have got now?

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cc: BG.

PRIME MINISTER

FINANCIAL DELEGATION TO SCHOOLS

I welcome the proposal in Kenneth Baker's paper of 6 April, and shall follow this progress with interest. While Northern Ireland schools do not have the same problems as those in some LEA areas in England, the underlying objectives of effective cost control and greater flexibility are equally relevant to Northern Ireland. To that end Brian Mawhinney has already arranged for officials to see delegated budgeting in practice in schools in his Peterborough constituency.

2. I am copying this minute to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretaries of State for Education, the Environment, Employment, Wales and Scotland and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

TK

24th April 1987

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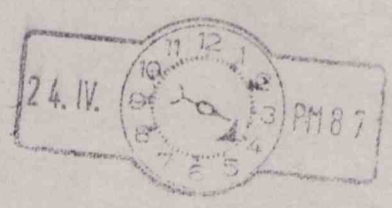
JLD/2886

EDUCATION
POLICY



DT 12

Prime Minister!
Agree to write as proposed?
ARN 24/4.

CC BG

PRIME MINISTER

Yes mt

24 April 1987

GOVERNMENT CONTROLS OVER A LEVELS

Kenneth Baker has returned yet again to the need for government to control A level syllabuses in the National Curriculum: except this time he plans to make his submission to H Committee.

It is a proposal which should be strongly resisted.

Why the present proposal is wrong

The substance of his argument is contained in the question "Do we really want all the 382 syllabuses shown in Annex A, 62 of which are taken by fewer than 10% of students?"

The answer must be yes, subject to any proposals which emerge from the Committee he has already set up to look at A levels.

The Examining Boards have a high reputation. If schoolteachers really felt that some were decidedly better than others, then both the number of Boards and the number of syllabuses would be reduced. But they have not. Substantial choice, subject of course to minimum standards of excellence, is as desirable in this area as it is in any other area of service.

The government has already set up a committee to look at ways of ensuring minimum standards throughout A level exams. Its terms of reference were:

"In the light of the Government's commitment to retain General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced level

examinations as an essential means for setting standards of excellence, and with the aim of maintaining or improving the present character and rigorous standards of these examinations:

- to recommend the principles that should govern GCE A level syllabuses and their assessment, so that consistency in the essential content and the assessment of subjects is secured;

- to set out a plan of action for the subsequent detailed professional work required to give effect to these recommendations."

The proposals from the committee should give the DES perfectly adequate powers with which to iron out inconsistencies and anomalies between different Boards. It does not require the draconian measures which would emerge from the present proposal, namely that government should have the power to draw up syllabuses for A level such as it does for GCSE.

The hidden A level agenda

My personal suspicion is that the reason Kenneth Baker comes back yet again is that he is being driven hard by his officials, the HMI and the schools education establishment. After having come to this conclusion some time ago I was fascinated to read the Times Educational Supplement leader (attached) commenting on the setting up of the 'A' level review. At least it comes clean.

The fact is that 'A' level curriculum and exams are the only feature of school education which have escaped DES and HMI reform over the past few years: GCE 'O' levels and CSE have given way to GCSE, AS levels have been introduced to broaden the sixth form curriculum, TVEI has introduced technical

education and CPVE (Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education) for pupils of limited ability.

Within the framework of DES and HMI thinking the existing 'A' level courses are based on a narrow rather than a broad curriculum, are designed for a limited ability range, are graded on the basis of "norm-referencing" (i.e. heavily influenced by the overall performance of all candidates) rather than "criteria-referencing" (which is the aim of GCSE), and to quote an official DES publication, "Since A level are designed for a limited ability range, and there are no plans for systematically basing their award on criteria-related grades, they are likely to be of limited value in the assessment of a school's performance."

This in my judgement says everything. It is neither a necessary let alone a sufficient reason for the government taking powers to determine A level syllabuses.

Conclusions

1. The apparent reason for the present proposal is administrative tidiness. But this is already being dealt with by the Committee looking into 'A' levels. It is not a good enough reason for risking 'A' levels being changed into the likeness of GCSE.

2. The real driving force for the proposal is not administrative tidiness nor dissatisfaction from either pupils or employers, but the desire to reform 'A' levels in line with GCSE. This will certainly increase breadth at the expense of depth and lead yet again to a dilution of standards. It must be rejected.

3. The teaching profession is already overwhelmed with curriculum innovation and new examinations: GCSE, TVEI, AS levels, CPVE. Introducing yet more changes are bound to meet with hostility from teachers, who are already suffering serious mental indigestion. Another good reason for being conservative.

Brian Griffiths

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

TIMES PAST
THE TIMES
EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT
Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. Tel 01-253 3000

The hidden A level agenda

It would be a mistake to read too much into the apparently restrictive terms of reference of the A level review committee reported in last week's *TES*. They are deliberately not the last word in clarity and precision – indeed, they are not even the last word.

The committee, appointed by the Secretary of State under the chairmanship of Dr Gordon Higginson, an engineer who is vice chancellor of Southampton University, expects to receive further guidance upon its role before its first meeting.

Anyone with a passing familiarity with the television programme *Yes Minister* will have no difficulty deciphering the real messages of Mr Baker's announcement. For "In the light of the Government's commitment to retain GCE A level as an essential means of setting standards of excellence", read "*I am not daft enought to be seen tinkering with A level this side of an election . . .*" and in place of ". . . with the aim of maintaining or improving the present character and rigorous standards" insert "*. . . but something needs doing about it urgently*".

This is not a wholly cynical view: indeed, it is to Mr Baker's credit that, coming relatively late upon the argument for such a review, he has managed to get it under way at such a politically inauspicious moment.

The clue to all this, of course, is in the way such apparently tight restrictions on what the committee has been asked to do are immediately contradicted by the people he has asked to do it. For whatever else you might think, they are clearly people of independent mind and not yes persons.

Whatever the letter of their instructions says, they should, and no doubt will, take a broader view of the academic sixth form than that suggested by the Secretary of State's political announcement.

They are starting work several years late and working to a tight schedule. They have to report by Easter next year, which in reality means they have to have their arguments sewn up by Christmas. But they cannot afford the luxury of saying they'd rather start from somewhere else.

Nor can anyone else involved in sixth form exams afford to wait for Higginson. First, because whatever eventually emerges from the committee is unlikely to influence the sixth form before the 1990s. So the exam boards, the Secondary Examinations Council, and the sixth form teachers need to be at action stations long before then to cope with the collision between the new GCSE approach and the old GCE A level syllabuses in September 1988.

And second, anyone with anything to say to the committee about the sixth form curriculum needs to work up evidence now to a state of instant readiness for this lightning review.

The committee is clearly expected to sketch, in broad brush terms, the principles that should govern the main academic exams for the sixth form: and since the sixth form is irredeemably bound up with its exams, therefore, the principles that should govern the sixth form curriculum. Though it is never referred to in the terms of reference, it is inconceivable that the committee will not also consider, *inter alia*, the fledgeling AS levels.

That immediately brings in considerations of breadth – now favoured by the university vice chancellors – versus the specialization which university entrance tutors are said to demand.

Red rag phrases in the terms of reference like "consistency" are redolent of moves to limit the range and number of A level syllabuses and "essential content" immediately invites the question, "essential for whom?" Essential for the single subject university department, and therefore for only a minority of those studying a given A level? Essential to a broader range of undergraduate courses? Or to those taking none?

Certainly the Cockcroft report – the closest we have come to a mould-breaking education commission in recent years – rejected the notion that A level maths syllabuses should be dictated by university mathematicians. No doubt Sir Roy Harding, a member of Cockcroft (and Cockcroft's deputy at the SEC) and now one of Dr Higginson's famous five, will remind his new colleagues of the background.

Many of the arguments are well rehearsed. They were touted in all previous attempts to reform A level and have been revived quite recently by the vice-chancellors, the SEC and the examination boards, among others.

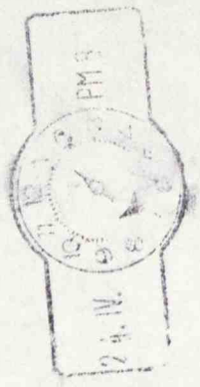
Indeed, the GCE boards regard Mr Baker's initiative as hijacking their own proposals for an orderly revamping of sixth form exams which they put to the Secretary of State last year.

Mr Baker can rightly argue that wider counsels than the boards' should prevail in such a review. The boards favour an evolutionary, bureaucratically tidy, change in sixth form exams. They speak for the considerable number who hope for a gradual introduction of AS levels to offset over-specialization. For the boards are not the only ones who doubt their own capacity – or that of the schools – to mount another major advance while still shell-shocked in the aftermath of GCSE.

But the alternative to the gradualist approach, a "big bang" change to a radically different system has its adherents too, like Professor Alan Smithers and Dr Pamela Robinson (see page 19) who would like to see something along the lines of the International Baccalaureate.

Either way, the committee will have to address two fundamental issues. The first is the resource implications of broadening. The GCSE has shown that the true development costs of change are often underestimated and any extension of compulsory maths or science into the sixth will inevitably require even more of the very scarcest specialist teachers, unless these moves are coupled with some innovatory technological or distance learning solutions to such shortages.

The second has to do with credibility and choice. There is a strong belief that the sixth form can never be broadened voluntarily until fears that it will disadvantage those students hoping for a university place are met. This requires nothing less than a positive incentive: universities have to prove a preference for the broadly educated. They may even have to consider the reintroduction of some kind of matriculation requirement in the form of a grouped certificate.



cc BS

Prime Minister
Brian Griffiths agrees with this.
Content not to proceed with assessment of physical capacity?
JHW 30/4.

PRIME MINISTER

Yes

BETTER SCHOOLS: MORE OPEN ENROLMENT

At your meeting on 8 April at trap you asked me to consider further how to ensure that, under my proposals, secondary schools admitted to the limits of their physical capacity.

2. I have reflected further on this. To require an assessment of the physical capacity of upwards of 4,500 secondary schools is neither practicable nor in my judgment necessary in order to secure our objective. Under my proposals, LEAs, and the governors of aided schools, will be required to admit up to the limit of the existing "standard number" which was generally set in 1979, when school rolls were at their highest. The standard number will be redefined to match the intake in the school year 1988/89, if that proves to be a higher figure. There will be very few schools indeed where intakes were higher in any particular year between 1979 and 1989 than in either of those years, and where there is a continuing capacity to admit to this higher level. In any such exceptional case, the reconstitution of governing bodies to reflect both parental and community interests will make it the more difficult for them to ignore available capacity in response to parental demand. The pressure will be all the stronger because in all cases, if they so choose, LEAs and governors will be allowed to admit to a number higher than the standard number or the redefined standard number. They could impose a lower admissions limit only if they were to satisfy me that physical capacity was in practice below the standard number.

3. I judge, therefore, that our purpose will be served by

proceeding as I have proposed. An examination of the physical capacity of each school would be a very expensive way of trying to catch the few exceptional cases. Moreover it might also act to delay the early implementation date of the scheme, September 1989, that I envisage.

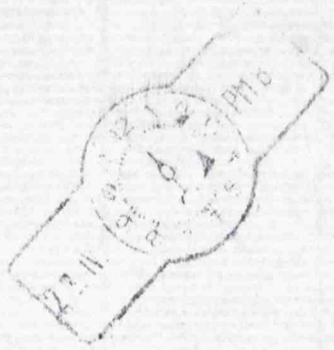
4. I am sending copies of this minute to the Lord President and the Secretaries of State for the Environment, Employment, Wales and Scotland, to the Chief Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

KB

23 April 1987

Department of Edcucation and Science

EDUCATION: Policy PT12



CONFIDENTIAL

CCB9

Any BG comments tomorrow please

PRIME MINISTER

NATIONAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

When we discussed this subject on 3 April, we focused our proposals on the period of compulsory schooling. Your Private Secretary's letter of that date recorded that we should not attempt to control A levels through the legislation on the national curriculum.

On reflection, I believe this would be a mistake. I am strongly of the view that we should take this opportunity to get a grip on the range and consistency of A level syllabuses as well as those of GCSE. You will recall that the Committee on A levels is charged with securing consistency of content for A level syllabuses in each subject. But even that - though an important step forward - will not solve the problem of the 8 GCE Boards each determinedly offering a very wide variety of syllabuses, with small, uneconomic entry numbers for many. Do we really want all the 382 syllabuses shown in Annex A, 62 of which are taken by fewer than 100 students?

Statutory powers to approve public examinations, and their associated syllabuses, taken by the under 19s in full-time school education, would enable me, through the agency of the Secondary Examinations Council, to secure some sensible rationalisation and consistently high standards. I shall work on detailed proposals on these lines and prepare a paper to H Committee for discussion early next month.

Copies of this minute go to Nigel Lawson, Nicholas Edwards, Tom King, Nicholas Ridley and Malcolm Rifkind, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

KB

K B
Department of Education and Science

23 April 1987

CONFIDENTIAL



ANNEX A

A LEVEL SYLLABUSES OFFERED BY THE GCE BOARDS

Subject	AEB	CAMB	JMB	LOND	O+C	OXF	SUJB	WJEC	TOTAL
Religious Studies	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
English	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	12
Welsh								2	2
History	4	1	4	6	3	9*	2	1	30
Engineering	1*		1	1*		1*			4
Latin	1*	1	2	1	2*(1)	1	1*	1*	10
Greek		1*	2*	1*	1	1*	1*	2*	9
French	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	10
German	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	9
Italian	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1		1*	7
Spanish	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	8
Russian		1*	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	7
Other Mod. Lang			1	23*		2			26
Art	3	1	11*	3	1	3	1	1	24
Music	1	1	3*(2)	5*(2)	1	1	1*	1	14
Maths etc	6*(1)	5	7	9	2	3	1	3	36
Computer Science	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	7
Physics	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	10
Chemistry	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	10
Biology	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	12
Geology	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	7
Botany and Zoology		2*		4	2*	2*			10
Tech. Drawing	1	2		1		1	1	1	7
Metal & Woodwork		2*	2*				1*	2*	7
Design & Techn.	1*	1	1	1		2		1	7
Environ. Studies	1		1	1					3
Govt. & Pol. Studies etc	1	2	1	1	1	1		1	8
Economics	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
Geography	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	10
Sociology	1	1	1	1		1		1	6
Other Domestic	2	2	2	2		2		1*	11
General Studies	1	1	1	1*		1			5
Accounts	1	1	1			1		1	5
Bus. Studies	1	1							2
Other Science	1								1
Others: (Misc)	9*(4)	5	4*(1)	2*(1)	2	4	1	2	29
TOTAL	53	47	63	80	29	54	21	35	382

Source: The GCE Boards Regulations and Syllabuses (1984-86).

Key: *Syllabuses for which there are fewer than 100 entries. (Where possible the number of syllabuses is indicated).

EDUCATION: Policy PT12

010

CONFIDENTIAL

SP

1

CC BG
(Letter only)

ELIZABETH HOUSE
YORK ROAD
LONDON SE1 7PH
01-934 9000

Prime Minister +
The conclusions are in
paras 56-61.
DCS
24/4.

The Rt Hon Viscount Whitelaw CH MC
Lord President of the Council
68 Whitehall
London SW1

23 April 1987

Dear William

Last Autumn I asked HM Inspectorate to mount a programme of inspection of educational provision in the London Borough of Brent, with the aim of giving me, the LEA and the public a picture of the quality and effectiveness of the education provided by the Borough.

HMI's report on Brent is now complete and I intend to announce its publication tomorrow by way of a Parliamentary Written Answer. A copy of the written statement together with a copy of the report is attached. It shows that there are serious and deep-seated problems affecting education in Brent. The report indicates that these are not centred on the Authority's anti-racist and anti-sexist policies, nor are they the product of insufficient resources. They are fundamental and long-standing problems stemming largely from bad management. Responsibility for remedying this chronic condition lies with the Authority itself.

In view of the dismal picture painted by HMI, I shall be asking the Authority to let me have by the end of June an action programme and timetable designed to achieve three basic objectives:

a. securing for all pupils and students an uninterrupted education that is full, balanced and challenging;

b. restoring effective management and the mutual trust on which it must be based throughout the education service;

c. deploying its teachers to better effect, and improving their motivation, morale and performance.

Copies of this letter, and of the enclosures, go to the Prime Minister, the other members of the Cabinet and the Chief Whip; and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever
Keith

CONFIDENTIAL

FRIDAY, 24 APRIL 1984 QUESTION NO

MR HARRY GREENWAY (Ealing North):

To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, when he expects to publish HM Inspectorate's report on education in the London Borough of Brent.

MR KENNETH BAKER

The report is being published today and copies have been placed in the Library. It shows that there are serious and deep-seated problems affecting education in Brent: the borough's education service has been gravely impaired by basic weaknesses of management and performance. I have asked the Authority to take urgent and immediate action and to let me know by the end of June its action programme and timetable for dealing with the matters raised in the report so that those who live in Brent receive the sort of educational provision they are entitled to expect. I shall continue to monitor the position closely.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

REPORT BY HM INSPECTORS

on

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN THE OUTER LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

INSPECTED: AUTUMN 1986 - SPRING 1987

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S304/7/02 168/87 DS7/86

REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN THE OUTER LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Introduction

1. In the autumn of 1986 the education service in Brent became subject to intense scrutiny by the media. The reason appeared to be a combination of events and reports: the persistent problem of the recruitment of teachers; the publication of "The Two Kingdoms" report; the resignation of the Director of Education in the summer of 1986; a highly publicised dispute between the Authority and one of its headteachers alleged to have made a racist remark; the proposal to appoint to each school, with the support of Government money, teachers (dubbed 'race spies' by the press) as part of a long-standing programme furthering the policy for racial equality. Newspapers, journals, radio and TV programmes devoted much space and effort to a variety of claims and counter claims. These events and the press coverage of them gave the strong impression that education in Brent was in serious straits.

2. As a result the Secretary of State asked HMI to carry out an inspection of education in Brent and to report to him as quickly as possible about the effectiveness and quality of the teaching and learning. This report is a response to that request. It draws on the evidence of 21 inspections carried out in the autumn of 1986 and spring of 1987: 12 of primary schools, 6 of secondary and three of schools catering for children with special educational needs. In addition during that period, there were inspections in further education (FE), of over 40 centres and projects in the youth and community service, and the adult education service. The report also draws on inspections and visits carried out in the 18 months prior to the main series of inspections. These included over 50 one-day visits and three full inspections of primary schools, two inspections of secondary schools and the inspection of the two FE colleges. The schools and colleges inspected were selected by HMI in an endeavour to give a balanced and representative sample of the range and variety of education in Brent. In recent years reports have been published on educational provision in individual local education authorities (LEAs) and it had been planned to include Brent in that series in 1987-88.

3. Given the wide ranging concerns that have been expressed about education in Brent, it should be noted that the scope of an inspection by HMI is limited. Section 77 of the Education Act 1944 imposes a duty on the Secretary of State for Education and Science to cause inspections to be made of every educational establishment to which that section applies, at such intervals as appear to him to be appropriate, and to cause a special inspection of any such establishment to be made whenever he considers such an inspection to be desirable. HMI are appointed for the purpose of enabling such inspections to be made on behalf of the Secretary of State. Educational establishments within

the scope of this provision include all schools, including schools maintained by a local education authority, independent schools and special schools; maintained further education establishments; and maintained teacher training colleges. Accordingly, the main task of HMI is to inspect teaching and learning in such establishments and to report on the standards achieved. They have no power to inspect the administrative arrangements of a local education authority, nor to investigate its executive and policy-making practice. While it is not for HMI to praise or criticise an LEA's education policies, to the extent that the consequences of those policies, for good or ill, can be seen to affect the work of the schools and colleges under inspection, it is open to HMI to comment on them and suggest the need for any change or development which they consider may lead to improvements in that work.

4. Because of the intense public interest in education in Brent, in addition to carrying out inspections HMI met a number of local parent and community groups reflecting different interests and ethnic groupings in the Borough. There were also meetings with several teachers' and heads' professional groups as well as with advisers, administrators and individual heads; in addition, letters were received from teachers and governors. The main purpose of the meetings was to listen to what the groups and individuals had to say in order to gauge their views and, clearly identified as opinion, to set them alongside the findings of the inspections.

Context

5. The Outer London Borough of Brent is fairly densely settled; the more heavily populated south of the Borough is separated from the residential north by an industrial belt lying along the North Circular Road. In July 1985 the overall rate of unemployment in Brent was 15.7% compared with 13.8% in London as a whole.

6. In 1981 its population was 251,000, a third of which came from ethnic minority groups. This was the highest proportion of any education authority in England and is almost certainly higher now; that in Greater London as a whole is about 14%. The largest group is Asian with origins in the Indian sub-continent and East Africa; the next largest is of Caribbean origin. There is a wide range of other groups and individuals with family origins in many parts of the world but most school children with ethnic minority family origins were born locally. Over 200 different languages are spoken by the children who attend Brent schools. The Authority has to serve a large number of pupils whose home language is not English.

7. There are 34,005 pupils in maintained schools in Brent. The number of pupils in primary schools is rising, but secondary schools as a whole have falling rolls, a feature which is most marked in the southern part of the Borough and aggravated by good transport links which enable pupils from the south to take up places in secondary schools in the north. About 20% of pupils within the maintained sector move to schools - many of them

to denominational schools - in other LEAs for secondary education. This 'export' of pupils occurs in many LEAs and is of long standing in Brent though its degree is unusually high: the average for the Outer London Boroughs (OLBs) is just under 8%. A further 5% of pupils or so take up places in independent schools. In 1984-85, 58% of Brent's young people entered full-time education post-16. This figure compares favourably with 52% for the OLBs and 46% for England.

8. In common with many LEAs which have to provide services in inner urban areas, Brent is faced with severe social and economic disadvantage. It has the third highest number of pupils eligible for free meals; and heavy youth unemployment. Partly because of these difficulties and like other LEAs in the London area, it finds increasing difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers.

Educational Provision

9. Brent is a high spender on education. In 1985-86 its net expenditure was 21.8% more than its Grant Related Expenditure. Its overall costs per pupil are among the highest in the country. It is the most generous authority in England in its provision of secondary teachers with a pupil to teacher ratio (PTR) of 11.2:1 compared with 15.7:1 nationally, and of books, materials and equipment in the secondary sector. At the primary level it is the third most generous authority in respect of PTRs (18.7:1 against 21.8:1 nationally) and second in respect of books, materials and equipment. Brent is also a high spender on youth and community provision where the number of youth workers employed is the second largest of the OLBs. Transport and 'pupil export' costs are high compared with other authorities.

10. Brent also spends highly on its support services for teachers and pupils. It has a relatively large advisory service - the second largest establishment (22) among the OLBs. The advisers are supported by 15 advisory teachers some appointed in relation to Education Support Grants (ESG) and TVEI Related Inservice Training (TRIST) arrangements. In-service training (INSET) is supported by secondments, attendance at local and national courses and a teachers' centre. Under the new national INSET grants scheme the LEA intends to co-ordinate staff development and INSET programmes. There are two resource centres for environmental education; a music centre; a nursery resources centre; a school library service and, since January 1987, a school computer centre and a home economics centre. Professional support of various kinds is available to teachers of children with special educational needs: the Learning Resource Service helps primary teachers to overcome children's learning difficulties particularly in language; and the Brent Language Service supports English as a second language (ESL) work in primary and secondary schools. Consultation, advice and INSET support to special and ordinary schools are provided by the Schools Psychological Service; the Special Needs Support Service provides primary schools with assistance for statemented pupils requiring additional help; and the Brent Education Workshop caters for pupils who have had long periods of absence from school. The Service for Children

with Impaired Hearing and Vision supports some 50 pupils with hearing impairments in ordinary schools, including those in two units for the partially hearing; it has yet to develop its provision for the visually impaired.

11. There is also a cluster of services set up in support of the Borough's policies on multi-cultural education and anti-racism, developed in the main since 1981. Two of the advisers hold posts designated for multi-cultural education and equal opportunities. The particular agencies created specifically for this support are the Curriculum Development Support Unit (CDSU), the Cultural Liaison Teachers team (CLT) and the Brent Language Service. Under the terms of the Home Office review of support arrangements provided under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966, the LEA has proposed a large scale programme to help meet the needs of children of ethnic minorities: the Development Programme for Race Equality (DPRE) under which it is intended to appoint 177 teachers to provide support for the LEA's policies in the schools. The CDSU and the CLT are to be phased out. The job specification states that the head of the DPRE is responsible to the Director of Education and the officer with the post of Race Relations Adviser (Education).

12. The education department is headed by a Director of Education supported by a Deputy Director. There is a principal adviser and three posts at senior or principal education officer level for schools, continuing education and administration. At the time of the main series of inspections there was no Director of Education*, no Deputy Director, and one other senior post was vacant. The Chief Executive and an education officer were filling the Director's and Deputy Director's posts in acting capacities.

Teaching and Learning

Primary Schools

13. In the schools inspected standards of work in English were generally satisfactory. Most pupils were becoming competent readers although they were given too few opportunities to read for information. The quality of pupils' writing was more variable; its range was limited and not enough scope was given to writing from first-hand experience. Spoken language was not being developed consistently although there were some instances of good practice. Most pupils were achieving reasonable competence in the basic skills of calculation but the work was limited by an over-reliance on commercial schemes and worksheets and by the narrow range of tasks set. History, geography, and science were largely encompassed in topic work. Much of this work was weak but there were some examples of good practice, particularly in RE where the topics chosen for study frequently reflected the cultural and ethnic diversity of the pupils. Too few opportunities were given to pupils to develop and master specific skills and techniques in art and PE even though in the latter the LEA's guidelines provided a useful framework. Generally class work in music was weak and limited to singing. The best work in music was that done by the peripatetic instrumental teachers outside normal classes; both are common characteristics in music education nationally.

* The new Director of Education will take up appointment in May, 1987.

14. The quality of the work in the primary schools was very uneven and often lacked pace and imagination. It was better in the nursery classes where it was well organised and matched the children's needs. By contrast, and as for the country more generally, under-5s in infant classes were not well served largely because of a lack of appropriate adult guidance and of suitable practical activities. The older pupils were better served, but too many were not reaching the levels of attainment which should reasonably be expected. In most of the schools there was an insufficient range of learning experiences - particularly in the aesthetic and creative fields - and pupils were not being stimulated or challenged enough. The great majority were well behaved and willing; the instances of poor behaviour were associated with poorly planned work not matched to the pupils' ability. Generally, the primary schools were adopting a sensible and practical approach to ethnic and cultural diversity through multi-faith assemblies, aspects of topic work and constructive use of the mother tongue in the early stages of adapting to school life and of learning English. But in some schools removing books because of their supposed racist or sexist content had depleted class and library stocks. With very few exceptions the primary schools gave high priority to ensuring that opportunities were equally available to girls and boys.

15. About three quarters of the schools inspected were not being strongly led - some of these had acting headteachers. In only a third of them were postholders holding responsibility for developing areas of the curriculum judged to be having a strong influence. In general, schools had such postholders in English, mathematics, science and music; only a minority had postholders for multi-cultural education, health education and special educational needs. There were evident problems in a few of the schools, arising from the employment of some teachers without primary training and experience and similarly inexperienced supply teachers who were being extensively used in some schools, often without adequate support.

16. Despite the LEA's generous provision for staffing, and for books, materials and equipment, most subjects in the schools themselves were not well provided for. This was largely due to the limited perceptions of needs, and inadequate planning and organisation of books and equipment, by heads and teachers.

17. In half the schools the accommodation was good, but in the remainder work was constrained by such features as too little space (including playing space); and intrusive noise. Some schools suffered from inadequate toilets, leaking roofs and poor maintenance. By and large the space, including that which had become available because of falling pupil numbers, was used sensibly. Much of the accommodation was decoratively dull although some was enlivened by good display of pupils' work and other materials set up by the teachers in halls, corridors and classrooms.

Secondary Schools

18. In every secondary school visited, and in most subjects inspected there was some work of high quality, sufficient to show that there

were strengths in the teaching and among the pupils that with encouragement and support could be spread more widely. Half the schools were performing competently overall though they offered too little challenge. Most pupils followed a broad and balanced curriculum. Some syllabuses, notably in English, history, geography, RE and social studies dealt sensibly and well with ethnic minority cultures, whereas in art, home economics and modern languages, opportunities were missed. Some work in humanities reflected syllabuses emphasising the place of women in history and working life. Generally the work in English, the humanities and social studies was better than work in other subjects. Mathematics and science were satisfactory in the main, but there was much room for improvement in art, craft, design, technology (CDT) and home economics. There was some good teaching of modern languages though much was less than satisfactory. Even though the abler pupils generally were more motivated and were achieving more from their studies than were pupils of average ability and below, too many pupils at all levels of ability were insufficiently stretched and their overall performance was below what might be expected. Many low attainers were being left without an adequate grasp of basic skills and the potentially more able pupils did not realise or even recognise their potential. A general feature of the secondary schools was the absence of strategies to differentiate learning expectations according to the pupils' needs and abilities, particularly in mixed ability classes. The net result of this was that the lessons where work was purposeful and challenging were outnumbered by those where expectations were modest or low; where there was a poor working atmosphere arising from inattention, chatter or unacceptable behaviour; and where the standards achieved were low. In addition, the erratic attendance of pupils in years 4 and 5 adversely affected continuity and progression in teaching and learning.

19. The sixth forms generally offered a somewhat brighter picture; the students, including those taking courses leading to the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE), were usually attentive and worked conscientiously though many lacked confidence. Teaching for A level and CPVE courses was on the whole well planned and suitably pitched. The quality of oral work and reading was much better than in the main school. Most schools provided a satisfactory range of courses but there were many small teaching groups particularly for A level courses and in some schools the learning environment was insufficiently stimulating.

20. When given the opportunity, the pupils showed in a range of subjects that they were articulate, able and willing to enter into, and extend their learning by, discussion. But for most of the time they were not called upon to develop their ideas, arguments or communication skills through extended talk. While most could read fluently and with understanding, and there were some keen readers among the pupils spoken to, reading - especially sustained reading - was not sufficiently valued by the teachers and the pupils. In part this was due to the under-use of books in years 1 to 3 in favour of work-sheets. As elsewhere, school libraries were under-used although in Brent they were well stocked and had good accommodation. Writing was limited in range and purpose except in a minority of schools. Generally, the demands of the General

Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) were beginning to encourage a broader approach in some subjects. The presentation of written work was usually good, but there was a predominance of note taking, largely copying, but sometimes from dictation, and of routine and mechanical exercises such as those requiring one word or short-sentence answers. The more extended writing that was called for was not always appropriate nor well matched to the pupils' experience and interests, and contained weaknesses of grammar, syntax and vocabulary that were not always dealt with satisfactorily by the teachers.

21. On the whole standards in mathematics were satisfactory; generally the pupils were able to cope with mathematical demands arising in other subjects, but they were not often called upon to do so. As in English, the more able pupils were better catered for and more confident in dealing with mathematical ideas. The average and less able were given work which was unduly mechanical and did not involve sufficient, appropriate practical work to enable and encourage low attainers to master skills and achieve understanding. Practical activities in science, physical education, art, CDT and home economics revealed some work of a high standard, but most of it was too prescribed and offered too little challenge to the pupils, especially in terms of problem solving, investigative work and planning. Art, music, drama and home economics contributed to the pupils' aesthetic development but opportunities for doing so in other subjects - and in the school environment - were often missed.

22. The spread of pupil attainment appears to be skewed towards the lower attaining end of the scale, a factor which may be associated with the relatively high rate of transfer to other LEAs. There is also a high incidence of socio-economic conditions which are known to correlate with low examination performance. In these circumstances the examination results achieved at all levels by pupils in all Brent's secondary schools, while just below average on most measures, are not unsatisfactory as a whole, particularly when results obtained in the sixth form are taken into account. But beneath the overall figures lie several concerns. Four of the 18 secondary schools contain one third of the fifth year pupils. Closer scrutiny reveals that most of the best results are achieved by pupils in these schools. Thus a large number of pupils in other schools gain poor results. The proportion leaving school with no graded result is higher than the national figure but lower than the expected figure when adjustments for social and economic disadvantage are made. Nevertheless the schools should be making more difference to achievement than they do, given the generous level of resources. Under-expectation of the more able, inappropriate demands for some low attainers and the high incidence of interrupted education that adversely affects the progress of many pupils suggest that there is scope to improve examination performance.

23. The secondary schools inspected generally made sensible arrangements for their pupils' welfare. Most teachers were aware of their overall responsibilities for their pupils' personal and social development and many dealt sensitively and effectively with difficult situations. In a few schools such difficult situations

were commonplace and postholders having specific pastoral responsibility were overloaded by disciplinary problems, some of them trivial. There was a noticeable incidence of poor behaviour: in classrooms where disaffected pupils were hindering others' progress, and in the corridors where in half the schools the behaviour was rowdy and sometimes interfered with lessons. These conditions were often associated with inappropriate programmes of work and teaching approaches. Poor attendance was a matter of concern in six schools, amounting in some to about a quarter of the pupils in years 4 and 5.

24. The environments of many of the schools were often drab and uninspiring. The few successful efforts to improve the environment in some schools by the use of bright commercial material and displays of pupil work could not overcome the impression which too many schools offered, of bare walls, poor decoration, litter and damage, and furniture in poor condition. Only in a minority of the secondary schools was the accommodation satisfactory in terms of maintenance and decoration.

25. In contrast to the state of the accommodation, resources for learning seemed to be satisfactory in the secondary schools inspected. The overall supply of text books was reasonably good although there were some instances of pupils being unable to take books home. Despite the level of provision, in only two schools were books being used appropriately in most subjects and the use made of school libraries was disappointing although five schools inspected had good library provision. Overall there were no noticeable shortages of other materials and equipment and they were generally used appropriately.

26. The consequences of Brent's generous staffing policy are most noticeable in the secondary schools. The overall pupil to teacher ratio (11.2:1) is the best in the country although within Brent it varies from 15.0:1 to 7.1:1. This low overall PTR is in part an effect, found elsewhere, of the need to protect the curriculum against falling pupil numbers. The differences between schools in this respect are a result of a particularly drastic fall in numbers in some, combined with the fact that parents, for various reasons, exercise their freedom to choose to take up places at other secondary schools inside and outside the Borough. They are also in part a consequence of the Authority's reluctance to re-deploy teachers.

27. Most of the permanent staff in post are suitably qualified and experienced. Generally they are well deployed across the years and range of ability, although there is some overloading of scale 1 teachers and of probationers. There is an unduly large number of scale 4 posts. The percentage of time spent by teachers in the classroom is below - in some cases far below - the national average, ranging from 76.8 to 57.6 (the national average being 78.4). Some teachers are therefore on average teaching just over half their available time. This high rate of non-teaching time did not appear to be reflected in better prepared and more effective lessons; nor was there much evidence of curriculum planning and staff development. Generally speaking, the improved PTRs have been used to reduce overall class size and to reduce some teaching

loads to well below the average, rather than to organise more flexible grouping and support. Many teaching groups are further reduced by the high levels of absence among pupils. Given these generous staffing levels and reasonable planning at school and LEA level, pupils should not have to experience interrupted schooling as so many appear to have done. Yet it was repeatedly reported by heads, and complained of by parents, that in schools enjoying such high rates of non-teaching time classes were often taught by supply teachers and by non-specialists, or by weak teachers; that pupils were sent home for lack of supply cover; and that posts were left vacant for long periods.

28. While all the secondary schools had sufficient numbers of laboratory technicians, only half had ancillary support for CDT, and a quarter adequate secretarial assistance. As in the country generally, there was no paid ancillary help in the school libraries; a factor that contributed to them being less well used than they might have been. Some teachers spent too much time on reprographic work - on tasks which could have been carried out by ancillary staff.

29. Homework was regularly set but, in common with schools elsewhere, it was usually an extension of the lesson's activities in the form of class work to be completed or exercises to be done, and rarely involving any investigative activity or new work to be explored. As is often the case elsewhere, none of the schools inspected had a policy for marking. Mostly it was conscientious; less frequently it included helpful comment and clarification of difficulties; sometimes it was superficial and low standards of work were accepted without comment. There was little evidence of any detailed and systematic recording of pupil achievement, although some schools had developed interesting assessment schemes involving pupils and their parents.

Special Educational Needs

30. The Authority has established a continuum of provision for pupils with special needs from pre-school age to 19. It provides support for pupils in ordinary schools, in special units and in special schools. A small number of pupils with profound disabilities are placed in regional centres offering specialist provision.

31. One of the three special schools inspected gave cause for serious concern in that the standards of work and behaviour were far from satisfactory. In the other two standards of work were satisfactory. These two offered an interesting range of experiences (including residential experience and attendance at a college of FE) and used a variety of differentiated teaching strategies including class, group and some individual work. Some lessons taught by specialists were of high quality, including some in art, home economics and PE. Language skills - listening and speaking as well as reading and writing - and mathematical skills were given much attention, not always repaid by the level of achievement. Not all pupils were taught the full range of subjects. The actual PTRs ranged from satisfactory to good; but there were several vacancies and high staff turnover which meant that some teachers were less well qualified and experienced than is desirable.

32. By contrast the provision for meeting pupils' special needs in mainstream schools varied greatly. Few primary schools had a designated teacher responsible for co-ordinating provision, resources and services and more INSET is needed. Secondary schools, on the other hand, had developed special needs departments, well provided for and sometimes generously staffed. But the level of specific support required by individuals was not adequately identified, especially the need for intensive language help. The support in lessons was most effective when provided by a subject specialist, but generally the support teachers were uneasy in practice and unclear about their role. Some of the withdrawal arrangements for pupils were impeding progress both in normal classwork and in the withdrawal group itself. Primary schools were given help by teachers from the Learning Resource Service. Teachers from the Language Service gave effective ESL help in both primary and secondary schools; it was particularly helpful in the primary schools when a range of teaching and learning strategies were employed.

Further Education

33. There was some effective teaching and learning in all subjects, particularly in some practical and craft workshops where there were high standards of work and a proper emphasis on speed, accuracy and working methods. CPVE students were strongly motivated and were benefiting from well-organised teaching. Some departments used a wide range of teaching methods but this was not always the case and there was a great deal of copying of notes by students, and laborious teaching which was rarely supplemented by good hand-out material, effective demonstrations and use of audio-visual aids. On the part-time advanced courses the industrial experience of the students was not well explored and built upon. Written work was neat and well arranged, but in the main comprised sets of notes. Some students showed difficulties in handling English in their work, as well as having handwriting problems and a poor understanding of theory. In most subjects marking was helpful and positive. GCE examination results were poor and, particularly at A level, compared unfavourably with national figures. Results obtained in vocational and technical examinations varied from excellent to poor.

34. FE in Brent is located in two colleges, operating on five major sites and seven annexes. One college is on a split site, the other with three sites and five annexes. This multi-site operation and the departmental organisation of both colleges led to the colleges and their departments working in isolation. In addition there was some resistance to cross-curricular working and the provision was much less coherent than it ought to have been. The accommodation on one site is spacious, clean and up-to-date, but most of the rest is dilapidated and in need of repair or refurbishment. Resources were not effectively used and much specialist laboratory and workshop equipment is dated. The lack of computer software and of technical support, added to poor management, have combined to limit the availability of computing facilities. Three of the six libraries were inadequate in terms of books and study and general facilities; this was more attributable to poor planning than lack of funds.

35. The teaching staff of the colleges are suitably qualified and experienced but need to update their industrial knowledge and skills and to have more opportunities for INSET relating to multi-ethnic issues, especially as the majority of the students are from ethnic minority groups. Staff:student ratios (SSRs) are distinctly generous by national standards. In fact, the high proportion of FE costs devoted to teaching staff salaries and the small size of the classes were features of an Audit Commission report of 1984 - a state of affairs virtually unchanged in 1986. There was also an imbalance of staff between the two colleges: 15% more students in one college attracted 42% more teaching staff and three times as many principal lecturers. This is not justified by differences in the level of courses and in subjects. Some poor examination results and high withdrawal rates (25% in some courses) suggest that a sizeable number of students are inappropriately placed and taught. Poor attendance by students often made the classes even smaller. In fact in over 40% of the classes seen there were fewer than 10 students present, though there were more than that number on the class roll. There was evidence of over-teaching and duplication of work between some departments. Yet some lecturers, including principal lecturers, were working an average of six hours overtime a week. The management by the LEA and on the part of the senior staff in the colleges is at fault and action is needed to improve the management and to rationalise the staffing of the two colleges.

Youth Work

36. Overall, Brent's expenditure on the youth service is far greater than that of any other Outer London Borough. The Authority deploys a large number of full-time and part-time staff for youth work. Yet parts of the service appeared to be over-staffed while others were short-staffed. At area level the lines of accountability for youth workers are not always sufficiently clear. Although well provided for, and despite the declared policy of the Authority, the Youth and Community Service in the Borough pays insufficient attention to the needs of unemployed young people, and of girls and young women who are not much attracted by the present range of provision. There are a number of clubs aimed at particular ethnic minority groups but the cultural diversity represented in the membership of the clubs and centres generally was not strongly reflected in the content and emphasis of the programmes and activities. In addition, youth workers need more information, education and training in health matters particularly in relation to alcohol and drug abuse and AIDS. As in the schools, the general standard of accommodation was drab and uninteresting although there were some good purpose-built premises and conversions.

Adult Education

37. In addition to the provision made in the two FE colleges adult education also takes place in two evening institutes, three community schools; three Neighbourhood Projects; two Borough-wide schemes; and in a wide variety of community groups. It is provided in many locations and has to serve a wide range of need and demand. Half the 27 literacy and numeracy classes inspected provided work of good quality and only three were less than satisfactory. Good

relationships were established; teaching strategies were appropriate; tutors prepared work well; and the students were highly motivated. Effective as much of the work was, a wider variety of teaching methods, including greater use of audio-visual aids, might well have made the work even more so. Work in most of the 49 ESL classes was satisfactory or better and in nine it was excellent. The range of experience and ability was very wide and the teaching and learning were most effective where the tutors had taken care to identify the capacities, experiences and aspirations of the students and planned work accordingly. Adult education provided in the evening centres inspected was more variable, much of it showing signs of a lack of preparation and evaluation. Teaching strategies inappropriate to adults characterised some of the work in the classes provided in one community school. Much of the accommodation was not conducive to good quality learning and administration, and the lack of day-time premises is a major constraint on the development of certain types of adult education. But the community-based schemes were readily accessible to students and there was an impressive referral network, although by and large the schemes were somewhat isolated from each other. While many adult education initiatives within the whole package were well managed and effective the overall service was fragmented and lacked a coherent policy and organisation.

Professional Support and INSET

38. The work of the extensive professional support services was not inspected directly but its impact was often discernible in the schools and colleges. The work of the LEA's advisers was constrained by an administrative work-load particularly occasioned by the considerable staff turnover and the appointment of teachers. This, along with the teachers' dispute, may account in part for the relatively undeveloped state of the curricula of most primary schools. Some advisers spoke of the few opportunities they had to evaluate the work of the schools. Systematic evaluation on the basis of first-hand evidence would do much to help identify strengths and weaknesses and to provide a basis for improvement of curricula and of management in schools. The work of the advisory teachers, for example in ESG related activities such as primary science, and in TRIST related activities such as profiling, was beginning to show some success. INSET has been hard hit by the teachers' action though some secondary teachers had clearly benefited from it to prepare for the GCSE. Although there is variation between and within schools there is clearly scope for development in a number of aspects of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools, including the implications of the development of gender and race awareness work. There is need to promote more effective management by headteachers, necessary for instance in relation to postholders' duties in primary schools, and in both primary and secondary schools to enable supply teachers and temporary staff to be used to the best advantage. Overall, there is a need to co-ordinate the various support activities and under the Grant Related In Service Training (GRIST) scheme the LEA intends to do so in respect of its staff development and INSET. There is also a need to co-ordinate and make clear the functions and activities of the large numbers of those concerned in the initiatives to promote racial equality. This provision, already extensive and expanding, is diffuse, complex

and confusing. In particular, the status of the DPRE teachers in schools needs clarification. As a consequence heads and teachers feel threatened by what is intended, after all, to be a support service.

Other Perceptions of the Education Service

39. People's perceptions of an education service are important factors for its morale and confidence. This is particularly so in Brent given the current public concern. HMI met, at their request, a number of groups reflecting parent, community, professional and administrative interests. It was difficult to gauge how representative the views expressed were, and, given the multi-ethnic nature of most of the groups, to distinguish the views emanating from particular ones. What is clear is that the perceptions of those to whom we listened were specific and, in the main, critical. With the exception of parents from Caribbean backgrounds, the parents tended to be supportive of the schools that their children attended.

40. The concerns which dominated the meetings ranged more widely than press reports suggested. Although they had many different starting points, depending on the source, there was considerable unanimity. By far the most important, mentioned by every group, were the worries related to the quality of education and the disruption of it caused by the apparent shortage of permanent, suitably qualified and experienced teachers available to teach when required to do so. It was acknowledged that, as in all other London authorities, the high cost of housing played some part in this problem. But some of the blame for it was attributed to lengthy and laborious appointments procedures and the effects of recent adverse publicity.

41. The main concerns of parents centred on the extensive use of supply teachers resulting in many changes of teacher for some pupils - as many as eight in one year reported for one infant class - and on the quality of the supply staff. Parents were concerned too about teacher demoralisation, about low expectations, particularly in the view of the parents of pupils of Caribbean origin; and about unmarked work and poor discipline (seen not only as poor behaviour but as poor application to work), a matter commented on frequently by parents from ethnic minorities. Poor examination results, the lack of resources as revealed by apparent book shortages and the reliance on work sheets, and the poor state of premises also came in for criticism as did the failure - over a period of two years in some cases - to issue reports on pupils. The continuing teachers' dispute meant that some pupils were frequently being sent home at untoward times; this was particularly worrying in areas where the parents are anxious for their children's safety. Parents in several groups spoke of wishing to seek education for their children elsewhere: in independent schools, in the voluntary-aided sector, in the north of the Borough, or out of the Borough altogether; or of supporting what their children were now getting by attendance at the supplementary schools, some of which, as in other areas, are assisted by the LEA.Standards were generally thought to be lower than in other authorities. Some parents spoke of difficulties in making contact with the LEA and of unreceptive schools unwilling

to deal sensitively with parents' worries.

42. The heads' and teachers' groups' concerns were about management and administration. There were repeated references to muddle and inefficiency on the part of the LEA which had led, for example, to extra paper work for heads, to incorrect and delayed payment of salaries, unanswered telephone calls and lost correspondence. They also spoke of unduly lengthy appointment procedures, over-hasty compilation of short-lists and long periods of interviewing against deadlines, unexplained late additions to short-lists and delays, allegedly to do with race matters, which gave rise to suspicion. Symptomatic of management problems in their view were the lack of strategies to deal with falling rolls and the redeployment of teachers. Generally the heads felt unsupported by the administration - at whatever level - over such matters as the exclusion of pupils and delays in making appointments, particularly of postholders in primary schools.

43. The administrators shared the heads' concerns about the difficulties of communications between schools and themselves and between themselves and the teachers' associations. In fact, it seemed to be acknowledged all round that relations between the LEA and the schools and teachers were poor. These difficulties were said to have their roots in the past but to have been exacerbated by the teachers' dispute. There had also been considerable turnover of staff in the education department with the result that many posts - at all tiers - were unfilled. Officials were acutely aware of the problems of teacher supply; a recent report on staffing to the Education Committee pin-pointed all the issues and the Authority has now revised its recruitment procedures. It was reported to us that meetings of administrators, headteachers and teachers associations have now been re-established.

44. The main concern of the advisers was that much of their time (50% was quoted) was spent on administrative matters, particularly those related to teacher appointments. This, coupled with other pressures, had had a number of effects: the possibility of INSET during the working week had been eroded; there had been a diminution in the amount of it; it had also had a lower level of priority because of the time that had to be given to administration and support. School appraisals had come to a stop.

45. Those concerned specifically with race relations policy concentrated on describing their roles and functions. The Race Relations Adviser (Education) is an officer with a dual reporting line: to the Director of Education in terms of "line management", and to the Principal Race Relations Officer in terms of "functional relationship". This dual reporting line, applies to the race relations adviser of each of the Council's departments. Given the wide-ranging nature of an issue such as racial equality, decisions leading to action taken in one area could have unforeseen effects in others. Consequently matters of immediate concern to the Director of Education and other officials may be acted on elsewhere; this situation could cause delay and confusion.

46. It has to be said that, among the parents and community groups, criticisms of schools' and teachers' standards and of administrative competence in the LEA generally featured much more strongly than did those concerned with the formulation and implementation of particular LEA policies. What references there were to LEA policy were dominated by the two key issues of race and gender. There was a large measure of support for the intentions of these policies. The criticism was directed at their implementation and overwhelmingly so with regard to the anti-racist policy. Some parents from ethnic minorities, notably those of Caribbean family origin, believed that the anti-racist policy had not gone far enough, with the result, in their view, that their children were still being discriminated against (one group specifically attributed this to white teachers) and were under-achieving. Others, predominantly from the north of the Borough, considered that the race policy was too dominant and that the pressure from the south of the Borough in support of the policy was too great. A number of professional groups expressed concern at the confrontational tone of directives relating to this policy. The lack of consultation about it was said to be engendering distrust and insensitive implementation and was leading to accusations of obstructive practices and discrimination, for example in the appointments procedures.

47. Some of the educational concerns highlighted in these discussions were borne out in large measure by HMI's observations and judgements of what was happening in practice in the schools and colleges. There is a notable gap between the LEA's intentions and the quality of the education it provides. Too many of Brent's young people under-attain. They do so regardless of sex or race and they do so despite the generous provision Brent makes for education. A number of factors seem to contribute to this state of affairs.

Contributory Factors

48. Brent ranks high among authorities having to cope with serious educational disadvantage. It has also to cater for a wide social and economic range typified, perhaps too starkly, by the dichotomy between the more prosperous north and the more seriously disadvantaged south of the Borough. It has to make provision for the highest proportion of the children of ethnic minorities of any LEA in England, including those whose home language is not English. As in other London boroughs, the high costs of housing and transport make it difficult to recruit and retain teachers and the Authority itself faces the same problems as the schools in recruiting and holding an experienced team of officers. In common with other authorities, after a period of expanding educational opportunity and provision, it has to cope with a sharp fall in pupil numbers, now followed by an upturn in those entering schools in the early primary years.

49. The north/south issue is important and needs some examination because it is complex: for example many pupils from the south of the Borough receive their secondary education in the north. There was no evidence that schools in the south were under-resourced or under-staffed; on the contrary the secondary schools had better and costly PTRs, used to create smaller classes. The Borough's youth and community provision is heavily weighted towards the

south. The quality of work in the primary schools does not appear to be in any significant way associated with location. The work of four secondary schools inspected was judged to be above average; one of them is situated in the south. The difficulties faced by secondary schools in the south reflect the problems associated with social and economic disadvantage.

50. It is in the staffing of its schools, colleges and youth services that the most difficult problem facing the Authority lies. In this, as in other matters, Brent presents a paradox: it is one of the most generously staffed LEAs in the country yet it is afflicted by what appears on the surface to be a shortage of teachers. PTRs are among the most favourable in England; the distribution of scale posts is generous; and, according to its own staffing schedules, Brent has a surplus of secondary school teachers costing £3/4 million per annum*. The effects of this situation are apparent in some schools where rolls have fallen drastically, where class contact time amounts to just over half that available and where classes are further reduced by absence. Yet teaching posts remain vacant for long periods; pupils lack specialist teachers; the extensive use of supply teachers, occasionally to mind classes rather than to teach them, leads to disrupted education for many pupils; and pupils are sent home because teachers are absent. This wasteful provision also affects the FE colleges which are characterised by generous SSRs, the duplication of provision and effort, and small classes made even smaller by absence and drop-out.

51. The inspections leading to this report have also identified some serious weaknesses in the quality of the teaching attributable to low expectations and a lack of professional planning in schools, colleges and the youth service. While the day-to-day work of teachers ensures that most Brent pupils receive adequate schooling, it is too frequently dull and undemanding and its quality varies too greatly from school to school. Main-stream subjects are satisfactorily dealt with by and large in primary and secondary schools but too much of the work does not match pupil's needs and abilities. Indeed, a persistent problem - not uncommon in the country at large - is the failure to match work to pupils' different needs and abilities, particularly in mixed ability classes. In only a few schools have heads and teachers devised assessment policies designed to identify strengths and weaknesses and to improve performance. Many teachers need to raise their sights; to identify pupil needs more effectively, including those related to living and working in a multi-ethnic society, and to determine their professional responses to them. Some of these problems may well have been exacerbated by the long period of the teachers' dispute, but others are of longer standing. It is difficult to avoid the judgement that the LEA is not demanding nor receiving a fair return on its generous investment in teaching staff.

52. Weaknesses in management have also thwarted the Authority's intentions though routine administration ensures basic provision. The absence of key personnel in the education department has meant that the necessary tasks of formulating and deciding on strategies for implementing policy on educational matters have not been carried

*The Authority has now budgeted to reduce this surplus in 1987-88.

through. There is a need for more open, firmer and speedier procedures to deal with resignations and appointments so that schools and colleges are not left in limbo; and for a more even allocation of finance as between, say, accommodation* and staffing. Decisions and action are needed to resolve the problems of half-empty, over-staffed schools; to reduce waste and duplication and to strengthen the management and co-ordination of FE, the youth and community services and adult education; to make clearer the roles and functions of people at all levels; and to evaluate the quality of the service provided with particular regard to its cost effectiveness.

53. Relationships within the education service in Brent are not good. There are quite unusual and undue levels of mistrust and resentment between the LEA and its heads; between the LEA and its teachers, particularly as represented by their associations; between some heads and teachers; between schools and the personnel concerned with implementing the race relations policy; and between the schools and some parents (particularly those from ethnic minorities) and between parents and the LEA. These poor relationships stem in part from the teacher dispute and its continuing aftermath affecting some pupils repeatedly. But they are not helped by the pressure of contingencies and emergencies accompanied by in-fighting inside certain schools and colleges.

54. Overlaying these matters are the policies concerning race and gender. While goodwill was expressed for the intentions of them, parents, teachers, heads and advisers were concerned about the manner of their implementation. It was impossible during the inspections to disentangle the various influences: the policies are not new and there have been steady attempts by teachers over a number of years to deal with race and gender issues; and there were as yet no DPRE teachers in the schools. In themselves the policies did not appear to threaten the quality of the work in schools except in those instances where the culling of books had led to a depleted stock of reading material. On the contrary they had either made only modest inroads or, where progress was more marked, had had a beneficial effect. The LEA's gender policy has made less headway than the policy on race but there were clear attempts to try and reduce sex-stereotyping in schools and in classes. On the other hand there seem to have been few attempts to respond to the needs of girls and young women in the youth service. So far as could be observed there is racial harmony among pupils in primary, secondary and special schools and the general impression was that the LEA's anti-racist policy in principle at least goes with the grain of local opinion.

55. It is hard to comment further on this matter since many of the concerns expressed bear on areas which lie beyond the remit of HMI, for example the processes of the recruitment and appointment of staff under Brent Council's "Code of Practice". But there appear to be two side effects of these policies. The first is that the manner of their implementation, and the argument it has generated, may have masked and diverted energy away from other more fundamental

*The Authority has recently agreed a three year £10 million investment programme to enable further essential work to be done.

educational needs identified in this report, though the agenda papers publicly available relating to the business of the education committee and its various sub-committees do not show an undue emphasis on those policies. The second effect is that the procedures relating to the appointment of teachers, and in particular of those to be appointed under DPRE arrangements, are the object of some suspicion on the part of the public and of some heads and teachers in the service. This is fuelled by the doubts reported to us about the way these teachers are to carry out their work in the schools and about whether they are answerable to the head or to others; by insensitive demands made on heads and teachers; and, as we observed, by the absence of the necessary help in terms of classroom management and curriculum development. We have no direct evidence of any impropriety concerning appointments but the muddle and confusion that undoubtedly prevail provide the circumstances in which the suspicion of impropriety can thrive, and within which it could exist.

Conclusion

56. Despite the undoubted problems in the Authority and much public sound and fury, much of the work actually taking place in schools and colleges is reasonably organised and conducted by teachers and equally reasonably responded to by pupils and students. There is little evidence that the work in classrooms, lecture rooms and libraries is being distorted by improper practices to do with anti-sexist and anti-racist policies. None of the DPRE teachers who have been a feature of press reports are in place. In most schools and subjects the response to ethnic and cultural diversity has been sensitive and helpful though it has not in the main brought about any major curricular changes. There is nevertheless a good deal of unease and suspicion surrounding the implementation of the anti-racist policy. The uncertainties need to be resolved and the schools assured that teachers working in them are answerable to the head who is responsible to the governors, the Authority and the parents for what goes on in, and is achieved by the school.

57. There are serious problems affecting education in Brent but they are not, as yet at any rate, centred on race and gender. Educationally they are more fundamental and long-standing. They affect pupils and students of all kinds and are concerned with the quality of what is provided in the schools and colleges and the standards of education being achieved; low expectations both of the range of experiences young people should encounter and of their capabilities; inadequate identification of their educational needs; and insufficient planning to meet them. Remedying these weaknesses requires good professional leadership in the schools. In the Authority strategic decisions about curricular provision and ways of implementing them, for example through INSET, and about management at LEA, school and college levels which might result in a more purposeful, coherent and economic service, have not been taken.

58. There is dissatisfaction on the part of parents about discipline in schools and above all about standards of achievement. They are concerned about such matters as disrupted teaching, the use

of unsuitably qualified and inexperienced supply teaching, unmarked work, unreceptive schools, the failure to issue reports and children being sent home. Heads' and teachers' concerns relate more to administration: inefficiency, errors and delays over day-to-day matters but also affecting large scale issues such as the appointment of teachers, and to a lack of policy and strategies to deal with matters such as falling rolls, redeployment and teacher supply. Administrators share the heads' concerns about attracting and retaining good teachers and about the uncertain communications between the LEA and the schools and between it and the teachers' associations. Some advisers were concerned that insufficient time could be given to evaluating the quality of service.

59. These problems and weaknesses do not arise from a lack of money for education. Brent is a high spender by comparison with all other LEAs. It is difficult to conclude that money has been used advisedly: expenditure has not been clearly focused or targeted and its effects have not been evaluated. The problem of surplus places has not been faced. The supply of teachers is generous but it is clearly not proof against an interrupted education for many pupils; against situations where teachers teaching half their time demand extra staff to cover absences; against hold-ups in appointments; against weak supply cover; and against undemanding teaching. Schools are in a poor state of repair and decoration and some are half empty. FE is badly managed at LEA and college levels, lacks coherent provision and is wasteful of resources. The youth service too, offers disorganised and unchallenging activities to the young people, particularly young women.

60. Changes are needed to make sure that education is a vital and challenging experience for all young people, girls and boys of all ethnic groups. For under-achievement does not apply only in respect of one group. Brent is publicly committed to providing good education for all its young people, particularly in ways which would given them the skills and attitudes they need to make their way in the world. There are within the LEA effective people and enough instances of good work in all schools and colleges to suggest that the general standards of management, organisation, teaching and learning can all be raised. But for this to happen the LEA's politicians and officers need to manage the service effectively by confronting its basic problems: falling rolls, effective arrangements for the recruitment and economic deployment of a teaching force adequate in number, suitably qualified and experienced, and encouraged and supported to raise its sights. The review of accommodation and the recent budgeting to reduce teacher surplus are signs that the Authority may be beginning to address these issues. Furthermore the LEA should set out a full range of educational policies aimed at raising standards. The heads, given support, need to manage and lead their schools with competence, and imagination so as to encourage and enable their teachers to adopt and teach well a wide-ranging curriculum in line with the needs of pupils in the society in which they live. The teachers, helped by the advisers and INSET, need to plan better for that range of experiences and to draw the best out of all their pupils.

61. Above all, genuine trust and co-operation need to be re-established within which each of the partners providing education in Brent knows what its part is in the scheme of things, is enabled to play it fully, and is aware and supportive of the parts played by others. Whether or not LEAs and schools can directly influence a society's values and attitudes in such issues as prejudice and discrimination based on race and gender is a matter for debate. Policies about such matters and the action deriving from them, are properly issues to be debated and agreed locally. But if an LEA wishes its schools and colleges to seek to influence society's attitudes in these matters, it is imperative that it ensures, so far as it is able, that they do, and are seen to do, their basic job of providing for and educating pupils and students effectively, efficiently and conscientiously. If they do not, or are believed not to do so - both of which seem to apply in Brent at the moment - there is little cause for them to be taken seriously in anything they have to say about eradicating prejudice and discrimination.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN THE OUTER LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

A REPORT BY HM INSPECTORS

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

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1 Schools and colleges inspected

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INITIALS AND ACRONYMS

The following acronyms and sets of initials are used in this report.

AEO	Assistant Education Officer
AFE	Advanced Further Education
A level	Advanced level (of the GCE)
BTEC	Business and Technician Education Council
CDT	Craft, Design and Technology
CE	Church of England
CEE	Certificate of Extended Education
CGLI	City and Guilds of London Institute
CPVE	Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education
CSE	Certificate of Secondary Education
DPRE	(The) Development Programme for Race Equality
ESG	Education Support Grant
ESL	English as a Second Language
FE	Further Education
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
FHE	Further and Higher Education
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectors/Inspectorate
GRIST	Grant Related In-service Training
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
INSET	In-service Education and Training
JMI	Junior Mixed and Infants
LB	London Borough
LEA	Local Education Authority
NNEB	National Nursery Education Board
OLB	Outer London Borough

O level	Ordinary level (of the GCE)
PE	Physical Education
PTR	Pupil: Teacher Ratio
RC	Roman Catholic
RE	Religious Education
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
SEN	Special Education Needs
TRIST	TVEI Related In-Service Training
TVEI	(The) Technical and Vocational Training Initiative.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN THE OUTER LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT
SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report is based on inspection carried out between November 1986 and March 1987, embracing twelve primary schools, six secondary schools and three special schools. All these inspections have resulted, or will result, in a published report on the particular school. There was also some inspection of youth and community work and of adult education. The report draws also on the evidence of earlier inspections resulting in published reports; on the two colleges of further education (FE), two secondary schools and three primary schools which were inspected within 18 months of the start of the main set of inspections. Assessment derived from the routine visiting of HMIs, in particular from about fifty one-day visits to primary schools in the 18 months prior to the inspection and from extra visits in FE, has also contributed to the evidence for this report. A list of the schools, colleges and services inspected is in Appendix 1.

2. As well as using the evidence yielded by inspections, HMI have drawn on other sources including the published documents listed in Appendix 3. The Chief Executive and several officers of the Authority have contributed a great deal of valuable information and have been helpful at all stages of the exercise. During the main period of the inspection HMI met and listened to the views of groups of parents from schools, of community groups and of the teachers' professional organisations and of individuals. A list of these groups is to be found in Appendix 2. HMI would like to express their gratitude to all who have assisted them in their work.

3. The Outer London Borough of Brent lies in the north west segment of Greater London and occupies 3.5% of the area of the Outer London Boroughs. It is fairly densely settled with nearly 57 people per hectare. The Outer London average is approximately 35 people per hectare. The more intensely populated south of the Borough is separated from the north by an industrial belt lying along the line of the North Circular Road. Although there is some manufacturing industry in Brent, the main source of employment is in service industries which provide 61% of jobs in the Borough as opposed to the 28% in manufacturing. This is broadly the same as the occupational pattern of those residents of Brent who are employed outside the Borough. In July 1985 the overall rate of unemployment in Brent was 15.7% compared to 13.8% in London as a whole.

4. In 1981 the population of Brent was 251,000 (5.5% of the total of the Outer London Boroughs) and it was projected to fall by 2.7% by 1991. One third of the population was from ethnic minority groups in 1981. The proportion is almost certainly higher now and is the highest of any Authority in England; the proportion in Greater London as a whole is about 14%. The largest ethnic minority group is Asian, with family origins in the Indian sub-continent or East Africa. The next largest group is of Caribbean family origin. These two groups constitute the majority of the ethnic minorities in the Borough but there is a wide range of other groups and individuals with family origins in many parts of the world. The vast majority of school children of ethnic minority parents were born locally. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups in Brent's schools is higher than the proportion of people from these groups in the Borough as a whole. The LEA estimates that around 65% of pupils who transfer to secondary schools are drawn from ethnic minority groups. In December 1984 41%

of the pupils in Brent spoke at least one language in addition to English; over 200 languages are spoken by the children in Brent schools taken as a whole.

5. Details of the schools, pupils and teachers in Brent are as follows:

Type	Number of schools	Pupils	Teachers (FTE)
Nursery	4	214	15
Primary	72	20,478	1,094
Secondary	18	12,824	1,144
Special	7	489	105
TOTAL	101	34,005	2,358

Source: Education Statistics Estimates:(CIPFA) 1986-87

Altogether the Authority maintains 101 schools, employs 2,358 (FTE) teachers (nearly 6.5% of the total employed in the Outer London Boroughs) and some 2,500 non-teaching staff. Further comment on staffing is made in Section IV of this report.

6. Brent has to cater for a relatively young population; the number of people aged 19 or below is the highest in Outer London. There are 34,005 pupils in maintained schools in Brent. The number of pupils in primary schools is rising, but secondary schools as a whole have falling rolls, a phenomenon which is most marked in the southern part of the Borough. These broad statistics mask two important features; first that about 20% of pupils within the maintained sector move to maintained schools (mainly denominational schools) in other LEAs for secondary education (the corresponding proportion for the Outer London Boroughs is, on average, 8%) and that around 5% transfer to independent schools; secondly the strong north-south transport links are tending to facilitate the movement of pupils to schools in the north of the Borough, thereby exacerbating the problem of falling rolls of schools in the south.

7. The January 1987 DES Form 7 data from the 18 secondary schools are displayed in Appendix 4. The rolls of the secondary schools ranged in size from 214 pupils to 1,686 pupils. Two schools had under fifty 11-year olds and eight had fewer than 100. Six schools also had less than 100 in each of the 12 year old and 13 year old groups. In recent years only four schools have regularly recruited numbers of pupils close to their admission limits. The total number of 11 year olds in Brent secondary schools in 1986-87 was approximately 71% of the published total intakes of the schools. There was little or no spare capacity in the first year at six schools. In the remainder the proportion of spare first year places was over 80% in one school, over 60% (in four schools, over 40% in six schools and over 30% in ten schools.

8. The proportion of 16 year olds in Brent schools continuing full-time education at maintained schools or colleges of FE has been higher than the national average in recent years:-

	1983-84	1984-85
Brent	63%	58%
OLBs	54%	52%
England	47%	46%

Source: DES Statistical Bulletin: 9/86

9. The Authority maintains two colleges of FE in which there are over 10,000 students (3,886 FTE) of whom approximately three quarters are on part-time courses. The majority of the students come from ethnic minority groups and slightly less than one fifth are following AFE. There are few links between the two colleges.

THE LEA ADMINISTRATION AND STRUCTURE

10. At the time of the inspection the Chief Executive was acting Director of Education. There was also an acting Deputy Director responsible for three main branches of the education service covering: schools (teachers, school administration, special education and special needs); continuing education (Further Education, youth and community, adult education and careers); and administration (buildings, supplies, finance, non-teaching staff and schools meals). Two of these sections had heads in acting capacities. An assistant education officer, working to the Deputy Director, is responsible for aspects of in-service training and the race relations adviser (education), an officer who is responsible to the Director, as is the principal adviser. A new Director of Education was appointed in March 1987.

11. The LEA's advisory service is the second largest in the Outer London Boroughs with 18 advisers in post and an establishment of 22. The Authority has a Schools' Psychological Service of 9.6 FTE educational psychologists; it also maintains a teachers' centre.

12. Brent's net expenditure on education in 1985-86 was £84.3 million (21.8% more than its Grant Related Expenditure); for 1986-87 the LEA budgeted to spend £94.6 million (28.6% above its Grant Related Expenditure). The Authority has a favourable pupil to teacher ratio as is evident by a comparison of the overall pupil to teacher ratios for primary and secondary sectors with those of other LEAs:

	Brent 1985-1986	Brent 1986-1987	OLBs 1986-1987	English LEAS 1986-1987
Primary	16.6	18.7	20.8	21.8
Secondary	11.4	11.2	14.6	15.7

Source: Education Statistics, Estimates; CIPFA 1986-87

The growth in the primary school population may explain the recent increase in the ratio in the primary sector.

13. Overall net expenditure per pupil (which includes staffing) is high in Brent compared with Outer London Boroughs and with LEAs overall. Primary phase costs per pupil rose from £1,027 in 1985-86 to £1,058 in 1986-87 when the Outer London Borough average was £881.4 and the national average was £786; secondary phase pupil costs were £1,685 in 1985-86 and £1,807 in 1986-87 when the Outer London Borough average was £1,357 and the national figure £1,202.

14. Transport costs per pupil in Brent are high at £25.9 compared with an Outer London Borough average of £11. Of the Outer London Boroughs, Brent has the third highest number of pupils eligible for free meals. The net export of pupils from Brent to other LEAs is a further cause of expenditure.

15. Brent schools are well provided for in terms of expenditure on books and educational equipment which has increased from £39.7 per pupil (1985-86) to £44.9 (1986-87) at the primary level and from £74.4 to £94.4 at the secondary stage. The Authority is second only to ILEA in its primary provision and ahead of all LEAs with respect to it secondary expenditure. The equivalent expenditure per further education student was £164.00 in 1986-87 compared with an average of £146 in respect of Outer London Boroughs and £148 for English LEAs*.

16 The Authority is concerned, however, that it has not been able to allocate sufficient resources for the comprehensive maintenance of buildings. In the 1986-87 budget the additional revenue funding was limited to the rate of inflation; essential work only has been carried out with the consequence that little internal decoration has taken place. Brent LEA is aware of these issues and has recently agreed a three year £10 million programme of investment which will enable further essential work to be completed.

17 The LEA has policies on a number of issues, in particular on maintaining a high level of nursery provision, on anti-racism and on anti-sexism. The LEA has recently introduced a new Agreed Syllabus for RE. It has a strategy for INSET which is designed, in part, to reinforce its equal opportunities policies. Currently it is reviewing its provision for students of 16-19 and possibilities for its reorganisation.

*Source for paragraphs 13-15 : Education Statistics, Estimates; CIPFA 1986-87

II TEACHING AND LEARNING

Early years and Primary Education

18. The quality of work in primary schools varied markedly sometimes even among classes of similar age children within the same school. Overall the best provision was in nursery classes where the children generally received a well balanced curriculum that met their educational needs and effectively prepared them for entry to the first stage of statutory schooling. In infant and junior classes the best work occurred in English; children made good progress in reading and attention was given to spoken English including the learning of English as a second language. Progress in mathematics was mainly satisfactory but in too many classes the work lacked pace and relevance to the real life experiences of the children. There was considerable variation in the standards of written work and the range of writing which children undertook was often unduly limited. Geography, history, science, and sometimes religious education, were usually included in topic work but, in general, inadequate planning and the uncertain management of the curriculum and resources hampered progress in most subjects. In a minority of schools the topics selected for study successfully reflected the ethnic diversity of the pupils' backgrounds. Good work in religious education was often associated with the implemention of the LEA's recently published Agreed Syllabus. In art, physical education and music there were too few opportunities for children to use their imagination or to develop appropriate skills and techniques; insufficient attention was given to practical activities involving craft, design and technology. These shortcomings in the curriculum resulted in many children failing to reach the levels of attainment which could be reasonably expected of them.

19. In almost all the schools the pattern of the day for children in the **nursery classes** was well organised and considerable attention was given to the children's social and linguistic development. Children were skilfully guided to select a wide range of well-planned activities including the use of sand, water and domestic equipment, and the making and painting of models. Sorting, matching and grading activities were used to develop early mathematical ideas, manipulative skills and an appreciation of the qualities of different materials. The ethnic diversity of several nursery classes was reflected in imaginative play stimulated by good collections of materials from a variety of cultures. Often work was co-ordinated through a theme such as 'Ourselves' which provided a focus for the activities and the development of the children's language. In many nursery classes English was not the home language of a significant proportion of the children and in some cases the staffing was augmented by a teacher from the Language Service who conversed with the children in their home language and integrated the teaching of English as a second language with the general activities of the class. All the nursery programmes had sessions when children were gathered together, for stories, songs and discussion. Parents were welcomed into some classes and assisted with aspects of the programme of work.

20. The provision for **under fives in infant classes** was less appropriate than that in the nursery classes. In only half the infant classes was the work of the under fives in language and mathematics and their social learning

ity of classes the lack of suitable materials, too

satisfactory. In the major

few practical and aesthetic activities and insufficient interaction with teachers and other adults resulted in disappointing levels of achievement. Contin

uity between the nursery and infant classes was satisfactory in half the

schools but too often the work of the nursery had little influence on the provision for the youngest children in the infant classes.

21. In the **infant classes** generally, the most successful work was in English. Standards in reading were generally satisfactory and some children were given regular opportunities for purposeful classroom discussion. In about a third of the schools the basic reading skills were learned through the use of a wide selection of books, rather than through focusing too narrowly on particular reading schemes, and teachers monitored the progress of the children successfully. Several schools introduced reading by drawing upon the children's own experiences as a basis for constructing early reading material; the children generally responded well to this approach and made good progress. In some infant classs successful use was made of tape recordings and stories which were told in the community languages of many of the children as well as in English. In one school where, in addition to English, pupils spoke Gujerati, Panjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Bengali and Kutchi they translated stories from English into some of these languages; the top infants were able to write expressively in English.

22. The quality of work in mathematics in the infant classes was often constrained by an over-reliance on commercially published schemes which sometimes helped to provide a framework for progress for the majority of children, but did not always encourage an appropriate range of practical work or offer a sufficient challenge for the more able pupils. Occasionally mathematics was related to more general topics as was the case in one class when the children compared the written symbols for numbers in English, Bengali and Gujarati or, in another class, where they compared the prices of fruit and vegetables in a local market. More often topic work provided a basis for language work and an introduction to geography, history and science as in one school where a class of younger children working on the theme of 'light' engaged in a lively discussion about rainbows, the colours of the spectrum and shadows.

23. In the **junior classes**, the most successful work was again in English and
achievement in reading was generally satisfactory. The best work took place where there was a wide range of reading material available and the children were able to select, if necessary with guidance, from well-chosen, attractively displayed collections of books. Most schools made good use of the LEA's book loan service and some organised a book club to enable the pupils to purchase books. Several schools encouraged children to take books home to read and occasionally to enlist the help of parents with aspects of reading. In about half the classes emphasis was given to developing oral work effectively, through class, group and co-operative activities but in most classes the teachers read stories and poetry reflecting different cultures, occasionally using recorded materials in the home languages of those children whose mother tongue was not English. There was considerable variation in the quality of written work. Nevertheless some good work was accomplished when the pupils were writing from direct experience with a particular audience in mind, as when a word processor was well used in one class to produce a class newspaper for pupils and parents. Unfortunately far too much written work was circumscribed by exercises and worksheets requiring limited responses from the pupils.

24. In mathematics there was an over-reliance upon commercially produced schemes often at the expense of more wide-ranging work thereby reducing the children's opportunities for comparing mathematical data and solving problems so as to give greater insight into aspects of their own experience. For example in one class of top juniors the pupils were able to interpret census material

detailing the diverse origins of residents in the Borough and to relate this to their own family backgrounds.

25. As in many primary schools in England, schools in Brent often approach the teaching of history, geography, science and sometimes religious education through integrating aspects of all or several of these subjects in themes or work on topics. Such work calls for careful planning and preparation if it is to be successful and amount to a coherent programme to match the age and ability range of the children. In many of the Brent schools much of this work was not sufficiently well-planned and managed, consequently standards were marked by uneven and in the poorest circumstances much time was wasted on low level activities such as copying information from books or answering narrowly based questions on teacher prepared worksheets. By contrast the fewer examples of good work drew upon well-prepared materials, carefully planned visits to historical sites or centres for field work in geography, science and social studies, school based work using a range of suitable reference books, artefacts and resources, so as to enliven the children's interests and advance their learning. A visit to a field centre by one class of eleven year olds led to some outstanding observational drawing and written descriptions of biological material. In another school a class topic on the Caribbean involved the children in a study of the history of the Islands including work about famous Caribbean men and women, festivals, literature and food. The children also visited the Commonwealth Institute and followed this up effectively in the classroom by using maps and globes, by reading widely about the topic and producing some first-rate art and craft based upon Caribbean themes.

26. In **infant and junior classes** the work in religious education had been influenced by the LEA's recently published Agreed Syllabus. In the majority of schools the daily assembly provided a focus for the work; in addition some schools had a weekly lesson in religious education while others explored religious themes such as aspects of the more general topic work undertaken. All the schools inspected* celebrated the main religious festivals of several faiths. Older juniors, in one school, studied how different religions deal with the major family events such as birth, marriage and death, while in another all classes enjoyed stories from the Christian Bible and the sacred writings of other religions, and the children were able to discuss their own views and beliefs. The depth of understanding associated with this type of work varied acccording to the age and abilities of the children. There is little doubt that the majority of pupils were learning to respect the beliefs and practices of religions other than their own; this is an aim of the LEA that is incorporated in its Agreed Syllabus.

27. As is often the case where art and craft have been integrated into a broader programme of topic work, essential skills, techniques and concepts, including attention to form, line, texture and colour, were not always sufficiently developed. Much of the work of the older children showed little improvement over that produced by the younger ones. In some schools there was either a restricted range or under-use of art materials and an over-use of certain media, for example, felt-tipped pens, which severely limited the children's achievements. Most schools provided opportunities for the children to make models and, in some cases, to tackle design projects. Scrap materials and discarded packaging which were often collected for these purposes added to the storage problems in some classes. This 'scrap' material was sometimes used effectively

* Religious education is not inspected in aided denominational schools.

as in the case of an infant class where the children made models of fire engines following a visit from members of the fire service. On the other hand, the material was sometimes used inappropriately and without sufficient thought for the provision of suitable tools, for example, for cutting and marking, or for using effective adhesives for joining different materials so as to help the children develop the skills and techniques necessary to make models which they might have valued and which had merit.

28. The quality of work that can be achieved in physical education was illustrated in one school where the teaching encouraged a variety of carefully planned activities that amounted to a well-balanced programme including gymnastics, games, swimming, dance and movement, and a range of extra-curricular activities. The work in this case benefited from school based in-service training, co-ordination by a teacher with designated responsiblity for the subject and the use of the LEA's guidelines for physical education. However, most of the physical education lessons seen elsewhere did not challenge the children to give of their best and the work rarely covered a broad enough range of physcial activities; expressive movement and drama were generally under-emphasised.

29. In music the work tended to be narrow in scope and did not encourage the range and depth of responses which the children were capable of achieving. Most class work was based on singing, sometimes involving several classes and while pupils often participated enthusiastically the quality of their singing did not often reach a high standard. Little use was made of the musical instruments available for creative music making, and where the schools' music broadcasts were used they were not always followed up systematically. Some schools have recently adopted a commercial music scheme and this may assist in providing more progression in the subject. A few schools had a generous allocation of time from a number of peripatetic music teachers; where this was the case a helpful contribution was made to the musical education of some children who achieved good standards, but this provision rarely influenced the general quality of class work in music.

30. The vast majority of the pupils in the primary schools were well behaved, co-operative, enthusiastic and willing to work hard. On the occasions when there was poor behaviour this was usually associated with inappropriate and poorly managed work. The frequency of staff changes in some cases added to the problem of managing the work effectively and made for difficulties in achieving curricular continuity. In the majority of schools there is a need for the pupils to be given greater responsibility for more aspects of their own learning, the maintenance and care of resources and the school environment. Where this was done the pupils fulfilled expectations and the quality of learning and relationships between the pupils and between the pupils and adults was of a high order.

Organisation and Curriculum

31. The Borough policy is to admit pupils part-time to nursery classes in the September following their third birthday and to infant classes on a full-time basis at the beginning of the school year in which they will become five, thus providing a three year infant course for almost all the pupils. Classes were normally arranged in single age, mixed ability, year groups although about a quarter of the schools had some classes with age differences among the pupils greater than one year. Occasionally the older children were re-grouped by

attainment within year groups and work in ability in 'sets' for mathematics and English. Grouping by ability within a class was rare; more often mixed ability or friendship groups were used to facilitate co-operative learning and discussion. The teaching of all subjects was usually carried out by the class teacher sometimes with the help of a specialist teacher for work in music, science, physical education and drama. Individual children or small groups were sometimes withdrawn from their normal classes for additional help with the learning of English as a second language. In some schools the children benefited from this support within the normal class; a teacher from the Language Service worked effectively alongside the class teacher and collaborated in the planning of the work. Teachers from the Learning Resources Services also gave additional support in some schools, although there was a degree of uncertainty about their roles and responsibilities.

32. The majority of primary schools offered the usual range of primary curriculum subjects although some of the infant classes included very little work of a geographical, historical or scientific nature. In about a third of the schools there was a particularly sensitive response to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the school population: this was reflected in books and resources that took account of the children's different backgrounds. There were also good examples of school handbooks for parents, notices and storytelling in the children's mother tongue languages. Religious assemblies were sometimes based on a multi-faith approach and a selection of multi-cultural themes or topics. Schools were in the main, similarly sensitive and sensible in their response to providing equal oportunities for boys and girls.

33. Most of the schools had guidelines for work in English, mathematics, science and religious education and about half for history, geography, music and physical education. The guidelines varied in quality and had insufficient influence on the work in the classrooms. Reviews of the curriculum and curricular guidelines have been affected in many cases by the teachers' dispute. In some schools however, the LEA policy documents on multi-cultural education, gender equality and the Agreed Syllabus for religious education had sharpened awareness of these aspects of the work and led to some positive effects on the curriculum and organisation. In some schools insufficient use was made of educational visits but where they were used the work is generally well prepared and followed up. The majority of schools offered extra curricular activities, usually in music and games, including mixed team games.

34. All pupils are assessed by LEA tests in reading and mathematics prior to their transfer to secondary schools; other than this there is little formal testing. In most schools teachers kept records of the children's progress in English and mathematics and all the schools maintained the LEA's central record card. The majority kept records for those children with special educational needs. For example in one school the class teacher together with the Learning Resource teacher kept careful profiles of pupils for whom there was concern about progress. Few schools had a policy for marking the children's work but there were some examples where teacher's comments were encouraging, evaluative and constructive.

35. The primary school **accommodation** covers a wide range of provision in terms of age, design and quality. Three of the schools inspected were of modern design, two others have had recent adaptations and additonal buildings and six included nurseries, three of which were particularly well-designed. Approximately half the schools had spacious playgrounds but only four had playing fields. There was spare accommodation in most of the schools and this

was used effectively in most cases for example, for libraries and group-work areas. Most of the schools made sensible use of the overall accommodation but the quality of displays and the organisation within the classrooms were satisfactory in only half the schools. Many schools suffered from one or a combination of problems including inadequate classroom and circulation space, external noise and disturbance, poor toilets, leaking roofs, limited storage facilities, poor security and inadequate maintenance.

36. Many of the subjects taught in the primary schools were not satisfactorily **resourced.** This was due largely to limited perceptions of curricular balance and to ineffective purchasing policies. In about half the schools books and apparatus were poorly organised. However, good use was made of the library loan service and in most of the schools the pupils had easy access to reading schemes and fiction books though the range of reference material was less satisfactory. In some of the schools the concern to remove racist and sex-stereotyped materials had depleted book stocks which had not been restored to their previous levels. Topic work including history, geography, and in some instances, science was generally under-resourced. Apparatus and materials to encourage imaginative and investigative play in infant classes were inadequate.

Secondary Schools

37. Eight secondary schools were inspected, two as part of national monitoring and six specifically for the LEA inspection. Not all subject departments were inspected in detail, but lessons in a variety of subjects were inspected taking account of the proficiency shown in oral work, writing, reading, mathematics and practical work and of the development of the pupils' aesthetic experience - aspects of education to which all subjects contribute. The inspections also considered the overall quality of the education provided in the schools and the context in which teaching and learning took place. In an overall assessment of the quality of the schools as institutions four of the schools were above average.

38. There were some good lessons in every school, characterised by purposeful and challenging work where the teachers' expectations were in line with the pupils' abilities. These lessons were, however, outnumbered by those where there were poor working conditions occasionally arising from inattention, chatter or unacceptable behaviour. Such situations were usually associated with teaching which lacked interest, rigour and pace, and where the expectations of the teachers were not matched to the pupils' abilities. In all the schools the motivation of the more able pupils was greater than that of the less able. There was some absence from lessons, particularly on the part of the lower attaining pupils in Year 5; this problem was serious in one school. The classroom atmosphere and general level of expectations were good in the CPVE courses being developed in the sixth forms of some of the schools.

39. Work in English and in humanities was good in a number of schools. Provision in mathematics for the younger and more able pupils was generally satisfactory and there was some good science teaching in a few schools. There was some good teaching of modern languages but much was less than satisfactory in spite of a reasonable take-up in a few schools. In many of the schools pupils whose first language was not English achieved work of a relatively high standard across the curriculum. In the creative and practical subjects work was often of a poor quality. There was a general absence of effective teaching strategies to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Erratic attendance was a problem in many of the schools, particularly after the third year.

40. The pupils were fluent and articulate in conversation with each other and with adults, particularly when discussing topics related to their own experiences. Generally however, there was insufficient work in class to develop oral skills either by extending the pupils' knowledge and understanding or by providing them with opportunities to develop spoken language for a variety of purposes. When given the opportunity pupils responded well and on occasion extended the discussion even against the planned thrust of the lesson. In two of the schools oral work developed in the English departments was notably good; the pupils made good use of opportunities to speak and listen and many lessons depended for their effectiveness on the confidence of pupils to explore ideas and to develop their views by this means.

41. Examples of good oral work occurred elsewhere in drama where the pupils improvised with confidence; in CDT where they were asked to give explanations of the processes they were attempting; and in mathematics where they were encouraged to reach their own answers through questions which led to the progressive clarification of an issue. In a fourth year integrated humanities lesson with ten pupils there was a simulation building on a previous lesson

where the pupils had visited in groups a local community service, the courts and the unemployment centre. Using the information and experience gained during these visits they were asked to justify why their particular, chosen service should receive extra funding. The teacher, by sensitive and probing questioning ensured that the pupils articulated their ideas. But in many lessons the pupils had much less chance for discussion. The teachers allowed the pupils few opportunities for extended talk or work in small groups: initial exposition by the teacher usually led directly to written work and in a few cases inadequate class control precluded useful talk. There was considerable under-use of spoken French and Spanish in modern languages and of productive oral work in lessons in these subjects. There was generally, however, a marked improvement in oral work in the sixth forms.

42. The majority of the pupils of average ability or above read fluently and with understanding. Some of the lower attaining pupils, however, had persistent difficulty with the techniques of reading and the support available for them was uneven: the approaches to reading were often narrow and fragmentary, particularly in Years 1-3 where worksheets of variable quality and short extracts, though often well used, were more in evidence than books. Books were often issued for use in lessons only thereby inhibiting the continuity of work and the motivation of the pupils. Greater use of textbooks was apparent in Years 4 and 5 although there was not much investigatory reading or recourse to a variety of sources and little reading outside the syllabus.

43. In some of the English departments the class readers were chosen with care and they often reflected the variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds within the school; the pupils often enjoyed this kind of reading. In one third year mixed ability English group of 19 pupils in Year 3 "It's My Life" was being studied. The pupils, including several whose first language was not English, read very well. Conversation with the pupils in the latter part of the lesson while they were engaged in some written work on the theme and characters of the book revealed that many of them were keen readers. Few of the pupils used public libraries but most of them bought books or had them bought for them. There were also examples of good quality reading aloud to the pupils by the teachers. Even though library provision was good in all the schools, more often than not the library was under-used as a resource for learning. Library periods were provided in some of the schools, but generally they had little effect on the pupils' motivation to read although one school which had timetabled library periods for all its pupils was quite successful in encouraging the pupils to borrow and read books.

44. Reading was not a very highly valued activity except in one school and the pupils needed more encouragement to become engrossed in books and to learn the skills of sustained reading. There was an improvement in the quality of reading by the students in the sixth forms.

45. In some subjects in a minority of the schools the written work included fiction; personal writing; recording information; the description of processes; the expression of opinions; and writing for specific readerships. But in the majority of the schools the standards of written work were poor. The tasks set were limited in range and gave little opportunity for writing imaginatively or from the pupils' own experiences or for a variety of purposes and readership. There was undue emphasis on copied or dictated notes, stereotyped exercises or the completion of worksheets requiring single word or short sentence answers. Such narrative writing as was demanded was not always appropriate for the ability of the pupils for whom it was set, and when completed it revealed

weaknesses in grammar and vocabulary in the pupils' ability to construct sentences. Some writing was inappropriately colloquial. The more able pupils were not always challenged by the written work set for them. The presentation of written work was often good with all age groups.

46. Preparation of pupils in Years 4 and 5 for the GCSE examination seemed to have a beneficial effect: an extended range of writing was more apparent in some subjects, although in others the demands of public examinations as perceived by the teachers led to a narrowing in the range of opportunities offered. Again things were better in the sixth forms, particularly in CPVE courses.

47. Standards of numeracy were variable; in only a minority of schools were they satisfactory or better for pupils of all ages and abilities. In all the schools the more able pupils achieved satisfactory standards. In the teaching of the pupils careful attention was given to a range of numerical processes, often supported by the use of calculators; the pupils' confidence was built up and they were able to develop a feel for number and number operations. With the mathematically not so able pupils, however, while a proper range of mathematical topics was covered the breadth of approach was limited. Too much of the work was purely mechanical, skills were practised narrowly and there was little evidence of the pupils acquiring genuine understanding. Some of the lower attaining pupils were offered few opportunities for practical or investigative work in mathematics.

48. The pupils were generally able to meet the mathematical demands made on them in other areas of the curriculum, for example in the collection, representation and interpretation of data within geography, and in a CDT project on the design of calendars but such opportunities were not often exploited.

49. Mathematical work in the sixth form was conscientious; it was satisfactory but unexciting. The students were able to cope with the mathematical demands of A level science.

50. A range of other subjects such as science, physical education, art, CDT, drama and home economics offered the pupils practical experience and helped many of them to develop manipulative and technical skills and to produce some work of a high standard although much of the work was of a poor quality. Practical tasks were too frequently prescribed in detail by the teacher and the intellectual demands made on the pupils were consequently restricted: there was little problem solving, investigation or other kind of incentive for the pupils to think and plan for themselves. There was some good practice: for instance in a third year home economics lesson the pupils worked in groups of three preparing one dish by a traditional method and one with a packet mix. As part of the session boys and girls compared the times taken to prepare food, the ease of preparation and its cost. The lesson was well paced; the pupils co-operated well, achieved a good standard of finish and engaged in useful discussion and learned something useful. Art, music, drama, and home economics sometimes contributed to the pupils' aesthetic development. In other subjects the opportunities for enhancing the pupils' aesthetic understanding and experience were often missed.

51. In most of the schools the pupils' aesthetic education was not helped by the drab and uninspiring buildings; in one school the corridor walls were undecorated, ceiling tiles were damaged and stained; in another the poor decoration presented a dispiriting environment; in another the dark decaying

building carried the grime of many years, corridors and flat roofs were littered with paper and the flower beds were empty and trampled on. There had been limited and inconsistent efforts to improve the environment of the schools by, for example, displays of the pupils' work. An exciting and colourful display in one school's entrance hall provided a particularly pleasant aesthetic experience in a school which was otherwise bleak. The care with which classroom display was designed and mounted varied considerably between the schools and between departments and classrooms in the same school, suggesting a lack of policy with regard to this feature of school life.

52. There were examples of good lessons which suggest that there are some pedagogic strengths in the secondary schools to which pupils responded well. The teaching of mathematics in two schools made good use of commercially available individualised schemes to cope with the range of pupils' needs in mixed ability classes. Resources were well organised and easily accessible and practical tasks were tackled in the classroom. The pupils had to collect and return resources: they behaved responsibly and the teachers were able to move around the classroom to help individuals and groups. The interest and work rates of the pupils were good, they worked to the best of their abilities and their learning was effective. In another school, a social studies lesson in year 5 was devoted to the media, and in particular the ways in which newspapers create and convey images. The pupils worked in small groups, each group having been given a different daily newspaper. These papers were read carefully and the various news items, cartoons and editorials were analysed and categorised. The lesson was marked by thorough preparation, lively discussion, care and a clear development of the pupils' understanding. Some outstanding practical work took place in an upper sixth form lesson where the students demonstrated how they could deploy skills acquired elsewhere in the curriculum. They worked in pairs: calculating an unknown resistance with the help of a Wheatstone bridge; and investigating Ohm's law for a simple AC capacitative circuit, an AC inductive circuit and a series resonance circuit. The students worked competently and safely; they were observant and able to perceive and explain patterns. Their verbal and mathematical skills were well developed and they used them confidently to analyse their results. They also used a commercially available computer programme to study the results and plot graphs.

53. A common gap in school policy and practice was in the field of assessment and marking. No school had a marking policy, neither did many subject departments. There were wide variations of individual practice. In most cases marking was conscientiously done and included helpful comments, clarification of difficulties and suggestions for improvement. In others it was superficial with no consistency in grading and some work of poor quality was accepted. The most common procedures for assessing the pupils' work were annual examinations, testing of various kinds and at various stages, and graded tests in modern languages.

54. One school which had no overall policy for assessment nevertheless had some interesting individual initiatives, for example, a pilot scheme in Year 1 in which pupil performance in all subjects was assessed and recorded at three levels - normal, exceptional, and under-achieving. This assessment and a written report on overall performance was discussed with the pupil by a tutor and subsequently with parents. In another school the history department was developing a successful profiling scheme in Year 4. In this case teachers discussed with pupils their progress, strengths and weaknesses according to a set of categories which reflected the objectives of GCSE.

55. All the schools had a policy for homework. In most cases a homework timetable was issued and the schools sought the co-operation of the parents in ensuring that the work was done. The homework set was usually undemanding and closely related to work done in class, such as finishing off work, completing exercises or learning by rote, without much opportunity for developing work of an investigatory nature or for exploring new material.

Examination Results

56 The LEA provided detailed data and analyses of the summer examination results achieved by the pupils in its schools in 1985 and 1986.

57 Judgements about performance in examinations need to take into account the range of attainment of the year group together with socio-economic factors but the LEA does not set objective tests in the primary schools of a kind which could help provide a valid profile of the attainment of each year group. Observation in a number of the schools, however, indicated a spread biased towards the lower attaining pupils. There is a 'net export' of secondary-age pupils from Brent and this may also affect the examination results of the LEA's own schools.

58 In 1985 the O level results overall were near to the national norms: 8% of the entries were awarded grade A and 57% achieved grades A-C. The corresponding national norms in 1985 were 10% and 57%. In 1986 however, lower proportions of the entry gained grade A (7%) and grades A-C (52%). The corresponding percentages in the aggregated results of the joint 16+ examinations for 1986 were similar to national averages. The CSE results overall for the LEA in 1985 and 1986 presented a consistent picture. In 1985 78% of the entries achieved grades 2-5 and 8% achieved grade 1. The corresponding figures for 1986 were 77% and 7%. These figures were very similar to the 1985 national norm at the grades 2-5 level but were only half the national average at the grade 1 level. The proportion of the CSE entry which was unclassified in 1985 and 1986 was about twice the national norm. The joint 16+ examination results for 1985 and 1986 presented a similar picture. This pattern of results would be expected from year groups with fewer more able pupils and a higher number of less able pupils (or pupils with learning difficulties) than are found in the population as a whole.

59 In 1985 309 fifth year pupils (137 boys and 172 girls) achieved five or more higher grades (O level A-C or CSE 1) in the O level, joint 16+ or CSE examinations: 11.0% of the year group. In 1986 this standard was achieved by 348 pupils (161 boys and 187 girls): 13.2% of the year group. In each year approximately three-fifths of these pupils attended four of the 18 secondary schools. In 1985 23.7 % of the year group achieved a higher grade in English language: the corresponding figure in 1986 was 20.7%. In 1985 17.6% of the year group achieved a higher grade in mathematics: the corresponding figure in 1986 was 11.8%. A significant number of students achieve higher grades in examinations in English language, mathematics and other subjects in the sixth form which would increase these percentages at the school leaving stage. Students who re-take O level and CSE examinations in the sixth forms of Brent schools are reasonably successful.

60 The DES School Leavers' Survey relates to a 10% sample of school leavers during a given academic year and so direct comparisons cannot be made with the statistics of the full group of fifth year pupils in schools. The DES data are also subject to sampling error but this can be reduced by the aggregation of results over three years. The achievements of school leavers from Brent schools have displayed a consistent pattern in recent years although they have not reflected the slight improvement achieved by leavers from all maintained schools in England. The achievements of Brent school leavers over the period 1983-85, compared with those of leavers from maintained schools in England are set out in the following table:

	LB Brent (%)	England (%)
5 or more higher grades	19.4	23.6
1-4 higher grades	32.1	28.7
No graded result	12.3	10.0

Source: Table C16(ii) of Statistics of Education: School Leavers CSE and GCE: DES 1985

At the level of 5 or more higher grades the achievement of Brent school leavers was below the national norm, but it was above the national average at the level of 1-4 higher grades. The proportion of pupils leaving school with no graded result in O level, joint 16+ or CSE examinations was also above the national average.

61 All these data, whether from the LEA or DES sources, take no account of the socio-economic background of the pupils or of school-based factors. The DES Statistical Bulletin 13/84, School Standards and Spending: Statistical Analysis took into consideration a range of factors for each LEA which nationally were found to have a strong statistical association with below average levels of attainment in public examinations. Estimates, averaged over the period 1981-83, were given of the proportions of school leavers from each LEA that might have been expected to achieve certain levels of examination success. The estimates for Brent were: 5 or more higher grades - 17.4%; 1-4 higher grades - 31.1%; and no graded result - 17.3%. Achievements at the 5 or more and 1-4 higher grade levels averaged over the period 1981-83 were similar to the expected levels, taking account of the sampling error. The proportion that achieved no graded result over that same period was significantly better than the expected figure.

62 The A level subjects most popular with Brent sixth form students in 1985 and 1986 were mathematics, physics, chemistry, English literature and economics together with, in 1985, biology. Subjects with both a substantial entry and a high pass rate (ie grades A-E) were English literature, mathematics, economics and sociology in 1985, and physics, biology and sociology in 1986. The overall pass rates were 65% (1985) and 66% (1986); the 1985 national average was 70%. The proportion of entries awarded grade A was 8% (1985) and 5% (1986); the 1985 national norm was 10%. About 12% (1985) and 13% (1986) of the entries achieved grade B, and the 1985 national statistic was 14%. In both 1985 and 1986 just over 60% of the students in schools who attempted two or more A level subjects gained at least two passes. Small number of fifth year pupils and sixth form students were also entered for BTEC, Pitmans, RSA, and CGLI examinations.

63 The examination results achieved by pupils in Brent schools are not unsatisfactory but most of the best results are achieved by pupils in a small number of schools which are situated in the northern part of the Borough. The under-expectation, especially of the more able pupils, and the inappropriate learning experiences provided for some less able pupils noticed in some of the schools suggest that there is scope to improve the pupils' achievements in examinations in these schools. The changes required by GCSE were being made in departments in some schools and these were judged to be having beneficial effects on the curriculum.

Organisation of the secondary sector

64 In the secondary schools the pupils were arranged either in mixed ability groups or in bands according to ability with setting in some subjects either within bands or across two or more mixed ability groups. These groupings were generally supportive of teaching and learning, although insufficient attention was given to devising effective strategies for managing the learning of the pupils of different levels of attainment.

65 Schemes of work were variable in quality: many comprised little more than lists of content and were deficient in such aspects as methodology, differentiation and assessment. It was evident, however, that the schemes exercised a strong influence on the work in the classrooms leading to a concentration on content.

66 The senior staff in about half the schools had a view of the curriculum as a whole and ways in which subjects and courses contributed to a coherent curricular framework. This view was not always shared by heads of departments and other teachers and so it tended not to be translated into practice. The curriculum in all the schools was subject-based although there were integrated science courses in the lower forms of all schools and integrated humanities courses in the lower forms of four schools. Cross curricular themes such as political education and education for economic and industrial understanding were not well developed.

67 The curricula of the Brent secondary schools were broadly the same as those prevailing elsewhere in the country. Pupils in all schools in Years 1-3 were provided with a curriculum which offered reasonable breadth and balance. This was largely a common curriculum, the exception being the provision in three schools of a second modern language for the abler pupils. Those who did not take a second modern language had extra periods of other subjects - history, geography, religious education, music, drama, and mathematics. Support for pupils with special needs either in ordinary work or in English as a second language was provided either by withdrawing them from some classes for extra tuition or by an additional teacher being in the room to give them extra help in the course of ordinary lessons.

68 In Years 4 and 5 the compulsory subjects, the common "core", varied in their extent and share of the timetable, as did the corresponding choice of optional subjects. However, a range of subjects with breadth and balance at an appropriate level was achieved in individual pupils' programmes in most of the schools. Support for pupils with special educational needs continued in these years in all the schools, but at a reduced level.

69 Sixth form provision in the six schools most recently inspected was analysed. The number of sixth form students totalled 587 and Advanced level courses were offered in all the schools. In the other five, 263 students were studying two or more A level subjects. Advanced level courses were offered in 21 subjects in the schools inspected and, with one exception, the range offered in the individual institutions was satisfactory or good. There are consortium arrangements in the Borough whereby schools are linked, usually in groups of three, to widen and rationalise the provision of A level courses; but few students chose to study A Level subjects which were not available in their own schools and there was no joint planning of courses. Group sizes ranged from three to seventeen; where group sizes were small upper and lower sixth form students

were taught together for all or some of the time. However, there were many small groups which were costly in staffing. In one sixth form there were only six students, all studying A level art. The course provision in schools was successfully supplemented by links with the FE colleges particularly through the CPVE courses.

70 Sixth form provision apart from A level consisted of successful CPVE and secretarial courses, as well as opportunities to study new subjects at O level, CSE or the pilot CEE and to re-take O level and CSE examinations. In only two schools was there provision of a general studies course.

71 Sixth form teaching of A level and CPVE courses was often well planned, suitably pitched and included clear exposition. Some, however, was insufficiently probing and analytical. Students were always attentive but often they were passive learners: they worked well and conscientiously, but in spite of some striking exceptions they often lacked confidence.

72 The arrangements for transfer between primary and secondary schools are good. Heads meet, a few secondary school teachers occasionally teach in neighbouring primary schools, pupils and parents visit the secondary schools prior to making a choice of secondary school and there is good liaison concerning the special needs of all pupils requiring extra support. The secondary schools make sensitive and sensible arrangements to help the pupils adjust and pupils appear to settle quickly in their new schools. There are a few small-scale links between primary and secondary staff concerning the teaching of particular subjects. Curricular links, however, are in need, as in other LEAs, of development to ensure that first year work in the secondary school effectively builds on the pupils' primary school experiences.

73 The structures for pastoral care involve tutors and heads of year moving through the school with their groups, an arrangement which enabled the pupils to be well known as individuals although at the expense of the tutors' ability to build up expertise with regard to a given age group. Most of the teachers were aware of the pastoral aspect of their work and many had considerable skill in responding to the pastoral needs of their pupils. In the few schools where the quality of pastoral care was unsatisfactory it was narrowly defined and the teachers with pastoral responsibilities were seen largely as agents for dealing with disciplinary problems.

74 Pupils normally had a weekly tutor-period, either a timetabled lesson or an extended registration period for personal and social education. Courses in some schools were well planned and sensitively put into practice although the time was not always used constructively. The topics covered aimed to increase the pupils' self-awareness, to develop study skills, to offer health education and to provide guidance on careers. The teaching strategies employed included team-teaching, role-playing, discussion and work in small groups. Personal and social education was an aspect of the schools' provision which had been significantly affected by the teachers' action. The arrangements often appeared better for younger pupils than for those in years 4-5 or the sixth form. Teachers in several subjects of the curriculum also made valuable contributions to pupils' social and personal development through their styles of teaching and the activities they organised in their classrooms.

75 All the schools had a policy for rewards and sanctions. Where behaviour was poor in classrooms it was usually associated with an unsuitable curriculum or inappropriate and undemanding teaching styles. In some classes the presence of a few disaffected and disruptive pupils hindered the learning of the others.

Behaviour in corridors was good or satisfactory in only half the schools. Elsewhere it was inclined to be boisterous or rowdy. This was particularly distressing during lesson times when some pupils absenting themselves from lessons were a nuisance in corridors.

76 In five of the six schools attendance was satisfactory in Years 1-3 ranging from 86% to 99%. It gave cause for concern (below 85%) in three schools in Year 4 and in six schools in Year 5. The lowest attendance was 72% in year 4 and 71% in year 5. These percentages are based on figures provided by the schools for two specific weeks.

77 Careers education was satisfactory in only one school. In the others, although some provision was made either by withdrawal from lessons or within the personal and social education programme, the strategy generally lacked coherence and there was an absence of co-ordination between the pastoral and careers staff. Work experience was limited and effective links with industry occurred only in CPVE courses.

78 The overall provision of **resources** in the secondary schools was reasonably good, although in some schools and in some departments there were insufficient copies of textbooks for the pupils to take home. Books were used appropriately and fairly extensively in only two of the schools. Five of the schools had good library provision which included collections of books on equal opportunities and multi-cultural themes. Sometimes access was restricted as the library was needed as a teaching room and sometimes there were insufficient staff for it to be adequately supervised but more often no incentive was provided for pupils to use the library. In most schools the use made of the library was disappointing. There were no serious shortages of materials and equipment and their use was generally appropriate. There has been a recent increase in the acquisition of computers but their use across the curriculum had not generally been well developed.

79 **Accommodation** was satisfactory in a minority of the secondary schools, in the others it hindered rather than facilitated learning. In one school with a split site the senior management and administrative staff were geograpically isolated from the school and some of the pupils had to commute in order to use specialist facilities. In all the schools some classrooms were too small for the group sizes using them and social areas were provided only for sixth form pupils. The internal environments of the school were usually depressing, mainly because of the lack of maintenance and decoration or because of the poor condition of the furniture. Some classrooms were enlivened by displays of the pupils' work, but examples of such self-help which encouraged the pupils to take a pride in their surroundings were not widespread; more effective policies are required to set good display standards and to cause good practice to be extended.

Special Educational Needs

80. Three special schools were inspected and note was taken of the special needs teaching in the primary and secondary schools which were inspected.

81. The Authority has established a continuum of provision for pupils with special needs from the pre-school years to the age of 19 by providing special education in various forms including support for the parents of pre-school children; support for pupils in ordinary schools; special units; and special schools. The small number of pupils with low incidence disabilities such as blindness or profound hearing impairment are placed in neighbouring authorities which have developed regional centres offering specialist provision.

82. The range and distribution of provision for pupils with special educational needs in Brent and its distribution are broadly comparable with national levels although there is currently a lack of specialised provision for children with speech and language disorders beyond the age of seven. Thirty five pupils attend boarding schools outside the Borough.

83. The Authority has only recently established formal procedures for the implementation of the 1981 Education Act (at the end of 1986) and as a consequence many pupils have only been made the subject of a statement of special educational needs for a short time, although they have been in receipt of special education in some cases for many years. As a consequence, the statutory annual reviews of such pupils have not always been carried out and arrangements for the statutory multi-professional assessments have not been fully introduced. The LEA has established a variety of services and specialised provision for pupils with special educational needs and has given considerable attention to the role of parents in the assessment process. It has recently started to co-ordinate these services.

84. Standards of work in the special schools were satisfactory in the main, with the exception of one school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties where the quantity of work produced by pupils was small; the match between learning tasks and the pupils' identified needs was often poor and insufficiently challenging; the pace of work was slow, and the management of the pupils was unsatisfactory. The other special schools employed a range of teaching strategies and generally achieved a sensible balance between individual work and group or class activities. Effective individual work programmes were being implemented with some of the pupils with severe learning difficulties but this was not a strong feature of the special schools. The schools were developing suitable assessment techniques and methods of recording the pupils' progress but not always in ways which influenced the content or level of the work. An interesting range of visits and residential experiences was provided for special school pupils.

85. Attention has been given to the development of curriculum guidelines in the special schools but although there were some good curriculum documents many lacked sufficient detail and they did not always influence practice effectively. Some lessons taught by subject specialists were of a high quality and they included art, home economics and physical education. Considerable attention was given to the teaching of language and mathematical skills even if the levels of achievement reached did not always match the time devoted to the work. Many of the pupils were provided with opportunities to develop speaking and listening

skills as well as those of reading and writing. It was not always easy to discern a planned continuity and progression of learning experiences across all classes within any one school. There were also occasional curricular imbalances where not all pupils were timetabled for given subjects, for example in science, health education or physical education. Leavers' programmes have enabled many of the older pupils to attend one day a week at a college of FE. The activities pursued within these bridging courses were not always entirely appropriate, but the pupils valued the experience.

86. The arrangements for meeting pupils' special educational needs in primary schools varied considerably. The Special Needs AEO/Adviser was attempting to encourage the schools to nominate a designated teacher in every school to be responsible for co-ordinating information concerning resources and services relevant to pupils with special needs but this did not appear to be within the context of an overall written LEA policy. Few primary schools had such a designated teacher. In-service training for these teachers was being planned but had yet to be implemented. More effective strategies are needed to support children in primary schools who have learning difficulties.

87. The secondary schools have developed their special educational needs departments. Reasonable staffing support was provided to meet the needs of pupils experiencing learning difficulties and some good practice was observed. The general picture, however, was that the specific support needed by pupils was not adequately identified and the need for intensive language help for some able pupils was not always recognised. There were examples of unsatisfactory withdrawal leading to discontinuity of experience in both the normal class and the withdrawal group. Teachers without any specialist qualifications or experience were less than successful when providing a few periods of help in a week in order to assist a small special needs department. The support in lessons was most effective when the support teacher was a subject specialist. Generally the support teachers were unclear about their task and uneasy regarding their supporting role in the classroom. The special needs departments were quite well resourced and there was some detailed and effective assessment and record keeping.

Further and Higher Education (FHE)

88. There was some good teaching and learning in all subject areas, with excellent practice in automobile engineering, computer studies, refrigeration and air conditioning, English as a second language, some advanced part-time professional building classes and the CPVE. There were high standards of work in practical and craft workshops where there was effective co-operation between staff and students and a proper emphasis on speed, accuracy and working methods.

89. Student participation and response was strong in practical computing and CPVE classes. Good features included some well organised teaching and some highly motivated students who were given the opportunity to negotiate their own programmes of study.

90. Although there was a wide range of teaching methods in engineering technology, fashion, and science, the teaching of electrical engineering, mathematics, and building technology was not always satisfactory. The students were often required to copy too many notes from the blackboard and the pace and style of teaching was slow and ponderous. In physics, chemistry and biology the predominant teaching method was the lecture; few lecturers used any teaching aids other than a blackboard or whiteboard. Time was wasted through the inadequacy or absence of appropriate handout materials. In chemistry the lectures were supplemented by a few excellent demonstrations. In some instances molecular models and micro-computers were needed and their absence prevented the achievement of good work.

91. A good deal of the teaching and learning in mathematics was unsatisfactory; insufficient use was made of handouts and often a great deal of time was taken up by the lecturer presenting lengthy examples on the board. For example, in one three hour GCE A level evening class the students spent the whole of the session copying notes. It was hardly surprising that they became bored and lost interest. Mathematics teachers rarely used audio-visual aids or computers with the consequence that the students' interest was rarely fully aroused.

92. The quality of the teaching and learning on part-time advanced courses in engineering and construction was satisfactory. But the industrial experiences of the students were not always used appropriately or drawn upon sufficiently in class; productive discussions between the student and teacher were restricted to the advanced final professional level classes.

93. The standard of written work was generally good. Although much of the note taking was dictated it was generally characterised by neatness, planned layout and the highlighting of important passages: the range of the students' study skills would, however, have been developed more if they had been required to make their own notes rather than merely copy down those of the teachers. In a minority of the classes the students' written work indicated a poor understanding of theory. Some students also experienced difficulty with handwriting, and others were unable to use language effectively. Examples of detailed marking and helpful comments by the lecturers were apparent in most subjects although in business studies and building technology, assignments and course work included some careless and over generous marking.

94. Examination results show wide variations. Individual students have achieved some excellent results in recent years and have gained top national awards from BTEC and CGLI. However, the examination results at one college were poor in CGLI food services, CGLI sciences and in some GCE O and A level courses. The 1986 GCE O level results for the FE sector in the LEA showed that 30% of the students obtained grades A to C. Poor GCE O level results were obtained in mathematics, economics, computer studies, French and Spanish. The pass rate at GCE A level was 43% in 1986 compared with the national figure of 63% in 1985 (the most recent figure available) for FE. In one department the A level pass rates were below 30% in accounting economics, law and pure mathematics.

95. The FE colleges' **range of provision** generally complement each other in that most of the work at Willesden College of Technology is engineering, construction and science, whereas that at Kilburn Polytechnic is in general education, business studies, adult and continuing education and health and social services work. The colleges offer a wide range of craft and technician courses. The General Education and Languages department at Kilburn Polytechnic offers a wide range of GCE courses which includes 15 subjects at A level. In the 1986-87 session the CPVE course has expanded in the two colleges. At Kilburn Polytechnic full-time and part-time CPVE courses are offered by four departments. As yet these courses are not co-ordinated across the college. However, they offer an excellent opportunity for students to develop vocational skills through work experience and develop an understanding of the nature and scope of employment.

96. Although there is a clear distinction between much of the work at the two colleges there is some duplication among the different departments. There are four engineering departments in the two colleges, one at Kilburn Polytechnic and three at Willesden College of Technology. There is scope for a more effective co-ordination and retionalisation of this work.

97. The range of provision at the two colleges has encouraged the recruitment of students of a wide range of ability. Many of the students need to improve their skills of numeracy and literacy and whilst both the colleges have small and dedicated groups of staff specialising in this area of work, there is inadequate college- wide provision for supporting these students.

98. Guidelines for most courses are provided by external bodies such as the BTEC, CGLI, RSA and GCE Boards. Although content in the majority of courses is relevant to the vocational needs of the students there is insufficient opportunity for students to work on their own and for social activities.

99. Within the FE Colleges the management of both human and material resources are inappropriate. The various committees have little influence and policy statements have not always been implemented. There is no effective overall system of evaluating courses and determining staff development needs. Timetables often fail to specify accurately the mode of activity: for example there is little evidence to indicate which periods are programmed for activities such as private study tutorials, use of the library or recreational study. There are few attempts to combine small groups for common subject teaching. In the case of one department communication among staff is poor and there is insufficient control of the deployment of staff.

100. The audio-visual aids and learning **resources** in further education are poorly co-ordinated and not always effectively used. Much of the specialist laboratory and workshop equipment is dated and some of it is obsolete. Computing facilities in some areas are adequate, but poor management, the lack of software and technican support has limited their availability and use to students. There are libraries of varying size on six sites, three of which are inadequate in terms of book stock, study areas and general facilities.

101. **Accommodation** in further and higher education is located in two colleges which operate on five major sites and in seven annexes. Willesden College of Technology operates from two sites about a mile and a half apart, whereas Kilburn Polytechnic has more scattered accommodation and uses three major sites and five annexes. Much of the FHE accommodation is in a poor state of repair and in need of refurbishment. In the summer of 1985 the main college building for Willesden College of technology was closed because of possible structural defects and it is now due to be demolished. In contrast to most of the further education accommodation the Harlesden site of Kilburn Polytechnic, provides spacious, clean and refurbished facilities for both staff and students.

Youth and Community Service

102. HMI inspected provision in over forty centres or projects where programmes of youth work are offered. The activities tend to be recreational, mostly confined to pool, table tennis, sport and informal activity. Some full-time and part-time staff are unclear about the purposes and methods of their work; some perceive it simply as containment and they confine their roles to befriending and supervising young people. Work is more encouraging with the younger boys and girls in junior clubs and adventure playgrounds, although these promising beginnings do not turn readily into effective youth work once young people are older than fourteen.

103. The youth and community workers work with young people of different ethnic origins. There are clubs and centres that cater specifically for groups of Jewish, Catholic and Asian young people and the majority of users of the Authority's provided centres are young men of Caribbean family origin. This cultural diversity is not, however, strongly reflected in the programmes. Few of the youth workers are developing music, drama or arts and crafts activities in recognition of the interests and talents of particular groups.

104. Although well resourced the Youth and Community Service in the Borough has given insufficient attention to:

.the needs of unemployed young people;

.the needs of girls and young women;

.health education;

105. Drop-in centres for the unemployed should provide more than recreational activities; groups such as the Women Workers with Girls Group need to clarify their aims and objectives and youth workers should be given more information, education and training in health matters.

106. In some groups disabled young people took part alongside others in social and recreational activities. These groups were characterised by integration that was subtle and sensitive, although one club devoted to this kind of work might have benefited from a more stimulating environment and programme.

107. The Borough supports 'Bremex', a well-organised outdoor training scheme in expedition skills that makes good use of the urban environment. The scheme extends beyond the Borough to include teachers and youth workers from across the region. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is also administered efficiently and it manages to cater for an equal number of boys and girls, although neither scheme is attracting many young people from ethnic minority communities.

108. Youth and community work takes place in a wide range of premises the majority of which have been adapted from their original purpose. There is some good purpose-built accommodation and in two cases basement garages on housing estates have been converted into attractive premises for youth and community work. The community centre that is emerging out of an old 'bus garage at Stonebridge is a fine example of the way in which local community can become involved in developing its own facilities. The general standard of accommodation however is poor, providing a drab and uninteresting environment for youth work. Many of the buildings require major repair and refurbishment.

Adult Education

109 Brent provides for Adult Education in its continuing Education Centres and in some community schools. Work was inspected at the Brent Neighbourhood English Project, the Brent Adult Literacy and Numeracy Project, The Wembley Adult and Community Education Centre, a community school and the Brent Unemployed Projects.

110. Half of the 27 literacy and numeracy classes inspected provided work of good quality and only three were less than satisfactory. The work inspected included literacy, numeracy, Neighbourhood English Schemes, ESL, cookery, pottery for special needs.

111. Most of the work in literacy, numeracy and ESL was excellent. Groups spanned a wide ability range and the teachers who were generally well prepared coped well and provided the groups with a satisfactory balance of individual and group work. Some sessions would have been improved by the adoption of a wider range of teaching strategies including role play and the use of audio-visual aids and computers. Teachers record keeping could also be improved if they followed the guidance offered by the LEA. Volunteer tutors who had undertaken some training worked effectively under the direction of tutors.

112. The students on the Literacy and Numeracy project and the Neighbourhood English Schemes were highly motivated, and their keenness to learn was encouraged by good relationships with their tutors. Most of the 49 ESL lessons were satisfactory or better, and nine were excellent. Both of the schemes catered for students with a wide range of attainment which poses a challenge to the tutors. Teaching and learning were most effective where the tutors had taken care to assess the capacities, experiences and aspirations of the students. Although teachers who spoke English only were coping successfully, the work might be improved by some bi-lingual approaches and by the use of a clear curricular framework known to all participants in these classes.

113. The quality of work seen in the evening at the Wembley Adult and Community Education Centre varied widely. There was some useful work in cookery and pottery for special needs groups; much of the work, however, was unimaginative with little evidence of thorough preparation or subsequent evaluation.

114. The classes inspected at one community school were satisfactory, although the numbers enrolled were low, with two students in a Gujerati class and five in one devoted to English language O level. Computer literacy is the most popular subject; in one group, despite the widely different needs and aspirations of the students, the tutors worked hard and with reasonable success. In classes where the school staff taught adult groups their lack of experience and knowledge of teaching and learning methods applicable to older people was sometimes evident.

115. Adult education courses are offered in many locations including primary and secondary schools, libraries, youth centres, church premises and centres used by ethnic organisations. Much of this accommodation does not provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning and the lack of day-time premises is a major constraint to development. The administrative areas for some schemes are in cramped premises. One of the major strengths of the Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language schemes is that they are community based, and the classes are easily accessible to students.

III PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

116 The LEA has a relatively large **advisory service.** In September 1986 this comprised 18 advisers including principal and senior advisers: the establishment is 22. The advisory team covered these specialisms: youth and community; 15-18 phase and FE; music; science; mathematics; multi-cultural education; English; CDT; primary schools; careers education; computer development; PE; humanities; home economics and social/personal education; special needs; equal opportunities; and languages. There were also 15 advisory teachers whose main task was to support classroom teachers in practical ways. The ESG advisory teachers were assigned for primary science work and primary mathematics; other advisory teachers covered equal opportunities and non-sexist development work, drama, music and religious education. Four advisory teachers working in TRIST covered profiling, gender and equal opportunities, information technology and the CPVE.

117 In January 1986 the ratio of advisers to schools in Brent was 1:7.8 compared to an Outer London Borough average of 1:7.9 and a national figure of 1:13.6. If the advisory teachers are included in the number of advisers the figures are 1:5.6 for Brent, 1:4.3 for OLBs and 1:7.5 nationally. These overall figures mask problems, for example the primary phase advisers had a heavy workload in terms of schools to cover at a time of considerable staff turnover and local shortages of teachers. Also the two primary advisers retired in summer 1986, although one still worked two days each week to give some continuity; the LEA appointed a new primary adviser in January 1987. These discontinuities may account in part for the relatively undeveloped state of the primary school curricula. On the other hand, the work of the advisory teachers for science in primary schools was making a promising contribution in some schools. The TRIST advisory teachers were also encouraging the secondary schools to start pupil profiling with some success and benefit to the pupils. Each school in the LEA has a designated 'link adviser' who is intended to act as a mediator beween the Authority and its schools and to monitor their work in a general way. The heavy administrative workload bearing on advisers has reduced their capacity to pay pastoral visits to their schools.

118 The Authority provides financial support for a range of **In-service Education and Training (INSET)** for its teachers; through secondment (24 teachers were seconded in 1985-86 and 12 in 1986-87); through locally provided courses and through attendance at courses outside Brent. In addition, the Authority provides a teachers' centre with a full-time warden, at Alperton. The governing council of this centre is advised by 30 panels of (mainly subject) teachers representing a wide range of specialist interests and the LEA is advised on its general INSET strategy by a Professional Advisory Committee. The Authority's GRIST allocation for 1987-88 is £569 000 within which the LEA intends to co-ordinate its approaches to staff development and INSET.

119 The Authority's INSET programme has been hard hit by the teachers' dispute over pay and conditions. The work and standards of learning in the primary schools indicated an urgent need to improve aspects of management concerning school organisation and staff deployment. More effective guidance is needed on the management and curricular aspects of the role of post holders including monitoring, supporting and supervising the work of teams of teachers so as to ensure that the best practice is extended concerning teaching methods, classroom organisation, ways of assessing children's strengths and weaknesses and providing work which is well matched to the needs and abilities of pupils.

Guidance is also needed to enable schools to provide more effectively for the needs of nursery age children in reception classes. The areas of the curriculum most in need of attention are topic work, physical education, the creative and aesthetic subjects and science.

120 Some of these issues confront schools across the country: but the large size of some of the primary schools and the marked instability of the staffing in schools in Brent requires effective management structures and firm guidelines to enable all teachers, particularly supply teachers and short-stay staff, to be deployed to work to the best advantage of the children.

121 The INSET needs of many of the teachers in the secondary schools are similar to those of the primary school teachers. There is a general need for the promotion of more imaginative teaching including better organisation and deployment of resources to enable pupils to make a greater contribution to their learning and to develop their skills of independent study. The place of discussion in learning with its implications for the organisation of group work needs to be considered by the teachers of most subjects, except perhaps those working in English and humanities who have more fully established this practice. Assistance is required to develop and improve the teaching of personal and social education courses, careers education and guidance, and a range of cross-curricular themes such as health education, economic understanding, and the use of computers. Heads of departments need to be more aware of their roles and responsibilities. They should help their colleagues not only in the diagnosis of pupils' learning difficulties and ESL needs and in the provision of appropriate records but also in raising expectations, particularly of the more able pupils and in guiding departments in the marking of written work.

122 An issue facing all teachers in Brent is how best to respond to the wide range of attainment present in most classrooms: to differentiate work according to pupils' needs, interests and attainments, and to provide the required classroom management and resources. This applies particularly to those primary schools - a quarter of those inspected - in which there are mixed age classes and to the mixed ability classes in the secondary schools. Displays in the classrooms and corridors in the primary and secondary schools also could be made more stimulating and interesting in order to promote the pupils' learning.

123 A range of INSET is offered at the Teachers' Centre. There were signs that the series of 'race-awareness' courses has sharpened the teachers' sensitivity towards this issue; some syllabuses had been redesigned as a result of teachers attending such courses. On the other hand, there did not appear to have been much INSET directed towards helping teachers concerning some of the fundamental issues noted above. If these are not addressed it is unlikely that any of the Borough's other curricular intitiatives will be successful. Secondary teachers in some departments had benefited from INSET to prepare for the GCSE.

124 The teachers appointed under the terms of Section 11 of the Local Government Act, 1966 have amounted to nearly 14% of the teaching force in Brent. They have been employed to improve pupil to teacher ratios rather than to provide specific help to meet the educational needs of the pupils from ethnic minority groups. The Home Office criteria for these appointments now require detailed job descriptions and Brent has proposed a large-scale and detailed programme to take advantage of this initiative: the **Development Programme for Race Equality (DPRE)**. It is intended that DPRE will eventually employ 177 teachers: 45 teachers took up their posts in January 1987 although none had

been placed in schools at the time of the inspection. Section 11 funding also makes it possible for the Authority to employ an officer as a Race Relations Adviser (Education) who reports both to the Principal Race Relations Officer and to the Director of Education: a form of 'line management' in one direction and of 'functional relationship' in another.

125 The **Learning Resources Service** consists of 25 teachers, ten of whom are recent appointments, each working in three or four schools. Most hold scale 3 appointments and the rest scale 2 posts. The main thrust of the work is in junior schools although a little support is given in infant schools. Seven teachers are involved in three particular schools: supporting curriculum change in a school, developing a framework for monitoring progress in reading through books and disseminating good practice concerning the help parents give their children in reading. The resource service teachers are based in seven centres across the Borough, each housing a collection of resources reflecting the interests of the teachers such as fiction books, mathematics, material for topic work. The emphasis of the work in schools has changed in recent years. Pupils with learning difficualties are sometimes withdrawn from their classes and given help when this is deemed to be appropriate. More often though, pupils receive support in class. The teachers of the Service also offer advice to schools and teachers. About half the primary schools inspected received help from the service, mainly for reading and language development but also help across the curriculum.

126 Over 60 teachers are employed at the **Language Service (ESL Support Unit)** where the establishment is 80 teachers. Most hold scale 2 appointments but team leaders for nursery, infant, junior and secondary work hold scale 3 posts and others have scale 4 positions for particular responsibilities. The teachers work in the classrooms of schools supporting pupils as well as helping pupils who are withdrawn from normal classwork. They also offer advice to classroom teachers and INSET courses to teachers in their schools. Formal courses of INSET are organised at the Language Service Centre and also a course leading to a Royal Society of Arts qualification. The centre has an extensive collection of reference books which are available to teachers. About half the primary schools inspected received assistance from the Language Service. It was most effective when the teachers from the Unit used a combination of strategies: helping the teachers in their classrooms, supporting groups of children and also acting as a consultant to the school. Some effective ESL support was provided in the secondary schools but help through withdrawal was sometimes unsatisfactory. In both the primary and secondary schools there were pupils who appeared to need help which was not provided. In one secondary school there was a large number of fairly able pupils in need of some support with their written work and insufficient specialist help was available to them.

127 Support to special and ordinary schools was being provided by the **Schools Psychological Service** which has an established staff of 9.6 FTE educational psychologists. The Service was established to support children and young people up to the age of 19, and their families. The service has moved towards providing consultation, advice and in-service support for the educational development of all pupils as well as contributing to the informal and formal assessments of those with special educational needs. Most of the primary schools receive two half day visits a term and secondary schools a half day visit each month from their designated psychologist. It would be valuable if the service were to undertake some evaluation of the effectiveness of this way of working in the schools. There is a considerable commitment within the service for the psychologists to involve and work with parents at every stage of

a child's assessment. The service is also committed to developing assessment procedures and educational practices which do not discriminate against ethnic minority pupils. Most of the educational psychologists are involved from time to time in providing in-service training to teachers and other supporting professionals.

128 The **Special Needs Support Service** consists of two teachers and six ancillaries who are available to work in primary schools mainly with pupils who require additional help as identified within a child's statement of special educational needs. This resource was stretched at the time of the inspection and was being supplemented by assistance from the Home Tuition Service. Provision is also made at the Brent Education Workshop for up to 14 pupils, in their last year of statutory schooling who have had considerable periods of absence from school

129 The **Service for Children with Impaired Hearing and Vision** consists of four teachers of the hearing impaired one of whom also holds a qualification in the teaching of pupils who have a visual handicap. These teachers supported some 50 pupils in mainstream schools including the two units for partially hearing pupils. There is a need for a properly established service for pupils with visual impairment. A home teaching service for pre-school children has been established through joint funding with the District Health Authority.

130 The LEA has other Resource Centres:

The Curriculum Development Support Unit; two **Environmental Education Centres**; a **Music Centre**; a **Nursery Resources Centre**; and a **School Library Service**. In January 1987 the LEA established a **School Computer Centre** and a **Home Economics Centre**.

IV ASPECTS OF EDUCATION IN BRENT

The educational environment

131. Because of the background issues described at the start of the main report, HMI met a range of local groups representing parent and community interests, as well as a number of teachers' and heads' professional groups and a group of advisers. Some individual discussions were also held and several letters were received from individual teachers and governors. The people met by HMI reflected the range of ethnic groups in the Borough. A full list of the groups with whom discussions were held is to be found in Appendix 2. The purpose of these meetings was to ascertain the main lines of public and professional concern so as to be able to set them alongside the judgements of this report. It was not to decide whether the claims of this or that group were right or wrong.

132. The **parents** expressed concern to HMI about these matters:-

- the extensive employment of supply teachers, sometimes allegedly poorly qualified or inexperienced ones;

- children being sent home from school during the day because of staff shortages, a cause for anxiety;

- pupils not being sufficiently challenged by the teachers (a particular complaint from parents of Caribbean origin) and the low expectations teachers seemed to have of their pupils;

- many changes of teacher for a given class in relatively short spans of time;

- the disruptive effects on educational continuity arising from the long-standing teachers' dispute over pay and conditions;

- pupils' work going unmarked for long periods;

- poor examination results;

- poor discipline;

- the poor state of some school premises;

- the feeling that provision and standards were better in the north of the Borough than in the south;

- the need to seek education out of Brent, or in independent schools, or (by way of reinforcement or compensation) in voluntary, supplementary schools because of some of the problems alluded to above.

The **heads and the teachers** expressed concern about these matters:-

- poor communications with the LEA; unanswered letters or telephone calls;

- slowness in recruiting new or temporary staff;

- occasionally late or incorrect salary payments;

- a lack of consultation by the LEA which allegedly rode roughshod over professional advice or opinion, when it was sought; a confrontational style over sensitive issues;

- uncertainties in staff recruiting procedures; late additions to short lists under circumstances which could give rise to suspicion;

- some LEA employees having access to schools (occasionally in teaching capacities), but not being directly accountable to heads, or having forms of dual responsibility which were reported as being sources of confusion and sometimes of tension;

- a lack of LEA support in disciplinary matters, particularly with regard to suspensions and exclusions;

- continuing uncertainty over the future of some schools, with consequent unsettling effects on staff morale.

Some **officers of the Authority** expressed concern about:

- the deleterious effects of the long dispute with the teachers over pay and conditions of work; the narrow room for manoeuvre in staffing matters (especially with regard to short-term supply staff) brought about by the teachers' declining to cover for absent colleagues;

- the difficulties, common to a number of OLBs, of recruiting and holding staff in an area of high housing and accommodation costs, and high transport costs;

- a heavy work overload on administrators and advisers and difficulty in recruiting and holding clerical staff;

- the slowness of some schools to inform the LEA about forthcoming staff vacancies and to implement staffing schedules.

All groups met by HMI affirmed and supported the LEA's anti-racist and anti-sexist policies, but some groups criticised their implementation in different ways. Some parents thought the policies had gone far enough, others that they had some way to go or that their emphasis was wrong; the heads were concerned about forms of implementation which were arbitrary or counter-productively authoritarian.

133 It is not possible to gauge how representative the views expressed were of the various constituencies. What is clear is that the perceptions of the people who spoke to HMI were in the main critical and suggested an atmosphere of antagonism or even suspicion, which is itself indicative of the climate in which education is provided in Brent. HMI comment on these expressions of concern are found elsewhere in the report and its summary of evidence, and with regard to the most frequently expressed concerns, immediately below.

Staffing

134. Pupil to teacher, and staff to student ratios in Brent are among the highest in Greater London, and in secondary schools and FE colleges they are the

highest. The Authority has been notably generous with its distribution of points for teachers, and according to its own staffing schedules it has a surplus of secondary school teachers which costs it some three quarters of a million pounds per annum. The Authority has, however, recently approved staffing reductions in the 1987-88 budget to reduce that surplus.

135. Five of the 12 primary schools inspected during the main period of inspection had acting head teachers and deputy heads, although the loss of three heads during the inspection (two because of promotion and one temporarily transferred to another school in the Borough) skewed the sample in this respect; the proportion of acting primary headships in Brent at the time of the inspection was 16%. In only one case was the head in post considered to have a strong influence throughout the school; three-quarters of the heads or acting heads did not give positive leadership to their schools and only one deputy head had much influence. The high proportion of acting headships contributed to this problem of uncertain leadership which was marked by a failure to design or implement appropriate curricula, or to draw up clear job specifications. The appointment of specialist postholders in primary schools was rather haphazard and in only a third of the schools were there examples of their positive influence on the quality of the work. Most of the primary schools had postholders for English, mathematics, science and music but only a fifth of the schools had postholders for multi-cultural education, health education or special educational needs. Although NNEB assistants were deployed effectively in classes designated as nursery classes, there was no such support for nursery age children in reception classes. The classroom ancillaries were mainly deployed on routine medical tasks or occasionally on secretarial duties but in several cases they worked alongside children and the teachers in the classrooms. Some children were sent home from one of the primary schools during the inspection as no supply teacher was available to cover for an absent teacher. Other problems encountered during the inspection were: an infant class had been without a teacher for four days; a supply teacher who failed to arrive in order to take a junior class and an inexperienced supply teacher who could not control a class; a school with four teachers leaving at the end of term, but with only two replacements found; a school with three new teachers, two of whom were probationers and none of whom had primary school experience; one class shared between three supply teachers and a school with five new teachers (out of a total staff of eight) in September 1986. Thus, in spite of a generous overall staffing policy for primary schools, there were gaps and shortages in some of the schools which threatened the continuity of the pupils' education.

136. The high level of the Authority's staffing was very noticeable in the secondary schools. The pupil to teacher ratio in the schools ranged overall from 15.0:1 to 7.1:1, in the main school from 15.0:1 to 7.2:1 and in the sixth form from 14.9:1 to 5.6:1. The overall pupil to teacher ratio is better than the national average: the other ratios quoted are the results of schools' management decisions and consequent internal organisation. The rather high rates of absence in most of the schools in years 4 and 5 meant that pupil to teacher ratios which were already generous on paper became even more so in the classrooms. The highest average group size in the main school was 22.6 and the lowest 9.6. The percentage of time spent by teachers in the classroom ranged from 76.8 to 57.6.

137 In three of the schools there were additional teachers to help pupils with special educational needs, but since they could be withdrawn by the LEA at any time it was difficult for schools to plan an enduring timetable to take

advantage of their services. The provision of supply teachers was numerically adequate, although they sometimes lacked experience and were occasionally used to 'mind' rather than to teach classes usually because they were not trained as specialists for the subject they were covering. For example in one school two parallel sets of six and four pupils were timetabled simultaneously, one taken by a specialist teacher, the other by a non-specialist supply teacher: it would have been advantageous to combine these groups. In another school a foreign language assistant was competently teaching a class of ten pupils, with a supply teacher present and not being a specialist, this teacher took no active part in the lesson.

138 The majority of permanent teachers had suitable qualifications and experience and were well matched to the tasks they were called on to perform. The schools deployed the teachers sensibly across the age and ability ranges, although there was some overloading, in terms of the number of periods taught, of Scale 1 teachers and probationers. Only one school had a policy for staff development which involved individual interviews for staff with the head. There was one example of an attempt to evaluate the school's work as a whole and there was some departmental evaluation in three schools but no school evaluated its teaching or pastoral systems.

139. There were laboratory technicians in all the schools; only half of the schools had acceptable ancillary assistance for CDT, and possibly a quarter of the schools had satisfactory clerical assistance. There was part-time assistance for resource management in one school: in no school was any ancillary help available for the library and two schools made use of voluntary help. There was a general problem of teachers spending too much time on reprographic work, the results of which were occasionally of poor quality; this was particularly the case in two schools.

140. Few of the secondary schools had found ways of adjusting their staffing structures so as to reflect and adjust to the requirements of managing schools with fewer numbers of pupils. Most of the schools had too high a proportion of teachers at Scale 4 and above in relation to their present rolls. While matters of day-to-day organisation were generally dealt with effectively, there was often a need for more direct communication and leadership about such matters as the planning of curriculum development and of staff development initiatives to accompany this, as well as the evaluation of the work of the school.

141. The staffing establishments for the special schools ranged from good to excellent although staff vacancies meant they were less favourable in practice. In one of the schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties the teachers were generally well qualified and experienced but in other schools they were less so; in one case this resulted from a high staff turnover which contributed to some of the problems being experienced in the school, particularly in the handling of pupils' difficult behaviour. In some cases the roles and functions of staff with posts of responsibility were unclear and were not well understood by other members of staff. In one of the special schools where job descriptions had been written they were available for some members of staff but not all. The roles of the ancillary staff attached to each school were generally well understood and these members of staff contributed significantly to the childrens' experiences, for example through counselling and by providing specialist help to a teacher.

142. The FE teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced, although there is a distinct need for a more systematic INSET programme to enable the staff to update their knowledge and skills.

143 In November 1986, according to college statistics a total of 10,351 students were enrolled at the two colleges of whom 2,316 attended full-time courses. The comparable figures for 1985 were 11,172 and 2508 respectively. In January 1987 there were 287 full-time teaching staff at Willesden College of Technology and 50 FTE teaching posts provided by part-time staff and full-time teachers working overtime. Since only 1,071 of the 5584 students at Willesden College of Technology are full-time the staffing ratio is generous. The high proportion of costs in respect of teaching staff salaries and small class sizes was a feature of the Audit Commission report in 1984 and the situation remains largely unchanged in 1986. There were 194 FTE teaching staff and a total of 4,767 students (of whom 1,245 were full-time) attending Kilburn Polytechnic in January 1987. In contrast however, Willesden College of Technology with approximately 15% more students than Kilburn Polytechnic, has approximately 42% more teaching staff although this imbalance does not appear to be justified by the differences in the levels of courses and subjects taught in the colleges. There are 13 principal lecturers at Willesden College of Technology and 4 at Kilburn Polytechnic; this generous allocation of senior posts at Willesden is also difficult to justify in terms of the level of work.

144 In view of the small size of many class groups, the extent of overteaching on some courses and the duplication of work between some departments, there is an urgent need to review the deployment and management of the teaching staff in FE. For example in a GCE A level politics course 24 students were taught in three separate small groups and in another department the class sizes were frequently below ten and the six principal lecturers in the department were working on average six hours overtime each week.

145. The staffing of the FE colleges is rendered even more generous by the poor attendance of the students in some classes. Over 40% of the classes inspected had fewer than 10 students present although the registers often indicated higher levels of enrolment. The policy and practice of the colleges on minimum class enrolments and attendance were unclear. The number of students withdrawing from some courses was high and for the electrical engineering and building courses the registers indicated a withdrawal rate of over 25% for many of the courses.

146. The two FE colleges have been affected by changes at a senior management level. A new principal, vice-principal and several new heads of department were appointed at Kilburn Polytechnic in 1986. The principal of Willesden College of Technology resigned in the summer of 1986 and this has delayed the review of the college organisation.

147. The Authority deploys a large number of full-time staff for youth work - 120 field workers and officers, two thirds of whom are employed as youth workers. Thirty two of these full-time established posts, some in key positions were unfilled at the time of the inspection. In addition there are about 500 part-time paid leaders and 1,000 volunteers are working in the service. The Authority's policy of recruiting local people as full-time unqualified youth and community workers requires officers to be discerning in placing people in appropriate positions and to ensure that these staff are provided with the necessary support and training.

148. This considerable staffing provision for youth work is the second highest in the Outer London Boroughs, and yet the most senior posts are allocated without sufficient assessment of their feasibility so that some parts of the service appear to be over-staffed while others need strengthening. For example Neighbourhood Schools Workers continue to be appointed despite a lack of liaison between the schools and the youth and community service. Some of the Service's staff are attached to centres, others belong more loosely to neighbourghood teams. Several workers are unclear about their roles and responsibilities.

149. This confusion is deepened by the Authority's lack of explicitness in its goals which allow for a very wide range of strategies to be adopted by staff. A more concise statement of objectives outlining what is expected of staff would help them to be clearer about how to measure their effectiveness. Line management responsibilities are poorly articulated. Although there is theoretical devolution of responsibility to Neighbourhood Team Leaders, they are not provided with the means to allow them to manage; for example they do not have their own clerical or administrative support. They lack the authority to effect accountability from those they lead or to assess needs, set objectives and evaluate outcomes.

150. The absence of a central team responsible for delivery of Adult Education in Brent has also contributed to a lack of co-ordination in provision. The shortage of clerical and administrative help means that the offices are rarely open in the daytime, part-time tutors who teach at the evening institutes do so with no support.

151. Nearly eight hundred hours overtime was worked by professional staff on the basic education scheme in 1985-86; an average of seven hours per week in term time. Much of this work is largely of a routine administrative nature which could be covered by increased clerical support.

152. Development workers are employed to work with adults on the three major social priority estates in the Borough and extra staff are employed to work with adults in some of the community schools; their precise allocation and roles have yet to be resolved. The Adult Unemployed Research Project funded under the 'REPLAN' initiative acts as an important and useful focus in bringing together the staff working in adult education at the colleges and in various projects around the Borough together so as to exchange information and offer mutual support. There is some initial training in the teaching of adults but it is promoted with varying degrees of enthusiasm by the different providers.

153 Even when making allowances for the difficulties of recruiting and holding teachers and other problems noted by the LEA's officers the inspection confirms that there is some substance in public and professional concern about the staffing of schools, colleges and other educational activities in Brent. The present staffing problems have not arisen suddenly. There is a surplus of secondary school teachers in the Borough although the LEA is taking steps to reduce that surplus in 1987-88; pupil to teacher ratios are very generous by national standards and the contact ratios in secondary schools are amongst the most favourable in the country and yet children have to be sent home because teachers are not available to teach them. Nor could it be claimed that the standards of work in all of the schools and colleges are commensurate with the funds spent on staffing them. The Authority is aware of the depth and complexity of the problem and a report has recently been considered by the Education Committee.

Management and Organisation

154 The issue of the management of the education service was raised by all the groups of people who spoke to HMI. Perhaps the central problem which affects the professional leadership and administration of the Brent education service has been the absence of key personnel - the Director of Education and the Deputy Director of Education (the first post became vacant in May 1986 and the latter in September 1986.) A new Director of Education has recently been appointed. In spite of these discontinuities in management caused by vacancies in key points, the routine administration of the education service continues.

155 There are other gaps in the senior management of institutions noted in this report: in primary school headships and deputy headships, and in the senior management of the colleges of further education. These vacancies exacerbate the existing problems of underdeveloped primary school curricula and the deficient, inadequate management in the FE colleges, in particular with respect to poor staff deployment, the failure to co-ordinate course provision, to initiate staff development policies and to tighten timetabling.

156 The problems arising from vacancies in the senior management of the education service were compounded in some areas by the lack of clear LEA policies, for example what action to take with regard to the secondary schools with seriously falling rolls, especially in the south of the Borough. There are indications that a general lack of managerial strategies and supervision was having its effect in schools and elsewhere. For example, an Authority so strongly committed to anti-racist education might be expected to keep data regarding the numbers and dispositions of ethnic minority staff, or to require schools to keep similar records of pupils in a more systematic and uniform way than is the case at present: this kind of record keeping seems haphazard and is voluntary.

Policies on anti-sexism and anti-racism

157 Brent has adopted a high profile on the issues of race and gender and the policies it has adopted for anti-racist and anti-sexist education in its schools date in their present form from 1981; they were promulgated (in the words of the Authority) "to ensure that discrimination and racialism do not hinder our children". The Authority also stated that "the present inequality of opportunity and achievement in girls and boys is in part due to those school practices which unconsciously differentiate between girls and boys....". The policies by which the LEA seeks to combat racism and sexism have been amplified and worked out in considerable detail in a series of publications, mostly aimed at parents. Some of these documents are listed in Appendix 3; they are clearly written and contain helpful advice to parents, teachers and other interested parties. The LEA has further strengthened the implementation of its policy by a series of actions which have included the appointment of an equal opportunities adviser, a multi-cultural adviser, and by the projected appointment of teachers to the DPRE. Earlier forms of support for this kind of work, the Curriculum Development Support Unit and Cultural Liaison Teachers, will be phased out.

158 In general the race and gender policies of the Authority either had no more than a modest effect on the quality of provision, or where they were more clearly apparent they had beneficial effects. In spite of considerable public agitation on these matters there was no evidence that the quality of work is being threatened or the curricula of the schools are being distorted as a result of schools applying Brent's anti-sexist and anti-racist policies, though in primary schools they may have diverted attention from other pressing curricular needs.

159 The LEA's anti-sexist policy has made less headway than its anti-racist policy in its schools. Nevertheless, there were definite attempts to implement the policy in primary schools, such as listing and arranging children alphabetically rather than by sex; by trying to reduce sex-stereotyping in classwork when describing the world of work to children; and encouraging mixed games sessions. There were attempts to ensure that work and play were not sex-stereotyped and this feature of school life continued in the first three years of secondary schools. After that there was some self-selecting by pupils into some of the more traditionally sex-stereotyped subjects, although the schools made efforts to keep curricular choices fully open to boys and girls. Here and there traditional gender boundaries were eroding: there were slightly more girls than boys studying science in one sixth form and the school libraries sometimes affirmed the place of women in society by special selections and displays of books. A few secondary school syllabuses, mainly in the humanities, emphasised the importance of women in history or in the world of work. Some of the girl students had opted for CPVE courses where they could develop practical and technological skills. But there were many occasions in which the boys were over-assertive in class, and the girls tended to retreat to quieter parts of the classroom and to play passive roles. Sexist bias on the part of teachers was very rare. In spite of one successful initiative, the youth service had not made very strong attempts to give support to young women.

160 The LEA's anti-racist policy had some beneficial effects. Possibly its principal achievement was its contribution to the racial harmony which prevailed between the pupils both in the primary and secondary schools. Some of the schools had formulated their own statements on anti-racism. In most of the primary schools there was a sensitive response to ethnic and cultural diversity; resources and the curricula in these schools reflected the diversity of the

children's ethnic backgrounds and an awareness of ethnic diversity. This was also the case in most of the secondary schools. Some syllabuses had benefited from the care and thought which had gone into recasting them so as to affirm the importance of ethnic minority cultures. There were many examples of this: good literature by established authors of Caribbean, African and Asian origins, selections of books reflecting the ethnic background of the pupil population, lessons in history, geography, RE and social studies which drew with distinct benefit from a wide ethnic frame of reference. In spite of these encouraging signs there were still some missed opportunities, especially syllabuses which had little to say about ethnic issues (most commonly art, home economics and modern languages.) Incidents in which teachers permitted insensitive comments were very rare. There were a few examples of offensive grafitti. The general impression is that the Authority's anti-racist policy goes with the grain of local opinion, has fairly widespread support in the schools and has a generally helpful effect on work in classrooms.

North and South

161 For reasons of history and geography Brent is divided into two distinct areas (see Introduction, paragraph 3). The south of the Borough is characterised by terraced housing, high-rise estates and a greater incidence of social deprivation than the more spacious and largely residential north with its greater number of detached and semi-detached owner-occupied houses. Concern was expressed to HMI that the two halves of Brent receive differential treatment and that the pupils in the south of the Borough suffer educational as well as social disadvantage. The 'Barrow Report' (see Appendix 3) was entitled 'The Two Kingdoms' and, as its title implies, it addressed itself in part to this issue.

162 The sample of schools and other forms of provision to be inspected was designed to reflect both the north and south of the Borough and the findings of the inspection suggest that the north-south issue is complex. The secondary schools in the south of the Borough received better staffing ratios than those in the north partly as a result of falling rolls and partly of the LEA's intention to preserve the breadth of their curricula. The best pupil to teacher ratio in the secondary schools inspected was in a school in the south of Borough (7.1:1) and the worst PTR (albeit good by national standards) was in a school in the north of the Borough (15.0:1). The better staffing provision in the south was generally used to create small classes and more individual treatment by the teachers.

163 The quality of work in the primary schools did not appear to be associated to any great extent with their location. The general absence of good curriculum development and the need for better strategies of classroom management were common to most of the primary schools whether they were in the north or south of the Borough. There is no conclusive evidence that the quality of work is essentially better in the secondary schools in the north of the Borough. Of the eight schools inspected, the overall quality of the education provided in three secondary schools in the north and of one in the south of the Borough was judged to be better than average. All the secondary schools in the south had some good work, in a few cases some outstanding work. Because of the considerable amount of travelling which takes place in Brent, many pupils from the south of the Borough attend schools in the north of the Borough. One school in the north, for example, found that its pupils of Asian origin came for the most part from its immediate surrounding area, but that the pupils of Caribbean family origins travelled further, often from the south of the Borough. The difficulties of the schools in the south reflect the higher incidence of social and economic disadvantage there.

164 The Borough's Youth and Community provision was heavily weighted towards the south and away from the north, which relied far more on voluntary organisations to provide for youth work. Even so, the provision did not reflect adequately the needs of the high concentration of ethnic minorities in the southern part of the Borough and very few young people of Asian origin appear to avail themselves of the Authority's provided centres.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES INSPECTED AS A BASIS FOR THIS REPORT.

1. The main span of inspection for this report was in the Autumn term 1986 and the Spring term of 1987.

Autumn Term 1986

Primary Schools

Kingsbury Green JMI School
John Keble CE JMI School
St Mary Magdalen RC Junior School
Gladstone Park Junior School
Gladstone Park Infants School
Roe Green Infants School

Special Schools

Frank Wyeth School
Coles Green School

Secondary Schools

Copland Community School
William Gladstone High School
Willesden High School

Spring Term 1987

Primary Schools

Newfield JMI School
Chalkhill Junior School
Wembley Manor Junior School
Carlton Vale Infants School
Furness Junior School
North West London Jewish JMI School

Special Schools

Woodfield School

Secondary Schools

Wembley High School
Preston Manor High School
Sladebrook High School

2. Other inspections used in the basis for this report:

Barham JMI School	1986
Lyon Park JMI School	1986
Vicars Green JMI School	1986
Claremont High School	1985
Aylestone Community School	1986
Kilburn Polytechnic	1985
Willesden College of Technology	1986

The inspections in paragraph 2 have resulted or will result in published reports; those in paragraph 1 are to be published.

3. In addition to these inspections, there has been an inspection of Youth and Community Provision and of Adult Education in Brent. This report also draws on other sources - see the Introduction to this report.

APPENDIX 2

Parents', community and professional groups with whom HMI held discussions

Representatives of the following groups were interviewed:

Parents' Panel of the Parents' Joint Consultative Committee;
Stonebridge Neighbourhood Project;
Black Women's Group;
Black Insight Community Advice Centre;
Brent Community Relations Council.

And groups of parents from:

Claremont High School;
Copland Community School;
Sladebrook High School;
Wembley High School;
William Gladstone High School;

Furness Junior School;
Gladstone Park Junior School;
Gladstone Park Infants School;
Newfield JMI School;
St Mary Magdalene RC Junior School;
a Supplementary School.

Also the Brent primary heads;
the Brent secondary heads.

And representatives of

the Brent Teachers' Panel;
the NAS/UWT (Brent Association).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Documents consulted in the preparation of this report:-

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2. The Two Kingdoms: Standards and Concerns: Parents and Schools; (The 'Barrow Report'); LB Brent 1986

3. Brent Council Code of Practice for the Elimination of Discrimination and the promotion of Equal Opportunity in Employment; LB Brent 1985

4. Parents' Handbook: Primary School and Under-Fives Facilities; LB Brent 1986

5. Parents' Handbook: Secondary Schools 1986-87; LB Brent 1985

6. Brent Religious Education Now and Tomorrow; LB Brent 1986

7. London Borough of Brent: Cross Council Review 1985; LB Brent 1985

8. Steps to Equality: the Report of the Primary Gender Equality Working Party; LB Brent 1985

9. Education for a Multi-cultural Democracy (2 parts) LB Brent 1981

10. Education statistics 1985-1986, Estimates; Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, 1985.

11. Education statistics 1986-1987, Estimates; Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, 1986.

12. An extract of (10 above) prepared by LB Brent for the Policy and Estimates Committee of the Borough Council.

13. (a) Capital Budget; 1985-96, and 1986-1987, LB Brent

    (b) Revenue Budget; 1985-1986, and 1986-1987, LB Brent

    (c) Papers prepared for the Education Committee of LB Brent; Revenue Estimates 1986-1987.

14. Development Programme for Racial Equality; LB Brent 1985

15. Beyond 16; LB Brent

16. It Ain't Necessarily So; LB Brent 1985

17. Labour Market Information; RMIU, TD London Region, October 1985

18. Statistics of Education: school leavers: CSE and GCE; DES, 1985

BRENT LEA: SECONDARY SCHOOL ROLLS APPENDIX 4

1986	Agreed admission limits	NUMBER OF F.T. PUPILS AGED (at 31 August)							
		11	12	13	14	15	16	17+	TOTAL
SCHOOL									
CLAREMONT HIGH	175	163	176	178	200	195	77	101	1091
WEMBLEY HIGH	140	106	122	127	153	138	73	47	766
KINGSBURY HIGH	250	247	248	295	287	296	172	141	1686
PRESTON MANOR HIGH	175	172	175	201	201	206	128	82	1165
COPLAND COMMUNITY	150	144	139	122	174	172	77	51	880
ALPERTON HIGH	180	147	158	142	170	204	98	54	973
WILLESDEN HIGH	160	62	78	89	115	124	46	17	531
AYLESTONE COMMUNITY	115	72	107	108	99	113	77	47	623
JOHN KELLY (BOYS) HIGH	100	51	47	47	45	52	25	14	281
JOHN KELLY (GIRLS) HIGH	125	114	123	114	132	126	71	89	769
SLADEBROOK HIGH	100	59	80	73	81	81	32	1	407
SOUTH KILBURN HIGH	100	19	27	39	49	50	16	14	214
WILLIAM GLADSTONE HIGH	150	93	101	111	132	149	72	35	693
BRONDESBURY & KILBURN HIGH	145	46	54	45	81	99	72	38	435
NEASDEN HIGH	150	51	74	87	131	122	72	28	565
CONVENT OF JESUS & MARY (RC) HIGH (GIRLS)	180	111	101	133	163	175	79	21	783
ST GREGORY (RC) HIGH	180	181	178	180	180	182	68	36	1005
CARDINAL HINSLEY (RC) HIGH (BOYS)	180	125	109	120	141	151	40	16	702

SOURCE: FORM 7 DATA, DES (1987)


23. IV.

ES

010

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

nbpm

ELIZABETH HOUSE
YORK ROAD
LONDON SE1 7PH
01-934 9000

CONFIDENTIAL

The Rt Hon John MacGregor OBE MP
Chief Secretary of the Treasury
Parliament Street
London SW1P 3AG

13 April 1987

Dear John,

EDUCATION BILL

You already know of my developing proposals for the major Education Bill which is going to form such an important part of our programme for the next Session.

2. Recent advice from the Law Officers has stressed the need for careful drafting of legislation if policies are not to be frustrated, when legislation comes to be implemented, by the courts.

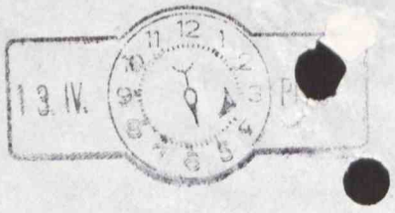
3. I face a particular problem with the extra workload for our lawyers in working out the details of the proposals, instructing Parliamentary Counsel and working with them on the drafting of the Bill. I have only a small team of five lawyers - an outstation of the Treasury Solicitor's Department - in my Department. Work on the Bill will have to be given top priority, but even so the timetable for the Bill is very tight, and I am concerned that, with the best will in the world, they will not be able to carry out their part of the work needed to have the Bill ready for introduction early in the Session unless their numbers can be increased.

4. The Treasury Solicitor is writing to Sir Peter Middleton asking that the legal complement of my Department should be increased by one senior lawyer for the duration of the time - approximately two years - needed to prepare and draft the Bill and carry it through Parliament and into effect. I should be grateful for your agreement that this very necessary addition to the strength of our team working on the Bill should be made.

5. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister and to the Attorney-General.

Yours ever,
Kenneth.

CONFIDENTIAL


13. IV.

CABINET OFFICE

With the compliments of

J. B. UNWIN

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS
Telephone 01 233

Re Norgrove - for info

From: J B UNWIN CB, Deputy Secretary

13/4

CABINET OFFICE
70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01- 270 0240

P 02643

CONFIDENTIAL

J Anson Esq CB
H M Treasury

Parliament Street
LONDON SW1P 3AG

10 April 1987

Dear John,

BETTER SCHOOLS

We met earlier today to discuss the work which needs to be done before the Prime Minister holds the further meeting proposed in the penultimate paragraph of David Norgrove's letter of 8 April to Rob Smith. Colleagues from DOE and DES were also present.

2. The purpose of this letter is not to record the discussion, but simply to confirm what we agreed. I will arrange a further meeting in the week commencing 27 April, at which we will consider three pieces of paper:

- a note by DOE on the idea of ringfencing local authorities' education expenditure. This will discuss possible mechanisms for enforcing reductions within the ring-fence, and bring out the conflict with the Green Paper proposals on local government finance, particularly on accountability, and other problems;

- a note by DES on ways to deal with the disincentives against schools in high-spending local authorities opting out. This will discuss both a more relaxed version of the original proposal, with a longer transition and perhaps other flexibilities; and an alternative under which there would be no definite programmes for spending reductions, but the Government would have the power to review expenditure and grant levels. It would be helpful for this paper, if possible, to give a clearer idea of the numbers of schools likely to be affected in the various cases;

- a joint DOE/Treasury note on options for achieving financial neutrality when schools opt out of the local authority sector. This will explore the three main options we discussed, bringing out the implications for the distribution of costs between the taxpayer at large and community charge payers in different areas.

3. You also kindly agreed to take the lead if any further action is needed before I return from leave on 27 April.

4. I am copying this letter to Ken Ennals and Chris Brearley in DOE, to Nick Stuart and Judith Partington in DES, and to Brian Gilmore in the Treasury.

J B UNWIN


11. IV.
AM 8 7

SUBJECT MASTER

Filed on:

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

8 April 1987

From the Private Secretary

BETTER SCHOOLS

The Prime Minister this afternoon held a meeting to discuss the reform of education on the basis of minutes by your Secretary of State (listed below) and minutes by the Secretary of State for the Environment of 7 April. There were present your Secretary of State, the Lord President, the Secretaries of State for the Environment, Employment and Wales, the Chief Secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr. Unwin (Cabinet Office) and Professor Brian Griffiths (No.10 Policy Unit).

The meeting considered first your Secretary of State's minute of 24 March which discussed proposals for open enrolment. One aspect of the proposals was that secondary schools would be required to admit pupils up to the limit of the "standard number", which would be redefined as equal to admissions either in 1979 or in (say) 1987, whichever were the higher, or such other figure as might be approved by the Secretary of State on an application from the LEA or the governing body. It was noted that for some schools the year of peak pupil numbers would not be 1979. An alternative formulation would be a requirement to admit pupils up to the larger of the number admitted in the school's peak year, which would not be defined, or the physical capacity of the school. It might be necessary for the Secretary of State for Education to set out how physical capacity would be determined, to minimise the risk of legal challenge. Your Secretary of State undertook to give further consideration to the definition of the requirement. It was agreed that if he thought it appropriate he could describe the proposal in a speech after Easter.

The meeting then considered the proposals for greater financial delegation to schools set out in your Secretary of State's minute of 6 April. Your Secretary of State said these e were substantially more radical than those considered in earlier meetings in the control over staff which would be delegated to Governors. It was suggested in discussion that the costs of setting up the scheme (paragraph 17) had probably been understated and that whilst there should ultimately be savings, any savings so far found in the schemes operating in Solihull and Cambridgeshire had been ploughed back into

meeting administrative costs. It was however recognised that the greater responsibility afforded to school governors under the proposal would encourage more people to come forward who would be able to help manage the new responsibilities. It was agreed that your Secretary of State should describe the proposal in a speech he would be making on Friday this week.

The meeting next considered the proposals for allowing individual schools to opt out of the local authority sector described in your Secretary of State's minute of 6 April. It was recognised that schools would not be willing to opt out if either immediately or after a period of years they were required to move to the full application of the per capita funding regime and as a result could expect to be worse off financially than if they had remained within the local authority sector. It was accordingly essential to find a means of reducing spending by extravagant authorities to an acceptable level. One possibility would be to ring-fence expenditure by local education authorities along the lines under discussion for housing expenditure. In low spending areas there would be the opposite problem, of an incentive to schools to opt out in order to gain increased resources. It was agreed that the problem of excessive expenditure by LEAs and incentives and disincentives to schools to opt out should be further considered by DES, DOE, Treasury and the Cabinet Office.

The meeting considered options for adjusting local authority grant as schools opted out. The choice lay between reducing total grant to all local authorities, and reducing grant to individual local authorities in line with the falling number of schools within their own particular area. The Prime Minister expressed the strong view that it should be the latter: if a school with expenditure of £1 million a year opted out of a particular local authority, grant paid to that local authority should be reduced by £1 million. It was not clear whether powers existed to allow this and, if not, they would need to be taken.

On other matters:

(i) it was agreed that umbrella organisations for groups of schools would be useful and this might reduce the risk that the Secretary of State for Education would be expected to answer in the House of Commons on matters relating to individual schools;

(ii) there would be very strong pressure from the staff to allow primary schools below the numerical limit of 300 pupils to opt out; it was agreed that the Secretary of State should take the power to allow such schools to opt out in exceptional circumstances;

(iii) small schools of this kind would tend to have higher than usual per capita costs and it would be right to allow parents to contribute to the costs of their childrens' education by topping up the amount received under the per capita formula.

The meeting finally discussed options for the future of the ILEA set out in your Secretary of State's minute of 3 April. Your Secretary of State pointed to the difficulties of transferring the ILEA to a charitable trust or board, and in particular the difficulty of managing 12,000 militant teachers. His very strong preference would be to allow individual authorities to opt out of the ILEA. The result might be that those authorities within the Association of Labour Authorities would form themselves into a rump ILEA. The Prime Minister expressed strong reservations about this proposal: leaving Labour authorities to run education in their areas could prove worse than the present ILEA. It might however be more acceptable if the choices open to parents were increased, for example by giving education credits which would allow them to have their children educated in private schools, in boroughs other than their own, or in areas outside London. The Lord President said that it might now be easier to secure passage of legislation to reform the ILEA through the House of Lords in view of the fact that it would not be tied up with abolition of the metropolitan authorities. There would therefore be more time for thorough discussion and consideration by the House of Lords. Your Secretary of State said that he was now inclined not to propose a review of the future of the ILEA, as provided for in the legislation, on the grounds of the uncertainty of its outcome. He would consider further and prepare another paper.

The Prime Minister invited your Secretary of State to put his policy proposals to H Committee. Since the meeting she has said that she would wish to take a further meeting to consider the outcome of discussions on ring-fencing of the expenditure of LEAs and your Secretary of State's paper on the ILEA. It would be sensible for this to take place before a discussion at H.

I am copying this letter to Mike Eland (Lord President's Office), John Turner (Department of Employment), Jill Rutter (Chief Secretary's Office), John Shortridge (Welsh Office), Robin Young (Department of the Environment), Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office) and to Brian Griffiths (No. 10 Policy Unit).

Duty Clerk

pp (DAVID NORGROVE)

Rob Smith, Esq.,
Department of Employment.

cc BLWP.

PRIME MINISTER

7 April 1987

Education Reform

Following on from last week's paper on

(a) National Foundation Curriculum,

the Secretary of State has now produced three more,

(b) Open Enrolment

(c) Opting Out

(d) Financial Delegation to Schools.

This completes the package on fundamental reforms in schools.

I have read the papers in detail and to my great surprise have found them (unlike the one on the curriculum) to be excellent! The officials have at last produced the kind of reforms which you have been asking for throughout the past year.

They are a strong and convincing basis on which to fight an election in the field of education.

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister

BETTER SCHOOLS

It may be useful if I make one or two points before our meeting tomorrow on the papers circulated by Kenneth Baker for this discussion.

First, a general worry. I remain concerned about the extent to which the proposals will appear to strengthen the central bureaucracy. Our arguments about increased parental choice will be undermined if the extent of central involvement in the detailed management of the educational system is greatly increased. The issue could be seen more clearly at an earlier stage when we were looking at a single proposition for central funding. Now it is more difficult to get an overview. But, taking opting out, financial delegation and open enrolment together, the proposed extent of reliance on control and supervision by the DES looks considerable and raises the issues about size and organisational structure which caused us difficulty before Christmas.

My other points are on the "opting out" proposal which, as you know, I strongly favour. I am pleased to see the key role given to "per capita" arrangements in the formulae for funding grant-maintained schools; the more weight that can be given to this element the more our proposals will be readily understood.

The papers contain options for adjusting local authority grant as schools opt out. Opting out will be going forward more or less simultaneously with the introduction of the comunity charge and it is important that we do not set up arrangements that muddy the messages and the accountability that we are seeking to put into place with our local government finance arrangements. For this reason I take a different view to Kenneth on the best way of making grant adjustments. He favours adjusting total grant in

line with the reduction in expenditure. However, this could lead to a mismatch between the change in the aggregate of grant and the change in the total needs assessment, with the result that the grant entitlement of all authorities would be affected in an unpredictable way from year to year. That would diminish accountability and reopen all the problems of grant instability which the Green Paper seeks to get away from.

If, as I strongly prefer, grant is reduced in line with the change in the education element of the needs assessment, then this problem is avoided, albeit possibly at a small cost in financial neutrality. The grant for authorities losing schools changes pound for pound with the adjustment in their needs assessment on that account, and other authorities are not affected.

Finally, the paper raises the question of whether it might be necessary to have access to a levy or to the income from the National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) if the amount of grant available were to fall below the minimum amount needed for equalisation. This is a theoretical possibility but not one which on current figures looks very likely to arise. I suggest we do not waste time worrying at this stage about the rather difficult issues which would arise in that unlikely event. I should say, however, that I do see presentational difficulties in adjusting the NNDR distribution quite as great as those that would arise from a small levy.

I am copying this letter to Kenneth Baker, Nigel Lawson, Nicholas Edwards and Malcolm Rifkind.

NR

7 April 1987

CC B/UP

CONFIDENTIAL

P 02632

PRIME MINISTER

Reform of Education (Better Schools)

(Meeting on 8 April)

DECISIONS

You should aim at this meeting to reach firm decisions if possible on the Education Secretary's new proposals in the areas you have previously discussed, namely:-

(i) Open Enrolment;

(ii) Financial Delegation;

(iii) Opting Out;

You will also want to decide:-

(iv) How to take forward the paper on abolition of the ILEA, which is less advanced than the others and presents some major financial problems;

and (v) How to take matters forward both within Government and in relation to public announcements and legislation.

You may find that it convenient to discuss the items in the above order.

BACKGROUND

2. You discussed the proposals at (i) to (iii) above with Mr Baker and other on 25 February. You asked him to work them up in the light of the discussion and also to bring forward a paper on

ILEA and education in London. In general, your main criticism of his original proposals for opting out, financial delegation etc was that they left too many powers with LEAs, and gave too little discretion to the schools, particularly to their governing bodies. It was also evident that the Education Secretary would need to do much more work on the opting out proposals to ensure that, so far as possible, the objective of financial neutrality was met. You also agreed en passant that the number of places offered under the Assisted Places Scheme should not be increased beyond 35,000, and that free home-to-school transport should not be offered.

MAIN ISSUES

3. The following paragraphs deal briefly with the main issues now arising in the order suggested above.

Open Enrolment (Mr Baker's minute of 24 March).

4. This is the most straightforward of the proposals. The proposal in essence is to change the present practice of setting many schools' admission limits well below their actual physical capacity. New legislation will require secondary schools to admit pupils up to the "standard number", which would be redefined as equal to admissions either in 1979 or (say) 1987, whichever is the higher, or such other figure as the Secretary of State may approve on application from the LEA or the governing body. LEAs or Governors could set the number higher than this redefined number on their own authority; but to reduce it would require the Secretary of State's consent. If enacted by the autumn of 1988, the legislation would operate from not later than the school year 1989-90.

5. This seems a simple and sensible way forward. You may, however, want to ask Mr Baker what he expects its practical effects to be. His earlier papers estimated that popular schools might typically be able to increase admissions by up to 25 per cent. You may also want to be assured that effective measures will be taken to prevent LEA obstruction by restricting the

budgets of popular schools.

Financial Delegation to Schools (Mr Baker's minute of 6 April)

6. To meet your criticisms at the last meeting Mr Baker now proposes:-

(i) to determine budgets on an explicit capitation basis, so that they are a function of the number of pupils. This will prevent LEAs from discriminating between schools in an area. It will not, of course, affect the overall level of provision in an LAE area, which will be determined by the local authority itself as long as they retain the responsibility for education provision;

(ii) to give governors greater discretion, including the freedom to appoint the staff that they (rather than the LEA) think most suitable (qua employer of the staff).

7. The delegated budget would include all expenditure incurred by the LEA in respect of the school except capital expenditure and associated debt charges, the LEA's own relevant administrative and central support service costs, and the cost of home to school transport. Schools would be allowed to run their own school meals services if they wished and could show that they could do so more cheaply. Details of these and the other delegations are set out in the Annex to Mr Baker's minute. All LEAs would be required to begin implementation by 1 April 1990 and to complete it by 1 April 1993.

8. These proposals seem to liberalise the delegations in the direction you wanted. I understand that the Treasury (at official level) are reasonably content with them. The dangers are, of course, that the proposed transparency of the capitation funding formulae will create pressures for higher spending; and that the proposals will cause a big row with the local authorities. But the latter is unavoidable if these and other changes are to go through.

Opting Out (Mr Baker's minute of 6 April)

9. The new scheme is to be open to all secondary schools and the 2,000 primary schools with 300 pupils or more, subject to extension of the latter in the light of experience. Details of the criteria and procedures for opting out, and the powers and duties of the Secretary of State and the LEAs, are set out in the note immediately below Mr Baker's minute. These are broadly on the lines discussed before, but Mr Baker concludes (paragraph 15) that there can be no absolute safeguard against judicial review; the best safeguard is "careful observance of the rules of natural justice and scrupulous administration".

10. The main problems or uncertainties seem to be:-

(i) Financial neutrality: Annex C seeks to secure this by proposing that local authority expenditure and the grant total and needs grant for individual authorities should be adjusted by the actual pre-transfer expenditure on each transferred school. The Treasury are in favour of this but I understand that (although this does not appear in the papers) DOE still hanker after only clawing back half the relevant amounts. If Mr Ridley pursues this, further detailed work may be necessary;

(ii) Effects of per-capita funding proposals on take-up: there are great uncertainties as to the effects the per-capital funding arrangements in Annex B will have on take-up. It is clear that some transitional arrangements (Mr Baker suggests 3 years) will be necessary to bridge the adjustment gap for schools whose current funding level is either above or below the new proposals (especially, of course, the former) This is discussed in paragraphs 12 and 13 of Annex B. Unless this is very carefully managed, there could be a good deal of instability in the system, although such evidence as we have suggests that across the country there is not too wide a spread round the average, with notable exceptions. The danger, again, is that pressures to

remove any instability, and to accelerate the process of opting out, will lead to higher expenditure. But it may not be possible to avoid this altogether as the price of getting this reform successfully launched.

11. Mr Baker's detailed proposals on opting out and financial delegation show again what an immense responsibility will now devolve on school governors and administrations. The responsibilities for in some cases multi million pound budgets will exceed anything expected of them in the maintained sector before, and it would be as well to have Mr Baker's assurance that he will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure they make a success of it.

Abolition of the ILEA (Mr Baker's minute of 3 April)

12. These proposals are new and respond to your request at the last meeting. Mr Baker suggests announcing in the Manifesto the intention to set up a review under the 1985 Local Government Act after the election.

13. You are familiar with the arguments for abolition. Political and educational considerations apart, the charge of financial extravagance is the easiest one to sustain. Some startling figures are quoted in paragraph 5 of Mr Baker's minute. Mr Baker canvases three options:

(i) Doing nothing, and letting existing ratecapping controls squeeze out overspending;

(ii) allowing boroughs to opt out;

(iii) setting up an Appointed Board either as a precepting body or wholly financed by Exchequer grant.

14. Each course raises difficulties and it is far from clear where Mr Baker's real preference lies, although he says (paragraph 23) that his preliminary view is in favour of allowing boroughs to opt out reinforced by individual schools opting out as well.

15. The biggest problem, which I think these papers understate, is that of the effects on the community charge. It will already be high in Inner London, as a result of high spending and the loss of high non-domestic rate income. Mr Baker calculates that transferring ILEA could add an extra £250 per head at present spending levels. In the long-run, this should be reduced by cutting spending. But in the short-run, any significant reduction would require Government subsidy. As Annex A to Mr Baker's note points out, this could either be found by taxpayers from the Exchequer, or, if deducted from AEG to local authorities, at the expense of other community charge payers outside London.

16. Since this is the most problematic part of Mr Baker's proposals, and the least sorted out with other Departments, I suggest that the best thing is to hive this off for further detailed work between departments and separate discussion at a further meeting. It needs to be sorted out quickly, but it is not integral to the main reform package in the other proposals above.

NEXT STEPS

17. If you are content with the substance of Mr Baker's proposals (except on ILEA), the first thing to settle is how and when they are to be presented. He makes no clear proposals on this, except that he would like to outline the proposals for financial delegation to the Secondary Heads Association this Friday.

18. You will want to consider whether it is sensible to reveal part of the package in this way, or whether it would be better to set all the proposals out properly as a package either (presumably in outline) in the Manifesto, or in a Government White or Green Paper (or a combination of both).

19. There is also the question of legislation. All the the main proposals - open enrolment, financial delegation and opting out - will require principal legislation. Mr Baker will presumably want to have drafting authority as soon as possible, but you will need

to ascertain his precise intentions and to discuss the timing. As in the case of other reforms currently under discussion, you will want to minimise the risks of premature leaks.

HANDLING

20. You will want to ask the Education Secretary to introduce his proposals and the Environment Secretary and the Chief Secretary, Treasury to comment on the local government and financial implications respectively. The Lord President will have views on the presentation and legislation aspects generally.

J B UNWIN

Cabinet Office
7 April 1987

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister

There may be a case for some kind of body, independent of Government and local authorities, to help and advise schools ~~etc~~ wishing to opt out. It would need central Government funding.

DLS 7/4.

PRIME MINISTER

OPTING OUT

1. I have now reviewed my proposals for enabling schools to opt out of management by LEAs. A revised scheme is set out in the attached paper.

2. My aim is to establish a substantial minority of schools in a new sector outside local government control by the end of the next Parliament. The scheme would be open to all maintained secondary schools and the 2000 primary schools with 300 pupils or more. But the rate at which we can make progress depends crucially on the level of per capita funding.

note that financial delegation is set at 7200 pupils.

3. My proposals for per capita funding are at Annex B. It is clear that many schools in high-spending Labour authorities could be faced with a sharp financial disincentive if we insist that transfer out of local authority control must be accompanied immediately by the full application of the per capita funding regime. We must not scare off just those schools we most want to attract. In my view some transitional arrangements will be essential. I propose a transitional grant available to such schools over a limited period - perhaps 3 years - under a contract committing the school to a planned reduction in its budget to bring costs down to formula funding level. The cost of bringing some schools down to per capita funding level would be off-set in part by ensuring that schools in low cost areas did not secure an immediate financial bonus from opting out.

4. We also need to decide upon how best to secure our aim of making the scheme financially neutral in its effects. The options are set out in Annex C. I believe that the balance of advantage points to

- adjusting local authority expenditure provision by the actual pre-transfer expenditure on each transferred school.

- Adjusting the grant total similarly by the actual pre-transfer expenditure: despite the knock-on effects for authorities generally this is the only certain way of securing financial neutrality; and

- securing a £ for £ reduction in the needs grant of individual authorities. In the longer term a problem may emerge in low needs areas: in that event I believe that it would be right to look to an adjustment to national non-domestic rate income. The alternative of a Government levy on individual LEAs is politically very unattractive.

5. I am sending copies of this minute to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for the Environment and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

K.B.

KB

6 April 1987

Department of Education and Science

CONFIDENTIAL

GRANT MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

1. Schools currently maintained by LEAs will be enabled to

(a) propose to the Secretary of State that they cease to be maintained by the LEA; and, if this is approved,

(b) enter into a contract with the Secretary of State to be grant-maintained (GM) schools, funded by him.

Constitution of GM schools

2. Each school would have a legal corporate personality, and be a charitable trust. Its affairs would be under the management of a governing body, it would own or have user rights over its premises, be empowered to acquire or dispose of land, buildings and chattels, control the admission (and expulsion) of pupils, employ its staff and manage and account for its finances. Some of these functions would be subject to the control or approval of the Secretary of State. These provisions would be set out partly in legislation and partly in the Articles and Instrument of Government of the school.

3. The corporate personality could attach to the school itself, or to a group of schools, or to a body which lay behind and owned the schools, as is the case typically with some voluntary aided schools owned by charitable trusts. The GM schools will be required to adopt Instruments of Government which provide for some governors to be elected from among the parents and teachers; others would be nominees appointed by the Secretary of State where he so wished, and co-optees from the business community. In the case of aided schools the body which owned the school would continue to appoint the majority of the members of the governing body.

Eligibility for GM status

4. The legislation would provide that GM status would be open

to such categories of school as the Secretary of State prescribed by statutory instrument. Initially it might be limited to all 4000 secondary schools and to the 2000 primary schools with more than 300 pupils, but with a provision for the Secretary of State to extend the scheme to primary schools with less than 300 pupils in the light of experience and if he is convinced they could cope.

Powers and duties of Secretary of State in relation to GM schools

5. The Secretary of State's powers would be embodied in legislation and applied case by case in contracts with each GM school. The legislation would

(a) empower the Secretary of State to require any LEA to transfer its interests in any maintained school to him for the use of the governing body of any newly created GM school

(b) require the Secretary of State to apply to GM schools the same standards of accommodation, health and safety, etc, and the provisions of any national curriculum as to LEA-maintained schools

(c) require the Secretary of State to secure that the same provisions as to pay, duties and qualifications applied to staff at GM schools as at LEA-maintained schools, including those provisions which enable the employment of unqualified teachers

(d) enable the Secretary of State to pay grant to the school and to attach conditions to the grant

(e) enable the Secretary of State to make capital grants or sanction capital expenditure or rentals by the school

(f) empower the Secretary of State to control borrowing by the school

(g) empower the Secretary of State to approve or refuse any proposed disposal by the school of its land or buildings

(h) apply the Secretary of State's existing duty under

the 1944 Act to cause HMI to visit, inspect and report on any LEA-maintained or independent school to GM schools

(j) empower the Secretary of State to provide in subordinate legislation for the size and composition of the governing body of a GM school and to appoint certain governors

(k) empower the Secretary of State to issue a direction to the Governing Body where he considered that they were making an unreasonable use of their power to debar a pupil from school (as distinct from expelling the pupil)

(l) empower the Secretary of State to permit a school to charge fees up to a maximum to be determined by him case by case and where fees were charged to require it to operate a means-tested fee remission scheme. This would enable the Secretary of State to refuse permission for fee charging to a GM school which had a monopoly of secondary education in its area. Whether or not fees were prohibited parents would be able to make voluntary contributions

(m) empower the Secretary of State to make contingency arrangements for the wind-up of the school, including the dismissal and compensation of staff.

6. The contract would apply for an indefinite period but with provisions for regular review, amendment and termination. It would provide for the grant to be calculated each year, the general basis on which it was to be calculated, and any specific arrangements as to fees and fee-remission. The contract or a separate financial memorandum would also set out the arrangements for audit and the provision by the school to the Secretary of State of financial and other information.

Powers and duties of LEAs in relation to GM schools

7. The local education authority would have

(a) the right to put forward to the Secretary of State

an objection to any proposal that a school should acquire GM status, but no right to prevent the proposal being published and submitted to the Secretary of State

(b) the duty to preserve the assets and equipment of a school which is the subject of a GM proposal from the point when the proposal is published until the transfer from the LEA

(c) the duty to transfer, if and when required by the Secretary of State, all its property interests in the school and its equipment to him for contingent transfer to the governing body of the new GM school, with any associated debt charges, but without any compensation

(d) the duty to continue to discharge all its functions as the LEA for the area, in particular in securing the attendance of pupils in its area at school.

8. Implications for the role of the LEA could arise in the longer term where a substantial proportion of the schools in its area secured GM status. The LEA would still have a continuing duty to provide primary and secondary education in its area. Its function in practice would however have been much truncated and where its pupils could not secure a place in a GM school or in one of its own schools, and had to be placed in maintained schools in neighbouring LEAs the home LEA would have to reimburse the providing LEAs for the costs of these extra-district placements. But it would be necessary to consider whether such a truncated authority should continue to operate for the time being as the LEA for the area. It is likely that in such circumstances the authority would be facing wider problems for which exceptional arrangements would be needed.

9. As noted in paragraph 7(b), an LEA would be required to preserve the assets and equipment of a school from the point at which a proposal for GM status was made until the transfer took place. LEAs might however seek to obstruct schools which were moving towards making a proposal to the Secretary of State. For example they might seek to thwart or sabotage a proposal

by proposing a re-organisation, reducing maintenance work, redeploying teachers or altering the admission policy. The Secretary of State's existing default powers under Sections 68 and 99 of the 1944 Act may be sufficient to meet any obvious obstructive behaviour.

Calculation of grant

10. This is discussed in detail in Annex B, which proposes a formula based largely on per capita payments which could be used to fund GM schools. Transitional arrangements might be needed to move from existing funding levels to formula funding. Annex C considers the clawback of grant from LEAs. It concludes that it is technically possible, within a reformed system of local government finance, to adjust grant to LEAs so as to maintain the existing balance between the taxpayer and the ratepayer.

Procedure for obtaining GM status

11. The governing body of any maintained school would be empowered, without requiring prior consultation with, or the approval of, the LEA, to put a proposal to the Secretary of State to cease to be maintained by the LEA and acquire GM status. The proposal would contain prescribed information including a proposed timetable for implementation , be published and be open for a two month period during which objections could be put to the Secretary of State. The act of publication would trigger the duty on the LEA to freeze the assets of the school. The proposal would require a resolution by a majority of all the governors, and by a majority of more than 50% of those voting in a postal ballot of parents of children at the school each parent having one vote. To secure that the decision was not taken on the basis of a very low poll, it might be stipulated that a valid resolution required that at least 40% of all parents had voted for it.

12. It is for consideration whether governors who are appointed by the LEA should be excluded from voting. The principle of our 1986 Act is that all governors have the same rights and duties

irrespective of the method of their appointment. The LEA appointed governors will under that Act be in a substantial minority. The Governing Body initiates the process and will require the substantial support of the parents at every stage before the proposal can be submitted.

13. The Secretary of State would be required to consider any proposal for GM status properly submitted to him by a governing body, on its merits. He would also have to have regard to any objections properly submitted to him whether from the LEA about the implications for securing efficient schooling in the area or from the parents or the governing bodies of other schools likely to be affected. In reaching his decision he would need to take account in particular of the admission policy of the school and the capacity of the proposers to constitute an effective trust or other arrangement for the proposed GM school, to run it effectively and to be committed to its continuation in the longer term.

14. The Secretary of State would, as with reorganisation and closure cases, be empowered to approve a proposal with or without modifications, or reject it.

15. There should be no appeal against the Secretary of State's decision. An aggrieved LEA or governing body could not be prevented from applying to the courts for a judicial review of a discretionary decision by the Secretary of State. The best safeguard against an adverse result in such a situation would be the careful observance of the rules of natural justice and scrupulous administration.

16. Where the Secretary of State approved a proposal (with or without a modification), the governing body would proceed with the transitional arrangements in accordance with the proposal as approved. If they failed to observe the terms as agreed the Secretary of State would not be bound to proceed. The steps in the procedure are set out in detail in Annex A.

Capital

17. The legislation would require the GM school to obtain the approval of the Secretary of State to any capital works, however financed, because they would have implications for the subsequent stream of recurrent expenditure at the school. GM schools would be free to raise private donations towards approved capital schemes. Borrowing, however, would be subject to control by the Secretary of State since it would carry a contingent liability on the Exchequer: in practice it would probably be best for the Government to borrow on its own account, though that need not be settled now. It is for consideration whether GM schools which had previously been voluntary aided schools would continue to qualify for 85 per cent grant and 15 per cent loan on certain capital works, direct from the Secretary of State. Receipts from disposals of land and buildings would in principle revert to the Exchequer, being netted off against capital provision for the GM school sector. As an incentive to effective management and rationalisation of provision, the arrangements should permit retention of a proportion of receipts on a case by case basis.

Pensions

18. GM schools and their teaching staff would be eligible for admission to the Teachers Superannuation Scheme. The school and its non-teaching pensionable staff would be eligible for admission to an appropriate local authority pension scheme. It would be for further consideration whether the costs of pensions, index-linking and redundancy compensation should be separate items in the annual grant or handled directly by the DES.

Termination

19. The legislation and the contract would need to provide that:

(1) a GM school could terminate the contract with a view to becoming an independent school, on payment of any compensation in respect of premises and equipment required by the Secretary of State

(2) the Secretary of State could terminate the contract and make arrangements to wind up the school where he considered that it was no longer viable. In the case of a voluntary school the land, buildings and certain major equipment would revert to the foundation with any associated liabilities. In other cases the land, buildings and equipment would revert to the Secretary of State.

Accountability

20. The Permanent Secretary would be the Accounting Officer for the grants paid by DES. The GM school would be responsible for the preparation and audit of its accounts.

Administrative costs

21. If a significant proportion of eligible schools applied to opt out, the DES would need extra staff to process the applications and manage the system. Precise numbers required cannot be estimated at this stage but on the assumption of 100 schools a year opting out the additional administrative staff might be containable at 15 FTE. There would also be additional demands on HM Inspectorate. As to the effect at local level, the extra cost of administration within the schools which opted out might be of the order of £3m a year for 100 GM schools, offset by savings within the LEAs concerned of possibly £1m - £2m a year.

ANNEX A

Transitional procedure

The steps necessary to establish the GM school once the Secretary of State's decision was made would include:

(1) governing body confirm proposed outline timetable

(2) GM school is incorporated, so that it can operate as a "shadow" body in parallel with the LEA school until the actual handover date

(3) Secretary of State negotiates contract with corporate body, including implementation dates for various steps. This would be designed to enable the Secretary of State to claw back from the LEA at the beginning of the financial year in which the change took place the appropriate sum in block grant and a reduction in specific grants. The formal transfer would where possible take place during the summer holiday before the start of the school year

(4) Secretary of State requires LEA to transfer its interests including any associated debt charges, to him and the GM school by a set date

(5) while the school is still running under the LEA, the governing body of the GM school decides which of the school's former teaching and non-teaching staff it wishes to employ. These staff would have their continuity of service preserved and would be deemed not to have been dismissed and re-employed, by an amendment to existing subordinate legislation covering transfers of employment between local authorities and certain public sector bodies. Teaching and non-teaching staff who were redeployed to posts elsewhere in the LEA or another local authority would likewise have their continuity of service preserved. Teaching and non-teaching staff who were not re-employed by the GM school

or elsewhere in the local government sector would be dismissed and the LEA which had employed them would be liable for any redundancy compensation

(6) while the LEA is still responsible for maintaining the school, the GM school makes any necessary new appointments, conducts admissions for the first year of the new regime, places any necessary contracts for transport, catering, books and equipment, maintenance etc

(7) the LEA places any former pupils whom the parents choose not to send to the GM school or the GM school decides not to admit, and terminates or renegotiates any contracts which previously extended to the GM school (eg on cleaning, catering, transport, maintenance, crossing patrols etc)

(8) LEA transfers to GM school any centrally held records (eg on pupils' social security status, statements of special needs, PAYE and other staff records)

(9) Governing body of maintained school transfers any locally held records to the GM school

(10) formal transfer takes place.

PER CAPITA GRANTS FOR GM SCHOOLS

1. This note considers the way in which per capita grants might be determined for GM schools. First it addresses the basis of setting grants in the longer term, and secondly the problems which may arise in the transition to Government funding.

A POSSIBLE FORMULA

2. There ought to be a link between the annual per capita funding in GM schools and the provision made per pupil in the education GRE. The GRE formula should not be carried over directly to GM schools, since the funding of individual schools as self-standing entities must necessarily be different in some respects from the funding of systems of schools maintained by LEAs. Nor should the level of funding of a GM school reflect the GRE for the authority in which it is situated. The latter allows for special factors which may be applicable to all schools in the LEA, on average, but not to the particular (GM) school. But if the opting-out scheme is to be financially neutral, the level of funding for GM schools must be consistent with the provision made nationally in the schools GRE. Grant will need to cover all the institutional costs associated with LEA schools (for example the salaries of teachers and other staff, books and equipment, and premises related costs such as heating and lighting). It must also be sufficient to cover services now carried out by the LEA - administration, any debt charges, subsidies for school meals, and home to school transport.

3. In theory the whole of the grant could be paid on a per capita basis. However this would make it difficult to take account of those elements of costs (for example debt charges) which can be expected to vary widely in a way not related to pupil numbers. A possible approach which would retain the advantages of a wholly per capita system but retain some flexibility would be a national formula made up of the following elements:

- a small, fixed basic grant (the same for all schools of a given type)
- the major component, paid on a per capita basis (with per capita payments varying with the age of pupils but otherwise the same for all schools)
- specific additions to the grant so calculated, to take account of the circumstances of each school.

4. The purpose of the fixed element of grant would be to offer partial compensation for the diseconomy of being a small school. Work done in the DES over a number of years has shown that the staffing of schools of the same type but differing sizes can be described by a model which assumes a small number of "fixed" or "overhead" teachers, with the remainder proportional to pupil numbers. There is also evidence of a fixed

element in non-teaching costs. Further work would be needed to establish values for the fixed element for different types of school. However the principle of partial compensation for the diseconomy of small scale is clear. With no compensation the smaller school would be effectively debarred from applying; and full compensation would blunt the incentive for a GM school to compete for more pupils. The fixed element is found from within GRE-equivalent provision. It is equivalent to the legitimate differentiation which an LEA could be expected to make in allocating resources to schools of different sizes.

5. Specific additions would be calculated partly in accordance with formulae (for example, allowances for higher costs in and around London, for pupils entitled to free school meals, and for higher than average home to school transport costs because of population sparsity) and partly by reference to factors specific to the school (debt charges, poor buildings leading to higher maintenance costs).

6. The major component of grant would be the per capita payments. These would be calculated so as to cover most of the running costs of the school, including basic allowances for administration and any general subsidy for school meals. The GRE recognises the different costs of educating pupils in three age brackets; primary (up to 10 years) secondary under school-leaving age (11-15 years) and over school leaving age (16+). These cost differences are outside schools' control and should be recognised by separate rates of grant.

7. Should the Government incorporate in these per capita payments any allowance for pupils whose educational needs give rise to higher than average costs, equivalent to the Additional Educational Needs (AEN) allowance in the education GRE? Such an allowance would be difficult to calculate: and it could be argued that a GM school free to determine its own admissions criteria and to admit pupils from a wide area did not need it. But since it is desired to make GM status attractive to schools which wish to continue to cater for a higher than average number of pupils with AEN, some such allowance will be needed; for example to support the teaching of English as a second language to pupils from the ethnic minorities, or special provision for the handicapped.

8. The table on page 5 illustrates the funding which might result from such a formula for 11-18 comprehensive schools of different sizes. The figures are approximate, but are designed to be such that the level of funding overall is consistent with the education GRE for 1986-87. The Department's work indicates that 11-18 comprehensive schools are staffed roughly as though there were an overhead of ten teachers, plus one teacher for every 18 pupils. The assumed fixed grant of £100,000 is roughly half the fixed cost which would result from this formula. The per capita element reflects the level of provision in the GRE after deducting this fixed element (assuming that GM schools reflect the existing distribution of school sizes), and allowing, as in the GRE, for pupils in sixth forms to cost 1.6 times as much as pupils in lower

forms. Further detailed work will be needed to establish accurate figures, including in particular the split between fixed and per capita funding.

SPECIFIC GRANTS

9. Some schools opting for GM status might have significant amounts of expenditure financed by specific grants such as Commonwealth Immigrants, Education Support Grant or in-service training grants, or direct Government funding as in the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative. Such expenditure would have to be considered case by case. Where it was held to justify a higher rate of per capita grant, this could be offset by a reduction in the amount of specific grant going to the LEA.

TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

10. The formula approach assumes unit costs in line with Government expenditure plans for education. In practice LEA's vary widely in their expenditure and schools may be more or less generously provided in relation to GRE. LEAs spending more than 15% above or 5% below GRE on schools in 1984-85 were:

	expenditure on schools as % of schools GRE 1984-85
ILEA	+47
Newcastle	+27
North Tyneside	+23
Haringey	+19
Newham	+15
Liverpool	+15
Bolton	- 5
Hereford & Worcester	- 5
West Sussex	- 7
Kent	- 7
Kirklees	- 8
Dudley	- 8
Birmingham	-10

11. Information is not available on variations in costs at the individual school level. We do, however, have details of pupil teacher ratios for all schools, and as teaching costs

account for 70% on average of secondary school costs these provide a reasonable indication of the spread of unit costs. Chart A on page 6 was prepared assuming that teaching costs are directly proportional to teacher numbers and that non-teaching costs per pupil are the same for all schools. It shows that the distribution is very skewed; few schools have funding levels much below the average, but there is a long tail of better resourced schools. Of the less well-resourced schools, most are in the shire counties and could be expected to have costs below the average because they cater for few disadvantaged pupils. The chart shows for comparison the "base" level of funding which a shire county school might have expected to receive under a national formula linked to GRE. There is much more variation in costs in the better resourced schools, with some more than 40% above average. Some of the variation may result from special needs but often it may result from the resourcing policy of the LEA.

12. An immediate switch to funding through a national formula linked to GRE would therefore provide some schools with a rather higher level of resources than they had previously experienced, and others much less. It is for consideration whether it would be necessary to have transitional arrangements for bringing schools into the new regime. One approach would be to announce the levels of funding which would be available under the central regime and let schools choose for themselves whether they wished to opt in. That is simple but carries two undesirable consequences. First schools in some of the higher spending LEAs would be deterred from applying, although some of those high spenders are LEAs of the kind from whom schools might most wish to be free. Second, some schools in lower spending LEAs might apply for GM status just to get higher funding (although Chart A suggests that this is likely to provide a significant incentive for very few schools).

13. These consequences could be mitigated by transitional arrangements such that schools opting in moved gradually from their funding level prior to transfer to formula funding. Schools currently less well resourced would gradually have their funding level increased. Those now better resourced would have to commit themselves to getting down to the formula level within a specified time. The effect on the Exchequer would depend on the method of calculating the deduction from AEG, the pattern of schools opting in and the timescale for transition. If the AEG deduction were based on the actual pre-transfer expenditure of GM schools, the immediate financial effect would be neutral; in the longer term, the Exchequer would gain if on average expenditure on GM schools was reduced by the transition to formula funding. If, on the other hand, the AEG deduction is based on the change in GREs, the effect would be neutral in the longer term but there could be a transitional cost to the Exchequer.

ILLUSTRATIVE FUNDING OF GM 11-18 COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS OF DIFFERENT SIZES ON FORMULA BASIS

Basic fixed grant
(same for all 11-18 comprehensives) £100,000

Per capita grant
(same for all schools)
- £1,000 per pupil aged 11-15
- £1,600 per pupil aged 16+

Resulting funding for:

- small school
  (500 pupils, 60 in 6th form) £636,000
- average school
  (1010 pupils, 110 in 6th form) £1,220,000

This funding would cover all the basic running costs of the school outside London catering for "average" pupils. Additional grant would be payable for:

- higher costs in London (eg +10% on grant for Inner London, as in GREs)
- home to school transport costs (with enhanced provision for sparsely populated areas)
- the costs of educating a high proportion of pupils with additional educational needs
- free school meals (equal to the average cost of meals for pupils statutorily entitled to free meals)
- debt charges (at actual rates) and allowance for poor condition of premises (done school by school or with a grading system)

CHART A

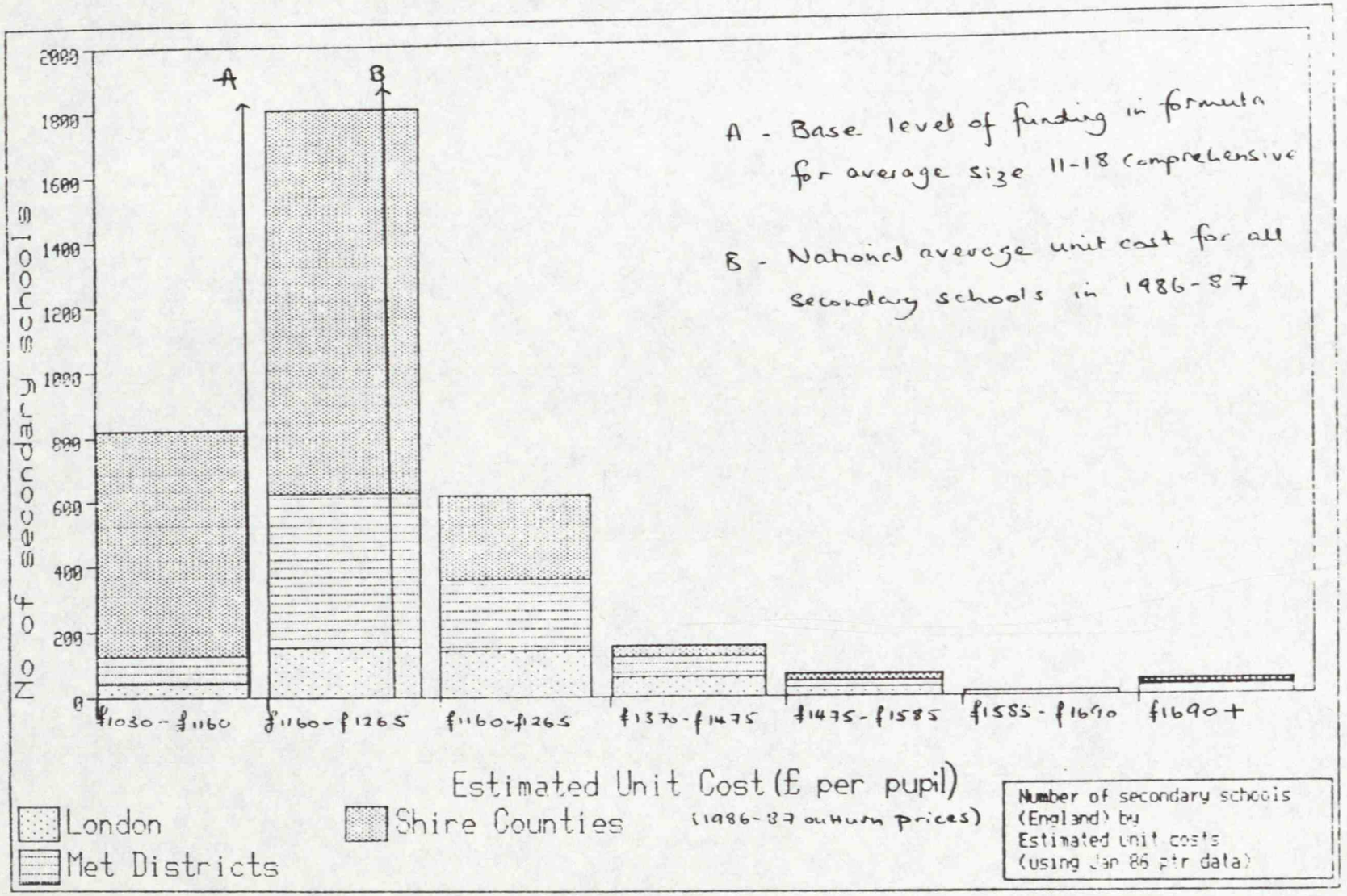


CHART A

BETTER SCHOOLS: IMPLICATIONS OF OPTING OUT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

1. This appendix looks at the implications for local government finance. They arise in relation to:

- the overall level of local government spending;
- the total amount of central grant; and
- the distribution of central grant.

This note considers these aspects in turn. It does so in the context of the new system of local government finance to be introduced in 1990, and under which all local authorities (including ILEA) will be in receipt of central government grant.

2. Consideration of these implications cannot be definitive at this stage for two reasons. First, consideration of the technical issues concerning the establishment of the new grant system is not yet complete. Secondly, the scale and pace of transfer to GM status is at present unknown. DES have suggested that numbers may be expected to build up over a period of 5 or 10 years to a substantial minority of those eligible. For purposes of analysis this paper assumes a maximum transfer of 100 schools a year, spending about £100 million.

Overall Level of Local Government Spending

3. In the Public Expenditure Survey, it will be necessary to reduce provision for local authority expenditure on account of schools transferring to Government Maintained (GM) status. The most straightforward course will be to reduce this provision by the actual expenditure on those schools immediately prior to transfer.

Effect on the total of Government grant to Local Authorities

4. There are 2 options for adjusting the total of grants to local authorities to take account of the changed funding arrangements:-

(i) adjust grant by the actual pre-transfer expenditure on GM schools;

(ii) adjust grant by the change in Grant Related Expenditure assessments (GREs).

5. A fundamental feature of the new grant system will be that authorities will receive a needs grant equal to the difference between their assessed need (i.e. their GRE) and some minimum level. This means that if an adjustment in grant is larger than the corresponding adjustment in GRE, the difference will fall on (and be spread across) the community charges of all authorities, and not only those who have had a change in their circumstances. This in turn implies a loss of local accountability which is at the heart of the new local government finance arrangements. Provided the national minimum level need not be changed, Option (ii) in paragraph 4 would avoid these implications by ensuring that the whole of the change in grant was falling on the authorities where the changes in status were taking place. Accountability would be clear.

6. Under option (ii), however, there could be no guarantee that the change in grant would equal the actual pre-transfer expenditure. Only option (i) would achieve this degree of financial neutrality at the national level, but at the expense of inequity between local authorities as described above.

The distribution of grant

7. As long as authorities remain within the grant arrangements, the distributional consequences of transfers to central funding can be readily reflected in the grant distribution. The needs assessments for authorities will be scaled down to reflect the smaller number of pupils they are providing for directly. This will result in a £ for £ reduction in authority's needs grant. (This arrangement will apply to all authorities except - in theory - the minimum need authority (probably Surrey CC) which will receive no needs grant. We believe even this theoretical problem can be overcome if needs and standard grant are combined; an option under serious study on these and other grounds in DOE).

8. At present the pupil data used in GREs has to be that for a previous year. However, no insuperable problem is foreseen in making adjustments to take account of events in a future year.

9. At some point aggregate Exchequer grants may become inadequate to finance needs equalisation in the way currently intended after 1990, unless some authorities cease to be entitled to grant. This will depend on the scale of exodus from LEA status in individual areas, but would be likely to happen in "low needs" areas first. In the case of Surrey, which as noted above is likely to be the minimum need authority, expenditure on secondary education is about £70 million while its initial grant entitlement (for all services) is likely to be about £75 million. This suggests that even Surrey would not go out of grant unless almost all its eligible schools opted for GM status - a situation which seems unlikley to arise for a number of years; if at all.

10. Nonetheless should the situation arise in due course where an authority is no longer in receipt of needs or standard grant, financial neutrality between central and local government and equity between authorities, will be lost unless some way is found of recovering from the authority the difference between the grant loss and the GRE loss. There are 2 ways of maintaining financial neutrality even in these circumstances:-

(a) To use part of the proceeds of the national non-domestic rate (NNDR) to finance needs equalisation. It could be argued that, as the NNDR is essentially a tax in support of local government services, using it (if necessary) to take account of the transfer of responsibilities for services from local to central government would be entirely reasonable. On the other hand the NNDR has been presented very clearly as an "assigned revenue", levied at a single national rate, with the upper limit set in primary legislation, and allocated to authorities on a per capita basis as of right. To start adjusting the regime in the way proposed here would confirm the fears of those who are apprehensive that the NNDR will rapidly become just another tax and just another grant.

(b) for DES, as the education authority, to have power to make a levy on local authorities for the unrecovered grant. This would be technically straightforward but, even if limited to a small scale in a very few authorities, might have presentational difficulties.

Conclusion

11. The interface between the "opting out" proposal and the new local government finance arrangements raises a number of issues. This paper suggests

(a) that, in PESC, the LA expenditure provision should be reduced by the actual pre-transfer expenditure on GM schools;

(b) that the grant total should be adjusted by either:

(i) actual expenditure - achieves financial neutrality but at the cost of knock-on effects for all authorities, and some loss of accountability; or

(ii) the change in GRE - the effect of the grant change is then contained to the authorities losing schools, but at some potential cost in financial neutrality.

(c) for individual authorities, under the new system of local government finance, grant will then be automatically adjusted by the GRE mechanism. If in the longer term a few authorities go out of grant, the maintenance of financial neutrality will require either adjustments to be made to the distribution of the NNDR, or arrangements to make a levy on the authority for the small sums involved. Both courses raise presentational difficulties but are technically feasible.

DOE

April 1987

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

Financial delegation to schools

1. Following your meeting on 25 February I have revised my proposals for delegated budgets to schools. These proposals are set out in some detail in Annex A.

2. I propose initially to give the governors of all secondary schools and of large primary schools with more than 200 pupils delegation over all the recurrent expenditure for the school. The only items not delegated will be the central administrative costs of the LEA and certain educational and supporting services which are provided on a local authority-wide basis for all schools. Among the latter are two quite separate cases - school meals and school transport. As regards meals, the law is changing in April 1988 so that LEAs' duty to provide free meals is confined to those families on Income Support. Four LEAs have stopped funding a paid meals service. We also propose to legislate to require local authorities to contract out their school meals service. Against that background I propose that schools should be permitted to furnish their own school meals service if they want to do so and if they can do so at a lower cost. As to school transport, costs arise not directly in relation to the individual school but as a consequence of parental choice and I believe that it would be simpler to exclude these costs from the delegated scheme.

3. You were particularly concerned that governors should be free to appoint those staff which they (rather than the LEA) thought most suitable within a maximum complement fixed by the employing LEA. This is achieved by the proposals in para 9 (3) and (4) of Annex A.

CONFIDENTIAL

£1½m

£20m

C.E.O.

4. Delegated budgets, and recurrent expenditure at those schools where there is no delegated budget, will be determined by a per capita formula for the LEA in question which the Secretary of State has to approve - see paras 4-6 of Annex A. This will ensure that the LEA cannot destroy a good school by discriminating against it in the allocation of resources. This was a risk that you asked me to eliminate. The per capita formula has to vary from LEA to LEA as long as we leave the LEA to determine the overall level of expenditure on education ie the level of community charge that will arise in respect of education. This is the critical power which a local authority will retain if we allow it to remain as a provider of education, as we have decided to allow for the time being.

5. I am addressing the Secondary Heads Association this Friday and I would like to make that the occasion for a speech which outlines our intentions and objectives for wider financial delegation as an essential element of our policies for improving quality.

6. I am sending copies of this minute to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretaries of State for the Environment, Employment, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

KB

6 April 1987

Department of Education and Science

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

FINANCIAL DELEGATION TO SCHOOLS

Objectives of the reform

1. The reform, which would require legislation, would have the following objectives.

(1) To give to the governing body maximum practicable control over the school's budget.

(2) To prevent the LEA from acting arbitrarily in the determination of the budget of any school.

(3) To base the total of each school's budget on a per capita funding formula.

LEA delegation schemes

2. Each LEA would be required to submit within one year of enactment for the Secretary of State's approval a scheme setting out:

(1) The formula it would use for allocating expenditure to be incurred at the schools it maintains; where the governing body of the school had control over a delegated budget, the expenditure covered by the allocation formula would constitute the delegated budget. Initially there would be delegated budgets only for secondary schools and primary schools with more than 200 pupils and for other schools to which the LEA wished to extend them. The Secretary of State would have power to make regulations requiring such an extension by stages.

(2) The provisions governing delegated budgets.

(3) The timetable and stages for implementing the scheme.

3. The LEA would be required to implement the scheme in accordance with the time-table for it once the scheme was approved by the Secretary of State. If by a prescribed date the LEA had not submitted to the Secretary of State a scheme which he could approve, he would have the duty to substitute his own scheme which the LEA would be required to implement. The scheme could subsequently be varied with the approval of the Secretary of State if the LEA wished to change it or if changes became necessary eg because delegated budgets were extended to all primary schools.

The allocation formula

4. The LEA would be required, for every year, to determine the total expenditure relating to the schools it maintains. It would determine this total in the light of its statutory duties and the revenue available to it. From this total expenditure the LEA would allocate money to each school in accordance with the allocation formula in its scheme (see para 2 (1) above). The formula would determine the expenditure to be incurred at each school, and the delegated budget where there was one, by reference to the number of registered pupils at the school and would specify:

(1) the basis of calculating the basic sum per pupil in the 5-11, 11-16, and 16-18 age ranges.

(2) the basis of calculating the automatic adjustments to the basic sums to be made in respect of differences in the size of school, or to take account of objective indicators relating to the composition of the pupils eg indicators of social deprivation, ethnic mix, or special educational needs.

(3) The extent, if any, of the LEA's discretion to make further adjustments to the automatic application of the formula under (1) and (2) above.

When the LEA submitted its scheme for approval, it would be required to illustrate its allocation formula by reference to a specified year.

5. The Secretary of State would publish criteria in relation to the contents of allocation formulae against which he would judge the LEA schemes. These criteria might include the items of expenditure which should be covered in the basic sums per pupil, the factors which should be taken into account in making adjustments, and the maximum adjustments the LEA would be able to make on an automatic basis under its scheme, beyond which the Secretary of State's further specific approval would be required to each individual case. The criteria would seek to establish a sensible balance between a formula which was so crude as to be incapable of coping with variations in circumstances and one which was so refined or so discretionary as to frustrate the objectives of a per capita funding basis.

6. Once a LEA's scheme has been approved, or imposed by the Secretary of State, the LEA would require the Secretary of State's approval for any variation in the formula.

Delegated budgets

7. The LEA's scheme would have to conform to certain statutory rules governing delegated budgets. These are set out in paras 8-13 below.

8. The delegated budget would have to include all expenditure incurred by the LEA in respect of the school except:

(1) capital expenditure and associated debt charges.

(2) The LEA's own administrative costs in relation

to the school and the cost of certain other support services to schools organised centrally eg in-service training, projects supported by Education Support Grants, peripatetic teachers: these items would be kept to a minimum when schemes are approved by the Secretary of State.

(3) The cost of home to school transport.

Provision would be made to enable schools to run their own school meals service if they wish to do so and if they could demonstrate to the LEA that they could do so at a lower cost.

9. The governing body would be free to spend the delegated budget at their discretion on any item which it covered subject only to the following constraints.

(1) The governors would be under a duty to manage the budget efficiently, and, in the case of a county or controlled school, to act in support of the LEA's duty to keep the premises in a satisfactory state of repair.

(2) The governors would be under a duty to have regard to any legal requirements relating to the curriculum.

(3) The governors could not, without the consent of the LEA, appoint a total (full-time equivalent) number of staff in excess of the maximum complement for the school determined by the LEA as an integral part of the per capita formula for the year in question. The LEA would determine that maximum as the employer and/or paymaster of the staff. It would adjust the maximum staff complement from year to year to take account of changes in pupil numbers. The governors would need to keep an eye on what they spent on staff within that maximum to ensure that it was compatible with the total sum at their disposal under the allocation formula.

If they acted recklessly they would risk withdrawal of the delegation - see para 13 below.

(4) Subject to (3) above, the governors could appoint staff for service at the school and remove them from that service. In the case of county and controlled schools, staff so appointed would have to be taken into employment by the LEA. Where the governors wished to remove staff, it would fall to the LEA to redeploy or to dismiss but in the case of dismissal any costs of redundancy or penalties for unfair dismissal would have to be met from within the school's delegated budget. The LEA could refuse to take into its employment, or pay the salaries of, such staff only on the grounds that the persons concerned were not adequately qualified or otherwise suitable for the work in question. That would also be the only ground on which the LEA could dismiss, or refuse to pay the salaries of, such staff whom the governors wished to serve at the school. It should be noted that this would give to governing bodies with delegated budgets a new power to prevent the LEAs from appointing a candidate whom it judges to be more suitable than the governors' candidate, and from redeploying a suitable teacher whose post has disappeared eg as a result of falling rolls.

(5) The governors would be under a duty to cooperate with consortium arrangements (eg for the TVEI or in-service training) made by the LEA between schools; and to comply with conditions attached to centrally earmarked funds (eg TVEI).

10. There would be rules about the limits to and treatment of the carry-over of under-spending and over-spending by the governors.

11. It would be for the governors to decide what administrative arrangements eg a qualified bursar they require to manage their delegated budget. They would also need to develop financial management information systems: these would need to be approved by the LEA so that it could satisfy itself that the governors were adequately equipped to control the delegated budget - see para 13 below. The LEA would be under a duty to supply financial information reasonably required by the governors and to offer them training: initially such training schemes might be supported by Education Support Grant.

12. The governors would be free to sub-delegate expenditure from the delegated budget to the head teacher and such sub-delegation is likely to be extensive in practice. The head teacher would retain his present right to veto the purchase of any textbooks or other materials which in his professional judgment were incompatible with the school's curriculum.

13. The audit of the delegated budget would be added to the responsibilities of the LEA's auditors. The LEA would need to strengthen its arrangements for internal audit. If it was satisfied that the governors had shown themselves incapable of managing their delegated budget under the scheme, it would have the right to withdraw the delegation until such time as it judged that it could be restored. The governors would have a right to appeal to the Secretary of State against the LEA's withdrawal of, or failure to restore, delegation.

Implementation Timetable

14. Each LEA's scheme would contain an implementation timetable. This might vary between LEAs, given that some have made more progress with financial delegation under existing arrangements than others. All LEAs would be required to begin implementation by 1 April 1990 and to complete it by 1 April 1993. The timetable would need to specify the preparatory work, and the stages by which complete delegation could be established. The Audit Commission and the LEAs who have done most so far to delegate agree on the need for preparation and staging

if delegation is to be successful.

Articles of government

15. In schools with delegated budgets the governing body will have new functions and the LEA's powers and duties in relation to the governing body will be reduced. These changes would need to be reflected in each school's articles of government.

Visibility of the new arrangement

16. To ensure that all concerned (including governing bodies) could see the effect for each LEA and school of the move towards per capital funding and delegated budgets the LEA would be required to publish:

(1) The average per capita expenditure per pupil arising from its total expenditure on the schools it maintains.

(2) The allocation formula and the per capita expenditure per pupil in each school which results from it, whether or not the school had a delegated budget.

(3) The public examination results for each secondary school, and for all schools the results of the tests it is proposed to introduce at key ages in connection with the national curriculum.

Resources

17. These reforms would lead to an allocation of resources between schools which better reflected their ability to attract pupils as well as efficiency gains from better decisions about the use of resources at schools. But it would not be realistic to expect them to produce public expenditure savings. They would give rise to additional administrative costs. There would be an initial cost in setting up the new arrangements in schools (for example setting up the financial

management information system and training governors and staff) and in the LEAs (the setting up of the new schemes) which together might amount to £20-£30m. There would be continuing extra staff expenditure at the schools in operating the delegated budgets and in the LEAs in operating the schemes. The Department intends to commission a quick management consultants' study to develop models of financial delegation for schools to assist LEA action and to examine further and in detail likely costs at school level and the scope for long-term savings in LEA administration.

18. There would also be an increased requirement for central manpower for the necessary legislation, the approval of LEA schemes, and the monitoring of their implementation including attempts to subvert them and governors' appeals against the withdrawal of delegation.

JPM03D2

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE
YORK ROAD
LONDON SE1 7PH
01-934 9000

David Norgrove Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

6 April 1987

Dear David

NATIONAL CURRICULUM

I attach a revised version of the statement that my Secretary of State intends to make to the Education and Science Select Committee tomorrow morning.

I am copying this letter and attachment to Alex Allan (HM Treasury), Jon Shortridge (Welsh Office), David Watkins (Northern Ireland Office), Robin Young (DOE) and to Robert Gordon (Scottish Office), and to Trevor Woolley.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Smith

R L SMITH
Private Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL

Secretary of State's National Curriculum Statement

1. At the North of England Conference in January I said that the time had come to move rapidly to a national school curriculum. This has been much discussed.

2. The aim of the main partners in the education service and myself is to raise standards of achievement in our schools. It cannot be secured without an education which equips every pupil with at least basic skills, knowledge and understanding to meet the challenging responsibilities of adult life and employment in tomorrow's world. Many of our schools offer such a curriculum, though not always to all their pupils. But many offer something far less good.

3. The Government believes that this is no longer acceptable. Pupils are entitled to a curriculum that draws upon individual talents and which challenges the child. This can be guaranteed only if it is required and enforceable by law. That is the principle on which the Government now intends to stand.

4. The Government wants the national curriculum to be as good as the best minds in the country can make it. The level of attainment to be aimed at and the content of what is taught should reflect the best practice of our good schools. The duties placed on the schools should leave full scope for good teaching, and for this country's tradition that teachers use their professional talents and skills to adapt the work to each pupil and to develop new approaches as new needs arise.

5. But two aspects of our educational tradition will have to be modified. First, we can no longer leave individual teachers, schools, or LEAs, to decide the curriculum children should follow. It is no longer acceptable that many children have a much less good curriculum than others through the accident of where they happen to go to school, or where they live.

6. Second, it is not right that hardly anyone knows with any clarity or in any detail what the schools are trying to do for their pupils. Parents are entitled to know what the schools seek to teach and how well they succeed in teaching it. Once they have that evidence, schools can be judged fairly.

7. Once the school itself has clear objectives, all the staff will know where they are and what is expected of them. Pupils will be motivated by clear expectations, and parents, employers and the public will know better how to give effective support to the school. A good curriculum will attract commitment all round. That commitment in turn will promote high standards of achievement which can continue to be measured over the passage of time.

8. The Government intends to legislate early in the next Parliament to establish a national curriculum brought about by the cooperative efforts of the education service, the providers and its customers. My aim is that when the Secretary of State sets out the national curriculum, he will not be imposing his will but giving effect to a broad national consensus.

9. We want to ensure that pupils have a well-balanced foundation curriculum suitable to their abilities and aptitudes which during the compulsory period includes not only maths and English, but also science, foreign languages, history, geography and technology in its various aspects. Time should be found for music, art and physical education. Religious education is covered by the 1944 Act.

10. This list of essential subjects which I have just set out does not describe the whole of a school curriculum. For example, it does not mention essential parts of the curriculum, such as health education, which is not usually taught or learnt as a separate subject. It does not mention choice of additional subjects at age 14-16. It does not refer to the personal qualities, attitudes and values which are required for a worthwhile and useful life.

11. For each subject within the foundation curriculum it will be necessary to determine clear and challenging attainment targets for the key ages of 7, 11, and 14. These targets should allow for variations in ability. They should not result in an unduly narrow approach to teaching and learning. Having established the attainment targets it will be necessary to determine and define the essential content, skills and processes of what has to be covered and taught in each subject. This approach parallels what is now being developed for the 14-16 period through GCSE: the national criteria, worked out by professionals, set objectives for measuring attainment; the Examining Groups set detailed syllabuses and examinations which are approved by the Secondary Examinations Council.

12. I emphasise that what is defined will be a core: it should leave ample scope for teachers to build around it, to exploit individual pupils' abilities, and to determine their own methods of teaching for the whole ability range. Teachers must have scope for exercising imagination, for experiment, and for responding quickly to new challenges as they arise. But unlike now, all this should take place within a set framework, known to all, intelligible to all, and as far as possible acceptable to all.

13. Having decided the core of what should be learnt, we need to assess pupils' performance in relation to the attainment targets. Those attainments which can be tested will be tested at the key ages. But we do not want teachers to teach only what is testable, so it will be essential also to assess work done in class at the key ages. The tests and the assessments would fall to the teachers, but both would be externally moderated.

14. The far-reaching changes planned by the Government pose a professional task which is large, complex and vitally important. Some of the groundwork has been done, notably in the professional discussions stimulated by successive HMI documents, including the discussion papers in the "Curriculum Matters" series. The next step is a more concentrated distillation of professional and lay expertise and wisdom.

15. I plan to appoint a number of very strong working groups to advise on suitable attainment targets and the writing of the programmes to make sure these targets are achieved in the subjects of the national foundation curriculum. Their reports will serve as the focus for statutory consultation before attainment targets and subject curricula are specified in legislation. I intend to start by setting up, as soon after Easter as possible, a working group on maths and a working group on science. Both groups will be thoroughly professional and small enough to work effectively and will reflect the main interests within and outside the education service who have an essential contribution to make. I shall ask the groups to give priority to the primary phase which has so far received less attention than the secondary phase.

16. There is much work to be done. I welcome the national discussion which will come and after that I propose to send a further memorandum to the Committee.

010

cc BG

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE
YORK ROAD
LONDON SE1 7PH
01-934 9000

NSPM.

Dear Colleague,

3 April 1987

HIGHER EDUCATION: "MEETING THE CHALLENGE"

I hope you will agree that the White Paper (Cm 114) we have just published on higher education is excellent news.

The keynote is expansion: an increase of 50,000 by 1990 in the number of students, to meet the economic and intellectual needs of the country, through the expansion of opportunities for pupils from all social backgrounds to aspire to higher education.

The dramatic fall in the birthrate will cut the number of young people by about a third in the mid 1990 s. To maintain the high level of graduate output we have achieved in the last seven years, I am working to raise the proportion of school leavers entering higher education from about one in seven to one in five by the end of the century. I also want to encourage more mature students, more people with non-traditional qualifications, and more people on short or part-time courses.

Many people think that higher education means our 45 universities. But the polytechnic and college sector has been growing enormously in recent years, and doing excellent work. It is time to build on this success, and reward these mature institutions by a greater degree of independence. That is why I plan to introduce legislation to remove polytechnics and other mainly higher education colleges in England from local authority control. The effect will be to increase their entrepreneurial spirit, and their links with industry and commerce, while retaining their specifically local characteristics. Funding will in future be based on a new Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council, using contract-based arrangements.

The third plank of the White Paper's policy is the reform of the University Grants Committee. The universities themselves have been making painful readjustments to improve their management, and serve the economic needs of the nation better. It is now time to reform the University Grants Committee, and I have announced in the White Paper the Government's acceptance of the main thrust of the Croham Committee's recommendations. This will mean replacing the UGC with a smaller, more effective Universities Funding Council, which will include a strong element of people from outside the academic world.

The Government is committed to maintaining and enhancing the strength and quality of the science base, and we are spending more in this area than ever before. To avoid any disruption of scientific programmes, I announced in the House that an additional £15 million is being made available for 1987/88 through the Science Budget, on top of the extra £39m I announced last November and the £17.5m over three years for AIDS research announced more recently. Taken together with the recent 24% pay settlement for academics, this will help to sustain the work of the most able scientists, to keep our first class research teams together, and to buy more first rate science, the quality of which is recognised world-wide.

Together with other steps to improve quality and efficiency, these policies will help our education to develop its distinctive strengths, and to serve the nation as we face the economic and social challenges of the final decade of this century and beyond.

Yours ever

Kenneth.

PRIME MINISTER

EDUCATION

With more Ministers coming to your next meeting on education reform, I do not think it would be useful to invite officials this time. But there is a case for an official from DES, who would now be Nick Stuart. (David Hancock is abroad.) Would you wish him to attend?

Why?

The paper on the ILEA can be taken without territorial Ministers present.

Other papers will arrive next week.

DRN

David Norgrove

No officials -- this must be an ordinary Ministerial meeting

MT

3 April 1987

PRIME MINISTER

Education

With more Ministers coming to your next meeting on education reform, I do not think it would be useful to invite officials this time. But there is a case for an official from DES, who would now be Nick Stuart. Do you agree that he may attend?

The paper on the ILEA can be taken without territorial Ministers present.

DAVID NORGROVE

3 April 1987

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT
cc master.

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

3 April 1987

Dear Rob,

NATIONAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Prime Minister this morning held a meeting to discuss the national school curriculum on the basis of your Secretary of State's minute of 24 March and the Chancellor of the Exchequer's minute of 2 April. There were present your Secretary of State, the Secretary of State for Wales, the Minister of State and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland and Professor Brian Griffiths.

Your Secretary of State said he had made in November a commitment to a national school curriculum and had put forward after Christmas proposals for attainment tests. Both ideas were being debated. There was now agreement across the political spectrum on the need for a basic national curriculum. Next week he would announce the creation of working parties on mathematics and science and would speak to Sir John Kingman. The aim was that the working parties should produce interim reports within three months and final reports within twelve months. They would be expected to concentrate on the curriculum in primary schools first. Setting attainment levels was the key. These must be precise and indeed the syllabus now operated in Croydon was too vague. There would be a need to specify how far children would be expected to progress by particular ages in particular areas. In many ways once the attainment levels had been specified course syllabuses in the various subjects would have been established. But it would be necessary to be wary in the use of the word syllabus: to do so would create great antagonism. A further objective would be to try in due course to establish a common syllabus for mathematics across the country for children between the ages of 14 and 16, removing the existing five examination boards. The proposals were revolutionary. They would create a system with a national foundation curriculum, and attainment tests moderated outside the schools concerned.

The following points were made in discussion.

(i) Remedial measures would need to be taken to help

children who failed to reach the minimum standards. It was noted that children in the United States and France could in those circumstances be expected to retake a year ("redoublement").

(ii) There was some risk that if minimum standards of attainment were set these would in practice become maximum standards and teachers might concentrate on the children having difficulty in attaining the minimum standard, leaving others to coast; it would be necessary to rely on pressures from the local education authorities, from parents and the ability of teachers themselves, to prevent this.

(iii) The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland suggested that in the light of Scottish experience the proposals could prove expensive and unnecessarily complicated. It was however noted that England was starting from a much worse position than Scotland had ever reached. Great interest was expressed in powers enjoyed by the Secretary of State for Scotland under a 1980 Act to compel changes in local education authority behaviour in certain circumstances. (These were not specified.)

(iv) There was a need in structuring the tests to avoid re-creating the problem of rejection brought about by the 11+. However it should also be permissible for the brightest and best taught children to take attainment tests early if they were ready to do so.

(v) There was clear evidence, for example from an HMI report on the teaching of science in Greenwich, that resources were being badly targeted and mismanaged in some areas.

It was agreed that A levels should not be an examination to be approved by the Secretary of State (paragraph 9 of annex A).

It was further agreed that it would not be appropriate for Scotland to be brought within the present proposals on the curriculum. However Wales would be involved. The Secretary of State for Wales said he saw no need for a separate organisation to deal with the curriculum and syllabuses in Wales. However it would be important to allow sufficient flexibility for the Welsh language and history and other Welsh matters to be studied as appropriate. It was agreed that the curriculum for England and Wales should give sufficient flexibility to accommodate regional variations, and in particular the Welsh language and culture. It was essential that there should be representation from Wales on the working groups and officials from the Welsh Office Education Department should work closely with officials of the Department of Education

and Science. Welsh Office officials should offer comments on the draft statement to give it application to Wales as well as England. The resource implications of the proposals on the curriculum would need to be discussed with the Chief Secretary.

Bringing the meeting to a close, the Prime Minister warmly welcomed your Secretary of State's revised proposals both on the curriculum and on testing and assessment. His statement to the Select Committee on Education and Science and the Arts should be made on Wednesday. The proposals should be taken to H Committee, and this might be done in advance of his other proposals on education.

I am copying this letter to John Shortridge (Welsh Office), Robert Gordon (Scottish Office), Alex Allan (HM Treasury), Robin Young (Department of the Environment) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours,
David.

David Norgrove

Rob Smith Esq
Department of Education and Science.

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

The Rt Hon Kenneth Baker MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON
SE1 7PH

3 April 1987

Dear Ken,

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Thank you for letting me have sight of your proposals on the National School Curriculum.

I am fully behind your intention to improve the quality and standards of education, and can see that your proposals will bring much-needed coherence to the content of what is offered in primary and secondary schools, as well as setting well-defined benchmarks for pupils' performance at various stages. I and my colleagues will take considerable interest in the progress of the subject working groups which you plan to establish, and in the outcomes of your proposals about testing. If you considered it possible, and potentially useful, I would be glad to suggest that a member of the Northern Ireland Inspectorate might contribute to the discussion about shaping your detailed plans.

Although the educational system in Northern Ireland is not subject to the wide diversity of standards that exist among LEAs in England and Wales, and although we have always been able to exercise a great deal of unobtrusive control over schools and the curriculum through our Inspectorate and our system of financing education, I have no doubt that we could do more to ensure that the abilities of all pupils - in primary no less than in secondary schools - are stretched as fully as they ought to be.

/...

We have recently embarked on programmes of curriculum reform in both primary and secondary education which will eventually involve all schools, and which seek to allow teachers to exercise significant professional responsibility for the breadth and quality of education offered to all pupils. It is intended that this work will provide the basis for consensus about the content of the curriculum for 5-16 year olds in Northern Ireland. In that context, your work on assessment of standards and levels of attainment at the various age groups you have mentioned could be particularly valuable, provided that the 'tested' curriculum did not become, for many teachers, the main objectives of their work. I am sure that you will be aware of this risk, and will ask HMI to promote the growth of good practice rather than a dull conformity.

In summary, I support your intention, and offer any practical help which you may feel we can give from Northern Ireland.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Nigel Lawson, Nick Edwards, Nick Ridley, Malcolm Rifkind, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

TK

DMC

Education: Policy Pt 12

CC 5/4

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

THE CURRICULUM

The papers for this meeting are:

A - Note by Brian Griffiths
B - Letter by me to Department of Education and Science
C - Minute by the Chancellor
D - Minute by Mr Baker
E - Annex A on legislation
F - Annex B on the timetable
G - Revised draft statement
H - Original statement

Those attending include Angela Rumbold, Bob Dunn, and, as you agreed, Scotland, Wales and possibly Northern Ireland.

The immediate need for this meeting is that Mr Baker wishes to make a statement on 7 April to the Select Committee on Education, Science and the Arts. Brian and I felt that his original draft statement (flag G) and indeed his whole approach was not fully in line with your own. With your agreement, I wrote to DES to say this (flag B), and I think you should read my letter to ensure that it does not misrepresent your views: it will be important that you should correct any misapprehensions at the beginning of the meeting.

The brief by Brian Griffiths assesses Mr Baker's papers against our understanding of your intentions.

Mr Baker has also circulated a paper on open enrolment. There is a further meeting scheduled for next week to discuss this and other papers on the wider reforms. It would seem right also to invite the territorial departments to that wider discussion. (They are aware of it.)

DRN

D R NORGROVE

CONFIDENTIAL

CCB FB

OD

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

CONFIDENTIAL

The Rt Hon John MacGregor Esq OBE MP
Treasury Chambers
Parliament Street
London
SW1P 3AG

2 April 1987

PM seen.

DKS
8/4.

Dear John,

JORDANHILL COLLEGE SCHOOL

I am writing to seek your agreement for my proposals to secure the future of Jordanhill College School, about which you may have seen reports recently in the national press. Very briefly, the background is as follows.

All the Scottish Colleges of Education (ie teacher training colleges) used to have demonstration schools, but, as you will know, by the 1960s professional opinion had come to favour student placement in ordinary state schools and the demonstration schools were phased out. However, two demonstration schools did continue, one run by Jordanhill College of Education in Glasgow and the other a small nursery school run by Moray House College of Education in Edinburgh. The schools were in effect funded by my Department through their recurrent grant to the respective Colleges of Education. In 1985 the National Audit Office in a report on my Department's control of centrally funded HE Colleges, criticised Jordanhill College School as representing in effect a subsidy to Strathclyde Regional Council, which is the education authority for the area concerned. The Scottish Office's examination of that matter in addition led to strong doubts about the vires of the grant arrangements (revised Regulations are in hand to solve this problem for as long as the School is administered by the College). George Younger concluded that the existing arrangements could not stand. I came to the same conclusion and after considerable thought I proposed last August that the school should gradually move towards being independent and fee-paying, but over a lengthy period and with a tapering direct grant meanwhile. I have decided to withdraw grant in respect of Moray House Nursery School. All this was discussed in a preliminary way with your officials last August.

It has, however, not been possible to find a promoter prepared to acquire the Jordanhill school and operate it on these terms. Instead, the parents and staff have responded by putting to me proposals for a permanent direct grant from my Department, to meet the full costs of running and maintaining the school. In doing so they have prayed in aid the proposal for City Technological Colleges and other ideas for a

hird force" in education to which there have been public references from time to time.

Despite the NAO criticism, Strathclyde Regional Council's guideline takes no account of the pupils at present attending Jordanhill College School. There is pressure from some quarters for the school to be transferred to Strathclyde Regional Council, but the Labour Group - which dominates the Council - has made clear that it is not prepared to accept the school. There is little doubt in my mind that, if I were to seek discussions with a view to persuading Strathclyde Region to take on the school, they would demand concessions from me (their total spending is well above guidelines) which I could not possibly meet. Their main objective would be to make a political issue of the future of the school and place the blame on the Government for the lack of agreement on its future. I do not therefore propose to follow this course.

Neither could I readily contemplate the closure of the school, since its examination results are amongst the best in the country and it is very much an example of the kind of school which we wish to foster. This view of the school is held not only in Glasgow but throughout Scotland and has been reinforced by recent publicity. Our supporters would find it impossible to understand if we were to close a school which exhibited all the merits we wish to see in education and our opponents would have a field day at our expense. Clearly I have to find a solution which allows this school to continue. And since the future of the school has been uncertain for a considerable time, I am anxious to reach a decision quickly.

I propose therefore to accept the principle of direct grant while encouraging the school to seek a measure of private funding.

My intention is to base the calculation of grant towards revenue expenditure on the estimated cost of educating a comparable number of pupils in local state schools. The maximum grant would be fixed by reference to this and a limit on pupil numbers which I would set, but the school's budget would of course be subject to normal Departmental scrutiny. The school would be free to educate a greater number of pupils or to offer a higher standard of facilities but they would be required to meet in full from private sources the additional costs of doing so. I propose that the building should be leased to the school by the College. Rent paid by the school would rank for grant and would reduce the grant paid to the College accordingly. Grant for repairs and maintenance would, like recurrent grant, reflect state sector levels of expenditure, while capital expenditure accepted by the Department as essential would be treated in the same way as voluntary schools in England and would receive 85% grant support. The school would be expected to seek private funding for the balance and for anything not accepted as essential to the discharge of the approved programme. My intention would be to encourage the school to pursue a measure of development and innovation in the curriculum and, in particular, to give increasing emphasis to technical and vocational subjects; and to seek funds from private industry and commerce to support this.

As to management and administration, the parents have suggested that they should form a company limited by guarantee to assume responsibility for the school. That seems the best way forward, but I intend to insist that they should constitute a small Board of Governors with commercial, financial and legal expertise to which I would have a contractual relationship providing for effective management, and access and

formation necessary for audit of expenditure and of the education provided. This seems to be an essential safeguard given the substantial public funding - some £1.5 million annually in round terms - involved in the enterprise.

There is now a pressing need to announce decisions in principle and to establish a framework within which further discussions with the parents can take place. I would like to do that as soon as possible. My proposals are very much in line with colleagues' current thinking on future development of the education service; they entail expenditure similar to that already borne by the Jordanhill College Governors; and of course they would be accommodated within the Scottish block. I thought, nevertheless that I should explain what I have in mind and, in particular, that I should reassure you on the expenditure implications before embarking on public discussion. I should be grateful if you would confirm that you are content for me to do so.

I am sending a copy of this letter for information to Kenneth Baker.

Yours ever,

Malcolm

MALCOLM RIFKIND



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cc BKP

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

2 April 1987

The National School Curriculum

Kenneth Baker's minute and annexes on the national school curriculum show real progress from the previous meeting. The proposals put forward however still suffer from serious defects. These are:-

(a) a reluctance to define the content of the core curriculum in terms of syllabuses.

Regrettably the papers are vague about the precise content of the core curriculum. The word syllabus is used only once (and that is para 11 of the Revised Draft Statement - it was omitted from the first draft) and when used refers to the parallels between the new national school curriculum and the syllabuses of the GCSE! This does not augur well.

You need to press Kenneth Baker to make clear beyond all doubt that what you want is minimum competence in basic subjects. This can only be achieved if teachers and parents know in advance the precise content of the core which has to be taught and learned. This in turn means the publication of clear and unambiguous syllabuses for basic subjects, which are readily accesssible to parents as in France.

Kenneth Baker will doubtless argue that we in this building do not begin to understand the difficulty he faces in presenting these ideas to HMI, his own officials and the teaching profession. He may well be right. If he fudges the issue of what constitutes a core however, there can be no guarantee whatever that

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you will achieve your objective of raising basic standards in our schools.

I believe that a clear statement on this issue would find wide acceptance among the population at large. It would be particularly popular with parents.

(b) a vagueness over attainment.

Attainment is always expressed in terms of targets and never at minimum levels. In addition "these targets should allow for variations in ability" (para 11 Revised Draft). As a result there will be different tests for different ability levels.

There is no reason to think that with proper teaching of given syllabuses focused on known examinations, the vast majority of children at all of our state schools could not have significantly higher standards of achievement. For example by 7 or 11 it would be perfectly possible for the bulk of children to be tested in spelling, tables etc and for them to pass. The way to ensure that less able candidates are not demoralised because they may fail exams is not to lower standards but to improve the quality of teaching.

(c) an uncertainty over who delivers and enforces the core curriculum.

You need to press the Secretary of State on the role of the HMI in the establishment of a core curriculum?

Para 14 of the Revised Draft pays tribute to the HMI discussions papers on "Curriculum Matters". The view of the curriculum contained in these papers is a far remove from for example that of the French - as was clear in earlier papers sent by the DES which examined

one subject in detail - history. HMI as presently constituted should not play much of a role in the setting up of a core curriculum in view of their traditional hostility to this approach.

At one point the Secretary of State mentions with approval the Secondary Examinations Council (SEC) as a body to which he would entrust the supervision of the core curriculum.

The information I receive is that the Chairman of the SEC, Sir William Cockcroft, is a genuinely likeable person but that his staff are second rate. In any case they are the people who are responsible for GCSE. It hardly seems appropriate that a major new initiative to raise standards in our schools should be linked to GCSE.

(d) an unnecessary extension of state control over A levels.

Tucked away in para 9 of Annex A is the somewhat surprising proposal they all public exams and in particular A level would need the Secretary of State's approval. As the discussion of the core curriculum has been for ages 5-16 the inclusion of a statutory control of A level syllabuses is difficult to explain, especially as a review of A level has just been set up.

The danger of this proposal is that for those who wish to change A level in the way that GCSE has changed O level, this could be an obvious way forward. It should be dropped as quite unnecessary to establishing a core curriculum.

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Conclusion

In view of the fact that the Secretary of State still has some way to go in developing a core curriculum, you need to insist on a revised paper before the Parliamentary Counsel start drafting.

The Revised Draft Statement

As it stands this is unsatisfactory because it is a ~~fair~~ reflection of the vagueness of the proposals.

As an example, take the first sentence of para 7. If we are to convey the right impression to the general public this should read something as follows:

> "Once the school itself is given clear objectives on the content of the core curriculum and how is to be delivered, all ....."

Para 11 needs changing so that targets are made "minimum levels" and the following sentence is dropped.

Having revised his basic papers on the curriculum the draft needs to be made more precise.

Conclusion

The present revised draft still contains ambiguity. It would be best if the Secretary of State produced another revision before you agree to it.

BG.

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
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PRIME MINISTER

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

I have seen Kenneth Baker's minute to you of 24 March about the national school curriculum; I understand you are discussing it with him tomorrow.

I am, as you know, strongly in favour of making early progress in this direction. I have felt for some time that we could learn something from studying practice in countries like France where a national curriculum has been a normal part of their school system.

The DES have kindly given me some examples of the material issued by the French Ministry of Education. I think you will be interested to see the attached example of the French curriculum for six to eleven year olds. It is interesting because of its content and style, and the way it has been published to attract parental interest. I attach a short note written here which picks out some of the main points.

I feel sure that parents will welcome a move by us towards setting proper standards via a national curriculum. But we may well have a problem with teachers, who may see this as yet something more being imposed on them, on top of the new pay deal.

I think we can meet criticism of this kind in two ways. First, we must make it clear that there will be a period of consultation with teachers and other interested parties - as indeed is implicit in Kenneth's proposals to set up working groups to report to him. But

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second, I think we need to be careful to avoid setting up the national curriculum in a way which leaves us open to unnecessary criticism about increased centralisation or bureaucracy. I was glad to see that the previous ideas about centralised monitoring and enforcement have been dropped: it must be better to rely on publicity, and - particularly important - the power of parents. But it does seem to me unnecessary for the Secretary of State to take the power to approve "all public examinations" (paragraph 9 of Annex A to Kenneth's note). The French seem to leave the matter of valuation more to the individual school, and it may be better for us to pursue something more on those lines, subject to clearly defined national standards.

I welcome Kenneth's proposal that officials should work out further the resource implications. I do not think these need be large, but we shall have to look carefully at the administrative overheads.

I am copying this minute to the Secretaries of State for Education, the Environment, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

N.L.

N.L.
2 April 1987

THE FRENCH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The curriculum

An example of the French school curriculum is contained in the attached paperback book, which contains the basic curriculum for "elementary" schools (ie for 6-11 year olds). This is described as obligatory for all schools and all teachers. It starts by reproducing the Ministerial Order prescribing the number of hours a week to be allocated to each subject during the five years covered by these schools. Then for each subject there is a clear statement of general objectives and of what should have been taught by the end of the 3 main stages, ie by age 7 (cours preparatoire), by age 9 (cours élémentaire), and by the time they leave the school at the age of 11 (cours moyen). There is also some very broad guidance about teaching methods, but generally the choice of methods is a matter for the individual teacher.

2. In the chapter on the French language, for example, the elements of grammar which should be taught at each stage are quite precise: on pages 29, 32 and 35 respectively for the 3 stages. Similarly for mathematics and for science and technology. For history and geography, the curriculum specifies in some detail the particular historical periods, etc, to be studied - mostly, at this stage of schooling, related closely to the history and geography of France. There is also a specific curriculum for civics, as well as provision for art, music and physical education.

3. Evaluation of the progress of each pupil is a matter for the teacher. There is no formal end-of-year examination to test the pupil's aptitude to move on; the teacher, in consultation with the parents, decides whether or not the pupil will be able to profit from the education in the class above. This "redoublement" is an accepted part of the French ethos; about

50% of pupils will repeat a year at some time or other in their school career. (It is not so common, however, in West Germany.) At the end of the final primary year, the pupil has the right to go on to secondary schooling, but the class teacher may propose that he does the final year again; the parents have a right of appeal against this to the county authorities. About 20% of pupils will be held back at this stage, and go on to secondary education at 12 or 13 instead of 11.

4. The obligatory curriculum is supplemented by additional documents which give guidance to the teachers on how to set about teaching particular parts of the curriculum. For science and technology in the top 2 primary years, for example, the guidance note suggests how the prescribed time (3 hours a week over the two years) might be divided between the different elements of the subject in the prescribed curriculum. It also gives examples of the kind of experiment which might be used to support the teaching. This supplementary guidance is however "indicative". There is also a very thorough note about how to evaluate the progress of the pupils and feed this into teaching methods in order to ensure that the objectives in the curriculum are achieved..

5. The choice of textbooks is left to the teachers, and there are not even any recommended books. But the curriculum obviously has a very strong influence on the books which are produced. The Minister's introduction to the prescribed curriculum remarks that he hopes the curriculum will provide the basis for new textbooks.

6. A separate curriculum is published for secondary schooling from 11-15, which we have not yet been able to study. It is similarly supported with guidance notes. These include a booklet on "Thèmes transversaux", which suggests how some more general social themes can be worked in to the curriculum on the various subjects. This is a recent development and some textbooks have now been published on it.

Comment

7. The French curriculum is an interesting and impressive document. It is clearly possible, in a centralised system like the French one, to prescribe a standard curriculum in some detail. Particularly in a subject like history, it does however imply being pretty ruthlessly selective in what is studied.

8. In this country, by contrast, we start from a position where teachers expect to have a much greater freedom to set their own syllabus, subject only to the requirements of public examinations. So long as the teachers are employed by the local authorities, the government has much less direct influence. The French system is, in some respects, also decentralised, in the sense that the local authorities, for example, own and maintain the buildings. But the State prescribes the curriculum, and trains and pays the teachers, and is able to assume that a central prescription will be complied with. The establishment of a national curriculum in this country will therefore require a distinct cultural change, with public and parental opinion mobilised behind it.

9. On the content of the curriculum, two points stand out. The first is its clarity and incisiveness. The material is not free from jargon and high-faluting prose, particularly in the introductory passages. Even that, however, is written in good and readable style. And the sections containing the individuals parts of the curriculum are clear and workmanlike, with definite milestones of achievement at each stage. The authors have been willing to make up their minds, and say what they think. Similarly the guidance on evaluation is not an agonised essay on whether evaluation is a good thing or not. It is describing, in a rather clinical fashion, a diagnostic tool which will enable teacher and pupil to learn from mistakes and thus make better use of the subsequent stages of the course.

10. The second is the way in which the education authorities, by enabling the public to buy copies of the curriculum in an accessible and intelligible form, at a cost of not much more than £1, are enlisting the support of the parents. Indeed, the new element in all this is not so much the existence of a national curriculum, which has been a feature since Napoleonic times, but making it so readily accessible to the public. The paperback book sold 600,000 copies in the first year, which makes it a best seller in French terms, and it is available on station bookstalls and hypermarket shelves. It will be interesting to see in due course how far parents are more involved as a result.

11. The French Minister of Education said in his preface that he had made it his personal concern to see that the curriculum was intelligible. How clear-cut the UK curriculum will be, and how far it will be expressed and published in a way which will enlist parent interest and support, will depend on how far the authors keep it in sharp focus and do not let it become the lowest common denominator of what comes out of the various advisory committees.

Higher Education (Scotland)

4.[illegible]

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement on arrangements for planning and funding of higher education in Scotland announced in today's White Paper on higher education. This follows consultations on the recommendations in the report of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council on future strategy for higher education in Scotland and advice from the Advisory Board for the Research Councils and the Croham Committee on the University Grants Committee.

In my statement to the House on 17 July 1986, I said that the Government accepted STEAC's view that there is scope for improvement in the planning and co-ordination of provision in higher education by the universities and colleges in Scotland. In reaching decisions on the future, I have recognised that six out of eight Scottish universities opposed the central STEAC recommendation for a separate Scottish body with funding responsibilities for both the university and college sectors. I share the views of the universities that they should continue to be, and be seen to be, an integral part of the British university system and believe that that might be prejudiced by removing them from the British funding framework of the UGC and its successor.

Irrespective of the source of funding, it is however highly desirable that both the university and college sectors can plan the development of their provision in the knowledge of what other institutions in Scotland are planning to do. But knowledge is not enough—we need arrangements to ensure that plans can be discussed, adapted and co-ordinated to take account of what other institutions intend to do and to ensure that overall provision in both sectors is in line with likely national and local needs. That is why we announce in the White Paper that we propose to accept and build on the recommendations of the Croham committee that the proposed Universities Funding Council should have a Scottish committee. The committee will play an important part in planning higher education in Scotland. It is important that the Universities Funding Council and its Scottish committee should take into account the needs of Scottish higher education as a whole. To this end in future the Secretary of State for Scotland shall give the Universities Funding Council guidance on plans for the other sectors of higher education in Scotland and will expect it to have regard to his views on the implication of Scottish needs for the university sector. These will, of course, be consistent with guidance given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science to the Universities Funding Council. The UFC and the Secretary of State for Scotland will then be able to plan provision, with the help of the Scottish committee, in the university and college sectors respectively with a clear knowledge of the implications of each other's plans.

I expect the committee to advise the UFC on the implications of the Scottish education system for the needs of the Scottish universities. It will, in consultation with my Department, consider the demand for higher education in Scotland and the balance of provision between its constituent parts. Appointments to the Scottish committee will be a matter for the Universities Funding Council in consultation with the Secretary of State for Scotland. I envisage that the committee will include members drawn from the non-university sector and employers as well as from the UFC, and the universities and that there will be representation from the Scottish Office.

I believe that the establishment of a Scottish committee of the UFC on these lines will mark a very important development in the relationship of the Secretary of State for Scotland with the university sector, with far-reaching implications for the proper planning of higher education. For the first time he will have formal access to a group taking an overview of the needs of the Scottish university sector and will be able to discuss with them his views on the priorities for higher education in Scotland and the plans of the college sector.

I am confident that the arrangements will be welcomed by the universities in Scotland. They will be able to maintain their role as part of the British system, but will have a new focus for looking at Scottish needs. They will be better able to plan their provision in the light of knowledge of each other's plans and those of the central institutions. The central institutions for their part should welcome the more systematic opportunity afforded by the Scottish committee for joint planning between my Department and the universities on how demands from students and employers should be met. Most importantly, Scotland should benefit from the improved arrangements for co-ordination and planning of higher education to meet the changes envisaged by the White Paper between now and the end of the century.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): The Secretary of State, perhaps typically, has opted for the least exciting possibilities open to him. To many of us on the Labour Benches his announcement sounds like a recipe for muddle and confusion.

Even in terms of the Croham report is not the Secretary of State a minimalist? I concede that Croham offered a Scottish committee of the University Grants Committee, but it only did so if a Scottish planning and funding body was not established. The Secretary of State has made a great deal of the views of the six out of eight Scottish universities, but perhaps it would be more accurate to suggest that they were the views of six out of eight principals. In any event, they emphasised their fears about the peer group review. That matter was specifically referred to the Croham committee. Can the Secretary of State confirm that Croham made it clear, when considering the matter, that a separate funding solution would not affect or disrupt the maintenance of national standards or any other aspect of the peer group review as it presently operates?

Is not the Scottish sub-committee of the Universities Funding Council a poor apology for an effective, co-ordinating body, which would consider central institutions, colleges of education and universities, as recommended by the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council report?

The new system means that the Secretary of State for Scotland, together with his colleague the Secretary of State for Education and Science, will intimate his views to the Universities Funding Council. The sub-committee is no more than a nod in the direction of consultation; a little bit of window-dressing that perhaps cannot do much harm, but certainly will not do much good.

The Secretary of State will be familiar with paragraph 8.19 of the Croham report which, when discussing the

possibility of a Scottish sub-committee, advised that it would have the specific remit of looking at the existence of separate Scottish school examinations and four-year honours courses at the universities. The report said that it would consider, specifically,

"the proposed resource distribution as it affected Scottish universities".

Will he say whether that distribution of resources, in particular, will be part of the remit of the sub-committee he is establishing? If it disagrees with the Universities Funding Council, what will be its powers to do anything about it? Can it merely complain on the sidelines or can it really and effectively affect the outcome?

The Croham recommendation was that the Scottish Education Department or any sub-committee would be represented by an assessor. Will the Minister tell us whether it will be by an assessor on this occasion or will it be by direct appointment and, if so, why has there been a change? Will he accept that there is nothing in the sad and damaging cuts of recent years to suggest that Scottish universities will be safer as a result of the rejection of the STEAC proposals for an over-arching body?

The Secretary of State knows of the Opposition's commitment to a Scottish assembly—*[Laughter.]* There is a certain amount of nervous laughter by hon. Members. When that assembly is in being, it will have responsibility for the universities and for their separate funding. Will he note our regret that the chance has not been taken now to move in that direction and to accept the STEAC vision of an over-arching body with the necessary authority to plan and build a healthy future for higher education in Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: We have just had the somewhat ludicrous occurrence of the hon. Gentleman seeking to present himself as the champion of the Scottish universities while he simultaneously rebukes the Government for having accepted the representations of the Scottish universities. The hon. Gentleman cannot have it both ways. He knows perfectly well that overwhelming opinion among Scottish universities was adverse to the recommendations of the STEAC committee in this respect. He knows also, or he ought to know, that even among the central institutions there was a difference of view, with a minority of the central institutions rejecting the recommendations of the STEAC committee.

The hon. Gentleman asked a number of individual questions. He asked about peer review and suggested that the Croham committee had said that peer review need not be affected by separate funding of the Scottish universities. That is indeed the case. However, if the hon. Gentleman wished to be open and frank with the House he might have added that the Croham committee qualified that statement by suggesting that parity of research funding could not be guaranteed if British peer review advice was interpreted by separate funding bodies north and south of the border. As the Scottish universities have a legitimate interest in access to proper research funding, the hon. Gentleman might have reminded the House of that aspect of Croham's conclusions as well.

The hon. Gentleman asked about the membership of the Scottish committee.*[Interruption.]* He might advise his hon. Friends to remain silent while I am answering his questions.

The hon. Gentleman asked about membership of the Scottish committee and I said in my opening statement that there would be representation from the Scottish Office. We shall naturally wish to have consultations on the detailed question of representation, but we wish to have a broad base of representation on the Scottish committee, which will include not only the Scottish Office but representatives of others with an interest in the work of the Scottish committee.

I was somewhat puzzled, surprised and disappointed by the hon. Gentleman's suggestion that the Scottish committee of the sort we propose would have only what he chose to describe as cosmetic functions. He seems to have failed to appreciate that the announcement we are making today goes significantly beyond the recommendations of the Croham committee. The Croham committee merely suggested that there should be——

Mr. Dewar: You have rejected STEAC.

Mr. Rifkind: I am well aware of the fact that it rejected STEAC. I informed the hon. Gentleman that it rejected STEAC so he does not need to remind me of that fact. The hon. Gentleman should appreciate that what we have announced today provides the Secretary of State for Scotland, for the first time, with a locus with regard to the universities to ensure that the interests of Scottish higher education are taken into account, to ensure that there is a minimum of duplication between the role of the central institutions and those of the universities and to ensure, as does the White Paper and my statement, that the proposed Universities Funding Council should have regard to the views of the Secretary of State for Scotland with regard to the needs of higher education in Scotland. That represents, for the first time, a significant development in our ability to co-ordinate higher education in Scotland. The hon. Gentleman might at least have had the grace to acknowledge that, even if he was disappointed that the STEAC recommendations were not being accepted.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have to apply the same ruling to this statement as I applied to the previous one. In view of the pressure of business, I propose to allow questions to go on for a further 15 minutes. I remind hon. Members that there are Scottish Questions on Wednesday next week.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that it is right to accept the wise advice of six out of the eight Scottish universities and set up a Scottish co-ordinating committee? Will he agree that there are more students in higher education in Scotland than ever before and that that shows how the additionalfinance put into education by the Government is paying off?

Mr. Rifkind: Yes, my hon. Friend is correct. The number of students in Scotland in higher education has increased by about 10,000 since the Labour Government left office in 1979.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): Will the Secretary of State accept that there is a wide feeling of victimisation within Scottish universities at the way in which they are being treated, that there is particular discimination against small universities and small departments and that there is mistrust as to whether the University Grants Committee does understand the Scottish dimension? The right hon. and learned Gentleman will know that I have a constituency interest in the university of Aberdeen and am

[Mr. Malcolm Bruce]

rector of the university of Dundee, both of which are facing savage cuts that will devastate their ability to face the future. Will he acknowledge that what he is proposing today is merely cosmetic and that there is no evidence that that body will be able to address itself to the fundamental problems facing Scottish universities? Is he prepared to accept that that is the case, that more action will be needed and that more funding for Scottish universities and colleges will be necessary?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman has made a general and unqualified statement. If he is seeking to imply that he wishes that the recommendations of STEAC had been accepted, he has to explain why he takes a view that is contrary to the representations made by the university of Aberdeen and the university of Dundee, of which he says he is the rector. He does not seem to be in touch with opinion in the two universities to which he has chosen to refer. The hon. Gentleman should bear that in mind.

Mrs. Anna McCurely (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde): Will my right hon. and learned Friend ensure that the new committee provides a proper forum for providing funds for small but significant research programmes in Scotland, which the UGC has failed to do?

Mr. Rifkind: The purpose of the Scottish committee is to ensure that the new Universities Funding Councl will have full access to information as to the particlar needs of Scottish universities and will, therefore, be able to take into account those needs and the needs of higher education in Scotland overall in coming to its decisions.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): Is the Secretary of State aware that the structure he has announced today, with a sub-committee of the Universities Funding Council, having no executive powers, acting only in an advisory capacity and subject to the guidance of the Secretary of State, is completely inadquate to meet the basic recommendation of STEAC, which was that we need a coherent, single planning and funding body for university and non-universiety sectors of higher education in Scotland? The structure announced today does not even meet the need for a single planning body, leaving the question of funding aside. Seven out of the eight universities want a single planning body.

Mr. Rifkind: I have to point out to the right hon. Gentleman that the precise role of the Scottish Office in future will be to provide that planning and co-ordinating responsibility of the sort to which I have drawn attention in my statement. For the first time the Scottish Office will be involved, not only in the planning and funding of the central institutions in Scotland, but will have the right and responsibility to be involved in the co-ordination of the central institutions with the Scottish universities. The right hon. Gentleman should appreciate that, where the majority of Scottish universities and a number of the central institutions made representations against the proposals put by STEAC, it is a sensible outcome to have a situation where the involvement of the Scottish universities in the United Kingdom as a whole is maintained.

I remind the right hon. Gentleman that when he was Secretary of State for Scotland and the subject of devolution was considered, the Government of which he was a member rejected the idea of the Scottish universities being devolved to a separate funding arrangement. The right hon. Gentleman had better reconcile what he said then with what he says now.

Mr. Alex Fletcher (Edinburgh, Central): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that both of today's statements should help to improve standards and value for money in higher education? Does he agree that colleges and universities could contribute to those aims by re-examining the academic year? The principal of Aberdeen university has shown how that might be done, and he should have the support of Ministers and academics.

Mr. Rifkind: That is a matter for the university of Aberdeen to determine, and I do not wish to comment on it. One of our objectives is to ensure that there is a proper use of resources and that unnecessary duplication is avoided. There has been occasional duplication of resources between the central institutions and the Scottish universities — for example, in the subject areas of engineering and technology, business and management, and architecture and town and country planning. The proposals have been announced to ensure better co-ordination of provision.

Mr. Jim Craigen (Glasgow, Maryhill): Does not the nature of the sub-committee for Scotland give us the worst of both worlds? Is there not a danger that the Secretary of State for Scotland may end up playing second fiddle to the Secretary of State for Education and Science, who will now be involved in the Scottish universities? What guarantees can the Secretary of State offer that the Universities Funding Council, which will appoint the sub-committee with his agreement, will not end up with a creature that suits it?

Mr. Rifkind: Because the appointment of members to the Scottish committee will be planned in consultation with the Secretary of State for Scotland. I have already outlined the broad spectrum of people—from a broad spectrum of backgrounds—that I would expect to serve on that committee.

The hon. Gentleman must appreciate that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science and I subscribe to a common policy of government. My role will be to ensure that proper account is taken of the interests of higher education in Scotland and that the role of the central institutions and universities in Scotland are more effectively co-ordinated. The universities in Scotland want that co-ordination to be effected without it being done at the expense of the great value that they rightly attach to their presence as part of the United Kingdom university structure.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, North-East): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that his statement is most welcome, not only because he has accepted the advice that I gave in the Scottish Grand Committee in January of last year, but because Scotland will get the best of both worlds? Students from all parts of Great Britain will continue to be able to come to high quality universities such as the university of St. Andrews.

Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that possibly the most important and welcome news that we have heard this afternoon has been that scientific research will continue without pause this year, and that more young Scots will have access to higher education in the years to come than ever before?

Mr. Rifkind: Yes, my hon. Friend is indeed correct that announcement of an additional £15 million for research that was mentioned by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science earlier will make a valuable contribution to ensuring the smooth continuation of important research during the years to come.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Will the Secretary of State concede that what we all want is a Scottish higher education system that meets the needs of the 21st century? We are concerned that the sub-committee will not hold to systematic views, but be a pantomime horse that will try to face in both directions at once. There will be no co-ordination or thrust in relation to the needs of Scottish education, now or in the future. We desire a thrustful organisation, a spearhead, a planning organisation, and that has manifestly not been included in the statement.

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman makes a bland statement without supporting evidence. He must acknowledge that the views that he has expressed are flatly contradicted by the vast majority of those in the universities of Scotland, and he will have to explain that.

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): I welcome my right hon. and learned Friend's announcement of the future involvement of the Secretary of State for Scotland in the Universities Funding Council and the Scottish committee. That is clearly a major step forward.

My right hon. and learned Friend has said that there is a clear need, accepted by everyone, for effective planning across the binary divide in Scotland. Is he satisfied that the system—it is essentially a guidance system—that he has announced will achieve that? As regards his point about demand, does he agree that the crucial figures are the participation rates in higher education in Scotland, which have been excellent in recent years? Can he give the House any guidance on how those figures are likely to go next year?

Mr. Rifkind: I believe that the UFC and the Scottish committee will have the same interest in the proper co-ordination of higher education in Scotland as would the Scottish Office. That will represent substantial progress.

On participation in higher education in Scotland, my hon. Friend knows that the White Paper is based on an assumption that the proportion of young people who will have qualifications for entry into higher education in the United Kingdom as a whole will have reached 20 per cent. by the end of the century. I am happy to inform my hon. Friend that Scotland reached that figure in 1980. By 1985-86, the proportion in Scotland was 23 per cent. That shows the great opportunities that are available for higher education in Scotland under this Government.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): When the Secretary of State referred to six out of eight universities, if he did not mean exclusively vice-chancellors and principals, precisely whose opinions did he take into account before making his statement? Why has he disregarded the overwhelming—if not unanimous—view of students, who supported the STEAC recommendations about an over-arching body? Why has the Secretary of State rejected their views?

Mr. Rifkind: I am not aware of any referendums having been held in the universities of Scotland to establish the views of students as a whole. Such referendums have not been held. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman's assessment of students' opinions is no better or worse than that of anyone else. We are entitled to assume that the views of university principals — unless they have been repudiated by the university courts or senates — represent the views of the universities. If the hon. Gentleman were able to inform me that the majority of university principals were in favour of the STEAC recommendations, he would not have tried to suggest that that was of little value in determining opinion in the universities.

The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that the considerations that led the last Labour Government to believe that the integrity of the British university system should prevent the Scottish universities' removal from that are as powerful now as they were then.

Mr. Michael Forsyth (Stirling): Can my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that Scottish universities enjoy exceptionally generous funding compared with those in England and Wales? I have seen figures that suggest that they receive as much as 25 per cent. more. Can he confirm that the new system will not prejudice that, since funding under a Scottish Office body might? Are we not witnessing yet another example of the Opposition's Scottish Assembly dogma being put before the interests of the people of Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: No, I would not suggest that the Scottish Universities are funded better or worse than universities elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Because the Scottish universities have four-year degree courses, they require additional funding for each student, compared with that for students in universities with three-year degree courses. That means that a higher proportion of funding goes to Scottish universities.

Mr. Albert McQuarrie (Banff and Buchan): May I assure my right hon. and learned Friend that contrary to the ridiculous nonsense uttered by the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce), his statement will be welcomed in Aberdeen, particularly by the Robert Gordon's institute of technology, which will now be able to increase its number of science and technology students? Is my right hon. and learned Friend also aware that his statement will be welcomed by the university of Aberdeen with the demise of the University Grants Committee? Will the Universities Funding Council look closely at the need for Aberdeen university to have more money for research, rather than have penalties imposed upon it by the UGC?

Mr. Rifkind: The Universities Funding Council has not yet come into existence, so it is difficult for me to anticipate what its view will be. But I remind my hon. Friend of the important announcement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science, that the resources for research at universities in the United Kingdom are being increased substantially.

Mr. John Corrie (Cunninghame, North): Will any organisations have a right to serve on the Scottish committee, or will they simply have to take their chance? Does my right hon. and learned Friend hope to see employers' organisations on the committee, so that there is some industrial input, in these days when we require more industry?

Mr. Rifkind: Members of the proposed Scottish committee will be there as individuals rather than representing organisations, but I have said that I envisage that the committee will include members drawn from the non-university sector and employers, as well as from the UFC, and that there will be representations from the universities in Scotland as well as from the Scottish Office.

Mr. Alexander Pollock (Moray): May I take it from what my right hon. and learned Friend has told the House that the proposal will preserve the university framework in Great Britain, with a clear Scottish dimension within that framework? Is he satisfied that the importance of higher education throughout Scottish society will be fully recognised and pressed by the Scottish angle of the new body?

Mr. Rifkind: I firmly believe that the proposals that we have announced today represent the best of both worlds for the Scottish universities because they not only provide continuing integration of the United Kingdom structure, which is what the universities want, but, for the first time, they enable a sensible co-ordination of the needs of higher education in Scotland, which both the Scottish universities and the central institutions recognise as being important to their future.

Questions to Ministers

4.31 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I shall not complain unduly at the fact that today's was the second environment Question Time when, unfortunately, I failed to catch your eye—[HON. MEMBERS: "Shame."] Yes. Part of the reason for that is that questions tend to be rather long on both sides of the House. On the Labour Front Bench, we have seven shadow Ministers who all seem to want to intervene at least twice, which cuts the time for Back Benchers to ask questions.

Question No. 3, asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry), was about Fulham football club. I wanted to ask a question about Chelsea football club, which is also very much under threat——

Mr. Speaker: Order. With great respect, I anticipated that. That question was about Fulham. I did not think that Chelsea would be in order.

Mr. Banks: I think that I could have found a way of linking the two, but that is not the point.

The point is this. The Minister responsible for sport was present at that time. We do not have many opportunities to direct questions at him. I should like to ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether you exercise some judgment when it is the turn of a Minister to answer questions, who is not often put at the Dispatch Box—given his performance, one can understand why. That should be an opportunity for us to ask direct questions of a Minister who is not often in the Chamber. In future, when such an opportunity arises, will you exercise some discretion, Mr. Speaker, and allow the questions to run on for a little while?

Mr. Speaker: I sympathise with what the hon. Gentleman said, but with the greatest respect, I cannot use my discretion to allow supplementaries to go wide of a question. The course that the hon. Gentleman should take is to table questions and hope that they come near the top of the list on the Order Paper.

Higher Education and Research

3.30 pm

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the Government's policies for higher education.

Higher education is crucial to help our nation meet the economic, social and intellectual challenges of the final decade of this century. We must ensure that our universities, polytechnics and colleges respond to the country's requirements. Important reforms are already under way; I pay tribute to the efforts that are being made, especially in our universities, to adapt more closely to the needs of the nation. The White Paper we publish today announces new policies in three key areas: first, wider access to higher education so that the United Kingdom gets the skilled people we need for economic success and to compete in international markets; secondly, the financing and management of polytechnics and colleges in England; and thirdly, the thorough-going reform of the University Grants Committee, along the lines recommended in the Croham report.

It is 21 years since the polytechnics were conceived. They have now come of age. They are successful, mature institutions with a strong national role, complementary to our universities. But they are held back by current planning and funding arrangements. Control by individual local authorities inhibits their progress towards meeting the challenges of the 1990s, and towards managing their resources to best effect.

We therefore intend to legislate to convert the polytechnics and other mainly higher education colleges in England to free-standing corporate bodies under boards of governors. Local and regional industry and commerce will be strongly represented on the boards. We want industry and those colleges to work more closely together. Industry will find it more attractive to place contracts for consultancy and research. We will be setting up a new Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council which will be independent of Government, although subject to guidance from the holder of my office. The council will succeed the National Advisory Body, and will contract with individual institutions for the provision of higher education.

Local education authorities will retain control of those colleges that do not provide predominantly for higher education. The Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council may contract for the provision of degree and full-time HND and equivalent courses at such colleges. Other courses, including all part-time sub-degrees, at colleges remaining under local authority control will be a local responsibility: the present expenditure pooling arrangements will end. Responsibility for the 530,000 students on non-advanced further education courses in some 360 colleges across the country will continue to rest with local authorities.

The voluntary and other colleges of higher education that are grant-aided by my Department will be brought within the ambit of the new funding council. For the present, however, those arrangements will not be extended to cover the polytechnics and colleges of higher education in Wales.

Secondly, we intend to introduce legislation to change the University Grants Committee to an independent statutory body on the lines recommended by the Croham committee. We accept the Croham recommendations that that body should be smaller, with broadly equal numbers of academic and non-academic members and a chairman with substantial experience outside the academic world. The new body will be called the Universities Funding Council, and its primary responsibility will be the allocation of funds to individual universities under new contractual arrangements.

Thirdly, I want to encourage more people of all ages to go on to higher education. The Government already have an outstanding record on access to higher education. Student numbers have increased by almost 160,000 since we took office in 1979. After its fall in the 1970s, the participation rate for young people has increased by 15 per cent., and the number of mature entrants has risen by about a quarter. We remain committed to providing places for all with the intellectual competence, motivation and maturity to benefit from higher education.

Over the next decade, however, the number of 18-year-olds will fall by one third, and student demand will no longer be a sufficient basis for planning. A major determinant must also be the nation's demands for highly qualified manpower. The increase in graduate output already planned seems unlikely to do more than keep pace with the nation's requirements until 1990, and may be insufficient by the mid-1990s. This view is echoed in the excellent report published yesterday by the Council for Industry and Higher Education, which is chaired by my right hon. Friend the Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior).

For the present, the Government's best judgment is that they should plan for the student numbers envisaged in the higher of the two projections which I published last November. This projection involves an increase in full and part-time student numbers from 906,000 in 1985-86 to 957,000 in 1990. That is an increase of 50,000. By the year 2000, almost one in five school leavers would then be going on to higher education. The Government want to ensure that within the total numbers the shift towards scientific and other vocational courses should be carried through.

Whether we reach these student numbers will depend crucially on this shift being achieved; on whether the schools and colleges succeed in raising the proportion of young people who qualify; and whether the universities, polytechnics and colleges can admit more mature students and more young people with vocational qualifications. The Government believe that higher education will meet these challenges.

Fourthly, the White Paper acknowledges that the quality of our research is recognised worldwide. The Government are committed to maintaining and enhancing the strength and quality of the science base, of which our institutions of higher education are a major and essential part. We attach particular importance to sustaining the work of the most able scientists and their teams. The Government are accordingly making available an additional £15 million for 1987-88 through the science budget. This funding is in addition to the £39 million increase in that budget for 1987-88 which I announced on 6 November last year, and the extra £17·5 million over three years for AIDS research by the Medical Research Council, announced since November.

The consequences of the increase I am announcing today for later years will be taken into account when we consider the science budget in this year's public expenditure survey. But I emphasise that we, and the scientific community, face difficult choices in the future.

[Mr. Kenneth Baker]

We must be more selective. We must concentrate resources. We must get even better value for money from better targeted research. We must exploit our science to the utmost—and that is a matter as much for industry as for Government, the research councils and higher education.

Our country's higher education is among the best in the world. Our policies will secure and develop its distinctive strengths. They will extend its benefits to a wider section of the population and will ensure that it serves our nation.

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): We have listened with interest to what the Secretary of State has had to say. [HON. MEMBERS: "Welcome it."] I welcome his conversion to the view that a policy of contraction simply will not do. Will he confirm that, according to his own White Paper, by the mid-1990s we shall have no more students in higher education than we have today? Will he also confirm that the CBI has calculated that industry will need at least 4 per cent. more graduates every year and that the report published yesterday of The Council for Industry and Higher Education — the organisation of industrialists and academics chaired by the right hon. Member for Waveney (Mr. Prior) — concluded that the number of students planned by the Secretary of State will not be enough to meet the needs of the economy in the decade ahead?

Is it not also the case that, even with that small improvement in the participation rate that is planned by the White Paper, the proportion of 18-year-olds in higher education in this country by the mid-1990s will still be well behind those of the United States and Japan, as well as of several other European countries? It will also be lower than the 22 per cent. projected for 1981 in the Prime Minister's 1972 White Paper.

Is the Secretary of State aware that, in any case, many people will view his White Paper figures with some scepticism? We observe that the Government have buried away in a Committee the political time bomb of student grants, which are so crucial to access. We note that the Secretary of State is not making any commitments to provide extra resources—again so necessary for access—and we remember above all that the Government have squeezed and cut higher education during the past seven and a half years.

Will the Secretary of State confirm that the welcome increase in research funding no more than meets the cost of the recent salary increases? Is he aware that that leaves the science budget in the position in which the Advisory Board for the Research Councils said that resources fall short of what would be needed to maintain the buying power of that budget?

Is the Secretary of State aware that, as over the teachers and local government, so now over the control of higher education, he is taking power to himself? Why is he rejecting the advice of the National Advisory Body committee set up by his predecessor, that, although the day-to-day running of the polytechnics and colleges should be in their hands, the overall strategic responsibility for them should remain with the local education authorities? Higher education will now be run on the basis of Whitehall diktat, and the view that the Secretary of State always knows best.

Finally, is the Secretary of State aware that for all the glossy exterior of the White Paper and the fine words that he has spoken to the House this afternoon, he has ducked the real challenge of opening up higher education to a far wider group than ever before, and of providing more graduates in the decade ahead to meet Britain's needs? The right hon. Gentleman has failed to do that.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The hon. Member has something of a nerve to chide me about the numbers of students in higher education, because the Government of his party cut the number of students by several thousand. I am planning an increase of 50,000 by 1990, on top of the increase of 160,000 since 1979. Those are ambitious targets. I make it clear to the House that achieving them depends on young people coming forward with the right qualifications. It depends also on the polytechnics and universities being more willing to welcome into their studies young people with vocational qualifications. That is an important point.

The hon. Gentleman also chides me for centralising the policy relating to polytechnics. However, I remind him that the present system of polytechnic policy is already highly centralised. I have a statutory responsibility for the distribution of all the money and for approving or disapproving well over 50,000 individual courses. We are putting the polytechnics in the same relation to Government as universities. They will enjoy much greater freedom and entrepeneurial independence.

The hon. Gentleman asked me about the National Advisory Body's good management practice working group. That group necessarily had to operate on the assumption that the existing structure would continue. It was not asked to consider alternative structures, and would not have been the appropriate body to do so.

I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will know that the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics made it absolutely clear in February that it favours the policy for polytechnics that we have announced. It stated that corporate status alone would not solve the problems and without direct funding, they are not convinced that it would go far enough. In support of my view, I quote a former Labour Minister in the Department of Education and Science, Mr. Gerry Fowler, who is the director of the North-East London polytechnic and who has clearly said that he wants the polytechnics to be independent.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must have regard to the business before the House. There is another statement after this, followed by a ten-minute rule application and an important debate in which there is enormous interest. I shall allow questions on this statement to continue until 4 o'clock and then we shall move to the next statement.

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the additional £15 million that he has announced for scientific research will be extremely welcome? Does he agree that scientific research in our universities should be a seamless robe, from the acquisition of fundamental knowledge to improvements within existing technology? Will he commit himself to sustaining the whole of that robe and not just parts of it?

Mr. Baker: I thank my hon. Friend for his support; I know that for many years he has taken a great interest in the scientific funding of our universities. The money provided will allow key scientists, programmes and

research teams to be kept together. We all want good science—that is common ground across the House—and we want that science to come out more into the market place. It is evident from all our research funding that the link with technology transfer is not sufficiently strong. British industry simply does not spend enough on technology transfer and basic research development.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): Is the Secretary of State aware that I am happy to welcome some aspects of the report — [HON. MEMBERS: "Only some aspects?"] The right hon. Gentleman asks for such welcomes and I give them to him — particularly the Government's reversed attitude to cuts in higher educaton and research? With falling rolls, is he not missing a unique opportunity substantially to increase the percentage of people going through higher education? I note that he did not answer the previous question about the numbers in higher education in 1990. Will he answer that now? Is he aware that the Council for Industry and Higher Education, to which he referred earlier, commenting on the 4 per cent. increase, said that this was "at odds" with Britain's ambitions for prosperity and renewal?

Is the Secretary of State aware that we can welcome his statements on corporate status for polytechnics? But why must that once again be centralised? [HON. MEMBERS: "Too long."] This is an extremely important statement on which we have several points to make.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Many other hon. Members wish to take part.

Mr. Ashdown: Indeed, Mr. Speaker.

Why does the Secretary of State believe that, under these circumstances, he must take that power? Will not that concentration of control over the polytechnics result in the polytechnics being less able to meet the needs of their communities?

Mr. Baker: As a result of the decline in the birth rate which started in 1966, the number of 18-year-olds in higher education in the 1990s will drop by a third. The projections on page 6 of the White Paper show that the numbers will dip in 1990-91 and then rise again. If we get our policies in place and change the qualification requirements of young people, I hope that we may be able to avoid that dip.

I have read carefully what the hon. Gentleman has said in the past few days about alliance policy on further education——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Can you understand it?

Mr. Baker: It is quite difficult. The alliance policy carries a big price tag which rises into the billions, matching Labour Front Bench policies. But I shall return to that at a more propitious moment.

The hon. Gentleman and his party are not taking the right line if they object to our proposals for the polytechnics. Our policy is to increase their independence. The directors of polytechnics, and industry, want it and I am sure that it will result in much better relationships. I beg the hon. Gentleman not to commit his party to opposing that part of our policy.

Mr. J. F. Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on this positive statement which, despite the carping words of the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice), will be widely welcomed? Can he confirm that the additional 50,000 students will be over and above the 160,000 to which he referred? Will he advise the House what the number of students in place was when Shirley Williams, the president of the SDP, was Secretary of State for Education and Science in a Labour Administration?

Mr. Baker: When the president of the SDP held the responsibility which I now hold, she cut student numbers and froze teachers' pay. When she held that position in a previous Government, she also came out in favour of student loans instead of student grants. I can confirm to my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) that the extra 50,000 students is over and above the 160,000, and that that means that when we came into office, one in eight of the 18-year-olds in our country could expect to go into higher education, but by the end of the century it will be one in five.

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): I welcome the Secretary of State's conversion to Labour party policy in terms of wider access, but does he agree that, to make it successful, additional money must be made available for universities and polytechnics in real terms, taking into account the fact that during the lifetime of the Government on average they have suffered a reduction in their real unit of resource? Does he agree that, if we are to get more young poeple from working-class homes into higher education to use their talents and resources, we need a system whereby youngsters at the age of 16 years are persuaded to stay on for further and higher education? On that basis, what plans do the Government have for introducing a system of educational maintenance allowances?

Mr. Baker: We have no plans for the latter, because I do not believe that that will attract more people to stay on, and there is a great deal of deadweight expenditure involved in it. As to funding; we have witnessed over the last seven years an increase of 160,000 students—many of those 160,000 students come from, to use the hon. Gentleman's phrase, working class homes — who have been attracted into higher education because they see the benefits of it. It is as simple as that. As to funding of universities, there has been an increase in funding for 1987-88 of well over 10 per cent. That is the money that I announced before and after Christmas, and figure H of the White Paper shows planned increases over the next three years. By 1989-90, for the first time, the money that is spent on higher education will rise to over £4 billion.

Mr. Robert Rhodes James (Cambridge): Is my right hon. Friend aware that his positive approach is profoundly welcomed by those of us who care deeply about education and is in marked contrast with the unmourned, and I hope now dead, Green Paper of 1985? Is my right hon. Friend also aware that the attention which has been given to the polytechnics to give them the status that they have earned and achieved is particularly welcome. Cambridge is also grateful.

Mr. Baker: We should, as a country, take pride in the polytechnics. They are excellent institutions. *[Interruption.]* I said that as a country we should take pride in them. As I visit many of the polytechnics, I see courses and faculties which are often better than in many of the neighbouring universities, and I am glad to see that the number of first-class degrees given by polytechnics rose by 20 per cent. last year. Polytechnics will now have the

[Mr. Baker]

independence that their maturity deserves and they will be able to establish a close relationship with local companies; that must be good for them.

Mr. Stan Thorne (Preston): Will the Secretary of State ensure that mature students can gain access to higher education through the provision of adequate family awards?

Mr. Baker: There has been a good increase in mature students—people who are aged 20, 30 or 40 years—going into higher education in the last few years; an increase of nearly a quarter. From memory, I think that they number between 40,000 to 50,000 a year. They tend to be funded in a variety of ways. If they have not gone into higher education first, they qualify for grants. Many of them are sponsored by companies, which is a growing practice that I warmly applaud and whenever I can I encourage companies to sponsor mature students.

Mr. Gerald Bowden (Dulwich): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his positively expansive programme for higher education. Is he aware of the warm welcome that his proposals for polytechnics will receive, not only from directors of polytechnics but also from teachers at polytechnics—I was such a teacher before I entered the House — but more importantly, from students in polytechnics, who will benefit from having teaching taken out of the party political arena and brought into an independent academic institution?

Mr. Baker: Many of the teachers, staff and faculties, apart from the directors, will welcome the independence that will come from not being subject to the control of the local education authority. They will be able to raise their own money much more freely. Many industries and companies will be willing to support them in the knowledge that their moneys will be directed to specific institutions for specific courses and disciplines and not merely to the local authority area. I am glad to say that the chairman of the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics, Dr. Rickett, made this clear effectively in a radio broadcast this morning.

Mr. D. E. Thomas (Merionnydd Nant Conwy): Will the Secretary of State accept that £15 million will be entirely inadequate for research council funding generally, when that is merely the figure required in Wales to bring the Principality into parity with the rest of the United Kingdom? If there is to be a real increase from 2·5 per cent. for reseach council founding in Wales, the system will require much more than £15 million.

We support the right hon. Gentleman's access policy, but how does he equate the notion of greater access with today's reports that six departments in University college, Cardiff are facing closure? How does he equate that with the £20 million to be taken out of the university of Wales over the next two years? In the absence of a statement from the Secretary of State for Wales, will the right hon. Gentleman announce the Government's proposals for Wales in the light of the Graham report?

Mr. Baker: The circumstances that have brought University college Cardiff to its present position are peculiar to that institution, as I think the hon. Gentleman is aware. It would not be productive or sensible to generalise on them. No changes are proposed for Wales because the Welsh system is smaller than the English one and only a few colleges concentrate on higher education, which means that the need for change is different from that in England. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales will consider making changes similar to those proposed for England if the Welsh Advisory Board does not demonstrate in its current review that it can offer advice based on national and not local considerations.

Mr. Steven Norris (Oxford, East): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, as befits the senior partner in the Oxbridge duo, Oxford has a university and a polytechnic, which means that his announcement is doubly welcome? Will he take it from me that the key phrase in his statement about polytechnics is that of their coming of age? Many of us who have seen the excellent work that is going on at Oxford polytechnic, for example, thoroughly endorse the phrase and welcome my right hon. Friend's moves. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the £15 million for research council funding of which he has spoken, which is most welcome, comes on top of the £40 million which is additional grant this year for the councils, and will fund the extremely generous pay award of 24 per cent. for the staff of the research councils and allow them to continue their research?

Mr. Baker: I can give my hon. Friend all those assurances. The money that I made available for the university pay settlement was £170 million over three years. That was made available after Christmas. It allows for an increase in academic pay of about 24 per cent., with 16 per cent. payable from 1 December and 7 per cent. from March 1988. That is a demonstration of the importance that we attach to university teachers. The money is additional and it will ensure that research money is available for key scientists and to keep key teams together. Research grants will be given, but the allocation will depend on the Advisory Board for the Research Councils.

My hon. Friend mentioned Oxford polytechnic, which I remember visiting five or six years ago. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State visited it more recently. It is an outstandingly good and successful polytechnic.

Mr. Norris: Thank you.

Mr. David Clelland (Tyne Bridge): Is the Secretary of State aware that his announcement reflects the Government's previous neglect of the education system and will be seen to have more to do with the approaching general election than a genuine interest in education? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware also that the university of Newcastle upon Tyne has recently announced a reduction of 140 academic posts as a direct result of the Government's policy, and his announcement will have little impact on that?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman will know that we have asked universities to examine their priorities, and universities throughout the country are doing that. During the lifetime of this Government, Newcastle polytechnic and other polytechnics have flourished like the green bay tree. Newcastle polytechnic has expanded and developed, as have other institutions in Newcastle. I was impressed by the college of art and design at Newcastle, which is providing services and training for 16 to 19-year olds. That will continue under Newcastle city council. The hon. Gentleman should recognise the enormous expansion in higher education that has occurred under this Government.

Mr. David Crouch (Canterbury): May I thank my right Friend for the extra £15 million that he has announced for research for the civil science Vote? In doing so he has proved once again that he is a listening Minister and that it is worth while for Back Benchers occasionally to make speeches in the small hours of the morning advocating a change in Government policy. We thank him very much.

Mr. Baker: In the past few weeks there has been a lot to listen to regarding scientific research. The debate that took place on the Consolidated Fund was certainly pointed, because the hon. Members who took part spoke forcefully of their experience of universities in their constituencies as well as their broader experience. I am glad that that debate contributed to allowing me to announce the increased expenditure today.

Mr. Richard Caborn (Sheffield, Central): Why has the Secretary of State not waited for the report from the National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education, "Management for a Purpose", which I gather his Department paid more than £350,000 to commission? It would have been useful if the Secretary of State had waited for that report because there is a great deal of scepticism about the centralisation that is taking place. Although I agree about the coming of age of the polytechnics, one of the main functions of those polytechnics has been to bring the university sector into closer contact with their localities and industries—rather than the reverse. We are fearful that that could be lost by this centralisation and the proposals announced this afternoon.

Mr. Baker: When the hon. Gentleman sees the proposals in the White Paper, I think that he will appreciate that the present system is already highly centralised. I am trying to create polytechnics as independent, free-standing institutions funded by an independent council. It will be guided by advice from the holder of my office, but will have the same independence as the University Grants Committee has of Government.

With regard to the NAB working party, I saw the chairman a week ago and explained the Government's proposals. Indeed, I answered that point about 10 minutes ago.

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): Does my right hon. Friend agree that in the seven years since my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle) first proposed a polytechnic grants committee, nothing has happened other than to prove that the work of the polytechnics is too important to be left to the whims and prejudices of local councils? Will my right hon. Friend confirm to the House that, since the war, the only Government under whom the proportion of 18-year-olds entering higher education fell was the previous Labour Government when Mrs. Shirley Williams was Secretary of State?

Mr. Baker: My hon. Friend can rely upon me to make the most of that—it is a two-barrelled gun. This failure was both under Labour and also when the president of the SDP was Secretary of State. I entirely agree with my hon. Friend with regard to polytechnics. I believe that, in the past few years, many directors of polytechnics have found it extremely irksome to be dependent upon political control. They have seen me—many of them are not particularly of Conservative persuasion—and have said that they cannot stomach any longer the nitpicking and political interference to which many of them have been subjected.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind those hon. Members who have not been called that if they put down questions this Friday they will be answered during education Questions on 28 April.

Higher Education (Scotland)

4.2 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement on arrangements for planning and funding of higher education in Scotland announced in today's White Paper on higher education. This follows consultations on the recommendations in the report of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council on future strategy for higher education in Scotland and advice from the Advisory Board for the Research Councils and the Croham Committee on the University Grants Committee.

In my statement to the House on 17 July 1986, I said that the Government accepted STEAC's view that there is scope for improvement in the planning and co-ordination of provision in higher education by the universities and colleges in Scotland. In reaching decisions on the future, I have recognised that six out of eight Scottish universities opposed the central STEAC recommendation for a separate Scottish body with funding responsibilities for both the university and college sectors. I share the views of the universities that they should continue to be, and be seen to be, an integral part of the British university system and believe that that might be prejudiced by removing them from the British funding framework of the UGC and its successor.

Irrespective of the source of funding, it is however highly desirable that both the university and college sectors can plan the development of their provision in the knowledge of what other institutions in Scotland are planning to do. But knowledge is not enough—we need arrangements to ensure that plans can be discussed, adapted and co-ordinated to take account of what other institutions intend to do and to ensure that overall provision in both sectors is in line with likely national and local needs. That is why we announce in the White Paper that we propose to accept and build on the recommendations of the Croham committee that the proposed Universities Funding Council should have a Scottish committee. The committee will play an important part in planning higher education in Scotland. It is important that the Universities Funding Council and its Scottish committee should take into account the needs of Scottish higher education as a whole. To this end in future the Secretary of State for Scotland shall give the Universities Funding Council guidance on plans for the other sectors of higher education in Scotland and will expect it to have regard to his views on the implication of Scottish needs for the university sector. These will, of course, be consistent with guidance given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science to the Universities Funding Council. The UFC and the Secretary of State for Scotland will then be able to plan provision, with the help of the Scottish committee, in the university and college sectors respectively, with a clear knowledge of the implications of each other's plans.

I expect the committee to advise the UFC on the implications of the Scottish education system for the needs of the Scottish universities. It will, in consultation with my Department, consider the demand for higher education in Scotland and the balance of provision between its constituent parts. Appointments to the Scottish committee will be a matter for the Universities Funding Council in consultation with the Secretary of State for Scotland. I envisage that the committee will include members drawn from the non-university sector and employers as well as from the UFC, and the universities and that there will be representation from the Scottish Office.

I believe that the establishment of a Scottish committee of the UFC on these lines will mark a very important development in the relationship of the Secretary of State for Scotland with the university sector, with far-reaching implications for the proper planning of higher education. For the first time he will have formal access to a group taking an overview of the needs of the Scottish university sector and will be able to discuss with them his views on the priorities for higher education in Scotland and the plans of the college sector.

I am confident that the arrangements will be welcomed by the universities in Scotland. They will be able to maintain their role as part of the British system, but will have a new focus for looking at Scottish needs. They will be better able to plan their provision in the light of knowledge of each other's plans and those of the central institutions. The central institutions for their part should welcome the more systematic opportunity afforded by the Scottish committee for joint planning between my Department and the universities on how demands from students and employers should be met. Most importantly, Scotland should benefit from the improved arrangements for co-ordination and planning of higher education to meet the changes envisaged by the White Paper between now and the end of the century.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): The Secretary of State, perhaps typically, has opted for the least exciting possibilities open to him. To many of us on the Labour Benches his announcement sounds like a recipe for muddle and confusion.

Even in terms of the Croham report is not the Secretary of State a minimalist? I concede that Croham offered a Scottish committee of the University Grants Committee, but it only did so if a Scottish planning and funding body was not established. The Secretary of State has made a great deal of the views of the six out of eight Scottish universities, but perhaps it would be more accurate to suggest that they were the views of six out of eight principals. In any event, they emphasised their fears about the peer group review. That matter was specifically referred to the Croham committee. Can the Secretary of State confirm that Croham made it clear, when considering the matter, that a separate funding solution would not affect or disrupt the maintenance of national standards or any other aspect of the peer group review as it presently operates?

Is not the Scottish sub-committee of the Universities Funding Council a poor apology for an effective, co-ordinating body, which would consider central institutions, colleges of education and universities, as recommended by the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council report?

The new system means that the Secretary of State for Scotland, together with his colleague the Secretary of State for Education and Science, will intimate his views to the Universities Funding Council. The sub-committee is no more than a nod in the direction of consultation; a little bit of window-dressing that perhaps cannot do much harm, but certainly will not do much good.

The Secretary of State will be familiar with paragraph 8.19 of the Croham report which, when discussing the

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STATEMENT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND
ON 1 APRIL 1987

WITH PERMISSION, MR SPEAKER, I WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR PLANNING AND FUNDING OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND ANNOUNCED IN TODAY'S WHITE PAPER ON HIGHER EDUCATION. THIS FOLLOWS CONSULTATIONS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE REPORT OF THE SCOTTISH TERTIARY EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL ON FUTURE STRATEGY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND AND ADVICE FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD FOR THE RESEARCH COUNCILS AND THE CROHAM COMMITTEE ON THE UGC.

IN MY STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE ON 17 JULY 1986, I SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED STEAC'S VIEW THAT THERE IS SCOPE FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE PLANNING AND CO-ORDINATION OF PROVISION IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY THE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN SCOTLAND.

IN REACHING DECISIONS ON THE FUTURE, I HAVE RECOGNISED THAT 6 OUT OF 8 SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES OPPOSED THE CENTRAL STEAC RECOMMENDATION FOR A SEPARATE SCOTTISH BODY WITH FUNDING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BOTH THE UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE SECTORS. I SHARE THE VIEWS OF THE UNIVERSITIES THAT THEY SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE, AND BE SEEN TO BE, AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE BRITISH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AND BELIEVE THAT THAT MIGHT BE PREJUDICED BY REMOVING THEM FROM THE BRITISH FUNDING FRAMEWORK OF THE UGC AND ITS SUCCESSOR.

IRRESPECTIVE OF THE SOURCE OF FUNDING, IT IS HOWEVER HIGHLY DESIRABLE THAT BOTH THE UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE SECTORS CAN PLAN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR PROVISION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT OTHER INSTITUTIONS IN SCOTLAND ARE PLANNING TO DO. BUT KNOWLEDGE IS NOT ENOUGH - WE NEED ARRANGEMENTS TO ENSURE THAT PLANS CAN BE DISCUSSED, ADAPTED AND CO-ORDINATED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF WHAT OTHER INSTITUTIONS INTEND TO DO AND TO ENSURE

THAT OVER ALL PROVISION IN BOTH SECTORS IS IN LINE WITH LIKELY NATIONAL AND LOCAL NEEDS.

THAT IS WHY WE ANNOUNCE IN THE WHITE PAPER THAT WE PROPOSE TO ACCEPT AND BUILD ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE CROHAM COMMITTEE THAT THE PROPOSED UNIVERSITIES FUNDING COUNCIL SHOULD HAVE A SCOTTISH COMMITTEE. THE COMMITTEE WILL PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN PLANNING HIGHER EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE UNIVERSITIES FUNDING COUNCIL AND ITS SCOTTISH COMMITTEE SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NEEDS OF SCOTTISH HIGHER EDUCATION AS A WHOLE. TO THIS END IN FUTURE THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND SHALL GIVE THE UNIVERSITIES FUNDING COUNCIL GUIDANCE ON PLANS FOR THE OTHER SECTORS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND AND WILL EXPECT IT TO HAVE REGARD TO HIS VIEWS ON THE IMPLICATION OF SCOTTISH NEEDS FOR THE UNIVERSITY SECTOR. THESE WILL, OF COURSE, BE CONSISTENT WITH GUIDANCE GIVEN BY MY RT HON FRIEND TO THE UNIVERSITIES FUNDING COUNCIL. THE UFC AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND WILL THEN BE ABLE TO PLAN PROVISION, WITH THE HELP OF THE SCOTTISH COMMITTEE, IN THE UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE SECTORS RESPECTIVELY WITH A CLEAR KNOWLEDGE OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF EACH OTHER'S PLANS.

I EXPECT THE COMMITTEE TO ADVISE THE UFC ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SCOTTISH EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR THE NEEDS OF THE SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES. IT WILL, IN CONSULTATION WITH MY DEPARTMENT, CONSIDER THE DEMAND FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND AND THE BALANCE OF PROVISION BETWEEN ITS CONSTITUENT PARTS.

APPOINTMENTS TO THE SCOTTISH COMMITTEE WILL BE A MATTER FOR THE UNIVERSITIES FUNDING COUNCIL IN CONSULTATION WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND. I ENVISAGE THAT THE COMMITTEE WILL INCLUDE MEMBERS DRAWN FROM THE NON-UNIVERSITY SECTOR AND EMPLOYERS AS WELL AS FROM THE UFC, AND THE UNIVERSITIES AND THAT THERE WILL BE REPRESENTATION FROM THE SCOTTISH OFFICE.

BELIEVE THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SCOTTISH COMMITTEE OF THE UFC ON THESE LINES WILL MARK A VERY IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND WITH THE UNIVERSITY SECTOR, WITH FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROPER PLANNING OF HIGHER EDUCATION. FOR THE FIRST TIME HE WILL HAVE FORMAL ACCESS TO A GROUP TAKING AN OVERVIEW OF THE NEEDS OF THE SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY SECTOR AND WILL BE ABLE TO DISCUSS WITH THEM HIS VIEWS ON THE PRIORITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND AND THE PLANS OF THE COLLEGE SECTOR.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE WELCOMED BY THE UNIVERSITIES IN SCOTLAND. THEY WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR ROLE AS PART OF THE BRITISH SYSTEM BUT WILL HAVE A NEW FOCUS FOR LOOKING AT SCOTTISH NEEDS. THEY WILL BE BETTER ABLE TO PLAN THEIR PROVISION IN THE LIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE OF EACH OTHER'S PLANS AND THOSE OF THE CENTRAL INSTITUTIONS. THE CIS SHOULD WELCOME THE MORE SYSTEMATIC OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED BY THE SCOTTISH COMMITTEE FOR JOINT PLANNING BETWEEN MY DEPARTMENT AND THE UNIVERSITIES ON HOW DEMANDS FROM STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS SHOULD BE MET. MOST IMPORTANTLY, SCOTLAND AT LARGE SHOULD BENEFIT FROM THE IMPROVED ARRANGEMENTS FOR CO-ORDINATION AND PLANNING OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO MEET THE CHANGES ENVISAGED BY THE WHITE PAPER BETWEEN NOW AND THE END OF THE CENTURY.

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ELIZABETH HOUSE
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David Norgrove Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
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1 April 1987

Dear David,

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

file with DN.

My Secretary of State was very grateful for your letter of 27 March commenting on his submission to the Prime Minister of 24 March. He has revised the draft statement attached to that submission in the light of the points you made in your letter. I attach a copy of the redrawn text.

I hope this will be helpful in connection with the meeting the Prime Minister is holding on Friday.

I am copying this to Alex Allan (HM Treasury), Jon Shortridge (Welsh Office), David Watkins (Northern Ireland Office), Robin Young (DOE) and to Robert Gordon (Scottish Office).

Yours sincerely,

Rob Smith

R L SMITH
Private Secretary

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Secretary of State's National Curriculum Statement

1. At the North of England Conference in January I said that the time had come to move rapidly to a national school curriculum. This has been much discussed.

2. The aim of the main partners in the education service and myself is to raise standards of achievement in our schools. It cannot be secured without an education which equips every pupil with at least basic skills, knowledge and understanding to meet the challenging responsibilities of adult life and employment in tomorrow's world. Many of our schools offer such a curriculum, though not always to all their pupils. But many offer something far less good.

3. The Government believes that this is no longer acceptable. Pupils are entitled to a curriculum that draws upon individual talents and which challenges the child. This can be guaranteed only if it is required and enforceable by law. That is the principle on which the Government now intends to stand.

4. The Government wants the national curriculum to be as good as the best minds in the country can make it. The level of attainment to be aimed at and the content of what is taught should reflect the best practice of our good schools. The duties placed on the schools should leave full scope for good teaching, and for the English tradition that teachers use their professional talents and skills to adapt the work to each pupil and to develop new approaches as new needs arise.

5. But two aspects of the English tradition will have to be modified. First, we can no longer leave individual teachers, schools, or LEAs, to decide the curriculum children should follow. It is no longer acceptable that many children have a much less good curriculum than others through the accident of where they happen to go to school, or where they live.

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6. Second, it is not right that hardly anyone knows with any clarity or in any detail what the schools are trying to do for their pupils. Parents are entitled to know what the schools seek to teach and how well they succeed in teaching it. Once they have that evidence, schools can be judged fairly.

7. Once the school itself has clear objectives, all the staff will know where they are and what is expected of them. Pupils will be motivated by clear expectations, and parents, employers and the public will know better how to give effective support to the school. A good curriculum will attract commitment all round. That commitment in turn will promote high standards of achievement which can continue to be measured over the passage of time.

8. The Government intends to legislate early in the next Parliament to establish a national curriculum brought about by the cooperative efforts of the education service, the providers and its customers. My aim is that when the Secretary of State sets out the national curriculum, he will not be imposing his will but giving effect to a broad national consensus.

9. We want to ensure that pupils have a well-balanced foundation curriculum suitable to their abilities and aptitudes which during the compulsory period includes not only maths and English, but also science, foreign languages, history, geography and technology in its various aspects. Time should be found for music, art and physical education. Religious education is covered by the 1944 Act.

10. This list of essential subjects which I have just set out does not describe the whole of a school curriculum. For example, it does not mention essential parts of the curriculum, such as health education, which is not usually taught or learnt as a separate subject. It does not mention choice of additional subjects at age 14-16. It does not refer to the personal qualities, attitudes and values which are required for a worthwhile and useful life.

11. For each subject within the foundation curriculum it will be necessary to determine clear and challenging attainment targets for the key ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16. These targets should allow for variations in ability. They should not result in an unduly narrow approach to teaching and learning. Having established the attainment targets it will be necessary to determine and define the essential content, skills and processes of what has to be covered and taught in each subject. This approach parallels what is now being developed for the 14-16 period through GCSE: the national criteria, worked out by professionals, set objectives for measuring attainment; the Examining Groups set detailed syllabuses and examinations which are approved by the Secondary Examinations Council.

12. I emphasise that what is defined will be a core: it should leave ample scope for teachers to build around it, to exploit individual pupils' abilities, and to determine their own methods of teaching for the whole ability range. Teachers must have scope for exercising imagination for experiment, and for responding quickly to new challenges as they arise. But unlike now, all this should take place within a set framework, known to all, intelligible to all, and as far as possible acceptable to all.

13. Having decided the core of what should be learnt, we need to assess pupils' performance in relation to the attainment targets. Those attainments which can be tested will be tested at the key ages. But we do not want teachers to teach only what is testable, so it will be essential also to assess work done in class at the key ages. The tests and the assessments would fall to the teachers, but both would be externally moderated.

14. The far-reaching changes planned by the Government pose a professional task which is large, complex and vitally important. Some of the groundwork has been done, notably in the professional discussions stimulated by successive HMI documents, including the discussion papers in the "Curriculum Matters" series. The next step is a more concentrated distillation of professional and lay expertise and wisdom.

15. I plan to appoint a number of very strong working groups to advise on suitable attainment targets and the writing of the programmes to make sure these targets are achieved in the subjects of the national foundation curriculum. Their reports will serve as the focus for statutory consultation before attainment targets and subject curricula are specified in legislation. I intend to start by setting up, as soon after Easter as possible, a working group on maths and a working group on science. Both groups will be thoroughly professional and small enough to work effectively and will reflect the main interests within and outside the education service who have an essential contribution to make. I shall ask the groups to give priority to the primary phase which has so far received less attention than the secondary phase.

16. There is much work to be done. I welcome the national discussion which will come and after that I propose to send a further memorandum to the Committee.

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1 April 1987

Dear David.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

I attach for information a copy of the final text of the statement my Secretary of State made in the House this afternoon, and also copies of the political briefings on HE and science which were supplied to the Whips Office. Kenneth Baker intends to send a letter to all MPs following up his statement later in the week.

I am sending a copy of this letter and the enclosures to private secretaries, to all Cabinet Ministers, to Murdo Maclean and to Trevor Woolley.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Smith

R L SMITH
Private Secretary

1.4.87

HIGHER EDUCATION WHITE PAPER

ORAL STATEMENT

1. With permission, Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the Government's policies for higher education.

2. Higher education is crucial to help our nation meet the economic, social and intellectual challenges of the final decade of this century. We must ensure that our universities, polytechnics and colleges respond to the country's requirements. Important reforms are already underway; I pay tribute to the efforts that are being made, especially in our universities, to adapt themselves more closely to the needs of the nation. The White Paper we publish today announces new policies in three key areas:

- wider access to higher education so that the United Kingdom gets the skilled people we need for economic success and to compete in international markets;

- secondly, the financing and management of polytechnics and colleges in England; and

- thirdly, the thoroughgoing reform of the University Grants Committee, along the lines recommended in the Croham Report.

3. It is twenty-one years since the polytechnics were conceived. They have now come of age. They are successful, mature institutions with a strong national role, complementary to our universities. But they are held back by current planning and funding arrangements. Control by individual local authorities inhibits their progress towards meeting the challenges of the 1990s and towards managing their resources to best effect.

We therefore intend to legislate to convert the polytechnics and other mainly higher education colleges in England to free-standing corporate bodies under Boards of Governors. Local and regional industry and commerce will be strongly represented on these Boards. We want industry and these colleges to work more closely together. Industry will find it more attractive to place contracts for consultancy and research. We will be setting up a new Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council which will be independent of Government, although subject to guidance from the holder of my office. This Council will succeed the National Advisory Body and will contract with individual institutions for the provision of higher education.

5. Local education authorities will retain control of those colleges which do not provide predominantly for higher education. The Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council may contract for the provision of degree and full-time HND and equivalent courses at these colleges. Other courses, including all part-time sub-degrees, at colleges remaining under local authority control will be a local responsibility: the present expenditure pooling arrangements will end. Responsibility for the 530,000 students on non-advanced further education courses in some 360 colleges will continue to rest with local authorities.

6. The voluntary and other colleges of higher education which are grant-aided by my Department will be brought within the ambit of the new Funding Council. For the present, however, these arrangements will not be extended to cover the polytechnic and colleges of higher education in Wales.

7. Secondly, we intend to introduce legislation to change the University Grants Committee to an independent statutory body on the lines recommended by the Croham Committee. We accept the Croham recommendations that this body should be smaller, with broadly equal numbers of academic and non-academic members, and a chairman with substantial experience outside the academic world. The new body will be called the Universities Funding Council and its primary responsibility will be the allocation of funds to individual universities under new contractual arrangements.

8. Thirdly, I want to encourage more people of all ages to go on to higher education. The Government already has an outstanding record on access to higher education. Student numbers have increased by almost 160,000 since we took office in 1979. After its fall in the 1970s the participation rate for young people has increased by 15%, and the number of mature entrants has risen by about a quarter. We remain committed to providing places for all with the intellectual competence, motivation and maturity to benefit from higher education.

9. Over the next decade, however, the number of 18 year olds will fall by one-third, and student demand will no longer be a sufficient basis for planning. A major determinant must also be the nation's demands for highly qualified manpower. The increase in graduate output already planned seems unlikely to do more than keep pace with the nation's requirements until 1990, and may be insufficient by the mid-1990s. This view is echoed in the excellent report published yesterday by the Council for Industry and Higher Education, which is chaired by my right hon Friend the Member for Waveney.

10. For the present, the Government's best judgement is that it should plan for the student numbers envisaged in the higher of the two projections which I published last November. This projection involves an increase in full and part-time student numbers from 906,000 in 1985-86 to 957,000 in 1990; that is to say an increase of 50,000. By the year 2000 almost one in five school-leavers would then be going on to higher education. The Government wants to ensure that within the total numbers the shift towards scientific and other vocational courses should be carried through.

11. Whether we reach these student numbers will depend crucially on this shift being achieved; on whether the schools and colleges succeed in raising the proportion of young people who qualify; and on whether the universities, polytechnics and

leges can admit more mature students and more young people with vocational qualifications. The Government believes that higher education will meet these challenges.

12. Fourthly, the White Paper rightly acknowledges that the quality of our research is recognised worldwide. The Government is committed to maintaining and enhancing the strength and quality of the science base, of which our institutions of higher education are a major and essential part. We attach particular importance to sustaining the work of the most able scientists and their teams. The Government is accordingly making available an additional £15M for 1987/88 through the Science Budget. This funding is in addition to the £39M increase in that Budget for 1987-88 which I announced on 6 November last year, and the extra £17.5M over three years for AIDS research by the Medical Research Council announced since November. The consequences of the increase I am announcing today for later years will be taken into account when we consider the Science Budget in this year's Public Expenditure Survey. But I emphasise that we, and the scientific community, face difficult choices in the future. We must be more selective. We must concentrate resources. We must get even better value for money from better targeted research. We must exploit our science to the utmost - and that is a matter as much for industry as for Government, the Research Councils and higher education.

13. Mr Speaker, our country's higher education is among the best in the world. Our policies will secure and develop its distinctive strengths. They will extend its benefits to a wider section of the population and will ensure that it serves the nation.

Conservative Research Department Brief

Statement by the Secretary of State for Education and Science on the White Paper 'Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge'

Prepared For:

House of Commons, 1st April 1987

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Enquiries to: Dr Sheila Lawlor **Ref:** ED (87) 7
1.4.87.

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HIGHER EDUCATION: MEETING THE CHALLENGE

The Conservative Aim. The Government believes that higher education should serve the economy more effectively and have closer links with industry and commerce. It also recognises the important of basic scientific research and of scholarship in the arts and humanities. The White Paper Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge is designed to promote these aims by

- widening access to Higher Education, in order to take account of the nation's need for highly qualified manpower.

- freeing the polytechnics and other higher education colleges from the control of local authorities. They will now be funded through a new Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council.

- replacing the University Grants Committee by a new, smaller body, with a broadly equal number of academic and non-academic members and a chairman drawn from outside the academic world.

- improving quality and efficiency through better design and content of higher education courses, better staff training and appraisal and more selectively funded and commercially useful research.

Increased numbers. Wider access. Under the Conservatives the proportion of students entering higher education has increased by almost 160,000. The percentage of 18 and 19 year olds has risen from 12.4 per cent in 1979 to an estimated 14.2 per cent in 1986 and that of mature students by a quarter. The government believes that, despite the drop in the birthrate, this increase should be maintained. Not only does the nation need skilled manpower, but the reforms by this government in raising standards in schools and further education will increase the proportion of young people likely to benefit from higher education.

The government's plans assume that the decline in the numbers of 18 and 19 year olds will not be matched by a similar decline in the participation rate for higher education. Instead, a 5 per cent increase in student numbers is anticipated between 1985 and 1990, a return to present levels of intake by the mid-1990s (when the numbers of 18-19 year olds will be lowest), to be followed by renewed growth. By 1990 there should be a 50,000 increase in student numbers. By the end of the century one in five school leavers should enter higher education. But the actual numbers will depend on the success of increasing the emphasis on science, engineering and vocational courses and that of schools and colleges in producing qualified young people.

Independence for the Polytechnics. Half the students in higher education in England attend polytechnics and colleges - highly successful national institutions whose role is complementary to that of the universities. After two decades they have become firmly established and offer every major subject except medicine. At present they are subject to the control of their respective local authorities - their capacity to plan and develop their national role and to manage their own resources restricted.

The government has therefore decided that the 29 polytechnics in England and 28 other colleges which principally provide higher education should be freed from local authority control. (The new arrangements will not apply to non-advanced further education or to the polytechnics in Wales.) They will be given corporate status and will now own their own land and buildings, employ staff, and each will have a board of governors - with strong representation from local and regional industry, commerce and the professions.

Funding will be through the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC) - an independent, non-departmental body, appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science, with members from industry and commerce, as well as from the polytechnics and colleges themselves. The PCFC will distribute the money it receives from public funds, not by way of grants, but by a system of contracting with the polytechnics and colleges. They will therefore be both more accountable for the public funds they recieve and encouraged to seek contracts from other sources, particularly the private sector.

A New University Funding Council. The Government considers that the University Grants Committee - which distributes public money to the universities - should be replaced on the lines recommended by the Croham Report. The new University Funding Council will be a smaller body, also independent, with roughly equal numbers of academic and non-academic members and a chairman with experience outside the academic world. Other Croham recommendations which largely build on present practice, will be accepted. The Government will provide guidelines for the planning by UFC and the universities. It will play no part in the distribution of funds between the individual universities.

Quality and Efficiency in Courses and Research. The Conservative commitment to quality and efficiency in higher education has already led to substantial improvement - but more needs yet to be done.

Already progress in the universities has been made in promoting codes of practice to sustain and monitor academic standards. (Here the recent university pay award of 24 per cent, with its provision for rewarding quality and merit must be welcomed.) The polytechnics and colleges will, in line with the Lindop Report, take maximum responsibility for their own standards as the best means of ensuring quality. Initiatives have also been taken to introduce more systematic training and appraisal of academic staff. The Government has welcomed the plans of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors to publish an agreed code of practice by July 1987 and also guidelines for performance-related appraisal of academic staff. The Government hopes that polytechnics and colleges will give attention to staff training and appraisal. And it looks to the universities to do more to reassure the public about the ways in which they control standards.

Efficiency, as well as quality, has been the target of Conservative reform. Unit costs are estimated to have fallen in real terms by 5 per cent in the universities, 15 per cent in the polytechnics, and 25 per cent in voluntary and other grant-aided colleges in England between 1980-81 and 1986-7.

Increased support for Science and Research. Under the Conservatives the Science budget has increased by 11 per cent in real terms since 1979 - a total of £1.2 billion a year is given by the Government to scientific research. Mr Baker has today announced a further £15 million for 1987-8 through the Science budget - in addition to the increase of £39 million over 1987-8 (announced last November) and to the extra £17.5 million over three years for AIDS research.

The Government is determined to maintain and build on Britain's outstanding science record and to enhance the science base. The Government encourages greater selectivity of funding and concentration of resources, clearly targeted research and closer links with industry.

While scientists themselves must do better in turning investment into profitable output, industry must play its part and invest in the research, development and training which is vital to its future. (In 1983 in Britain only 63 per cent of industry's research and development expenditure came from its own resources - by contrast with 73 per cent in France, 82 per cent in West Germany and 98 per cent in Japan.) As Mr Baker said in his statement on the White Paper:

> 'We must exploit our science to the utmost - and that is a matter as much for industry as for government, the research councils and higher education'.

Conservative Research Department,
32 Smith Square, London, S.W. 1.

SL/JLS
1.4.87.

Conservative Research Department Brief

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON THE ADDITION TO THE SCIENCE BUDGET

Prepared For:

1ST APRIL 1987

Contents Page

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR SCIENCE 1.

TABLE 1

DTI R & D POLICY

Enquiries to: Dr Sheila Lawlor

32, Smith Square, London SW1
01-222 9511

Ref: ED(87)8
1st April 1987

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR SCIENCE

Introduction

1. The Government supports science through the production of trained scientific manpower from the education system; and through the support of scientific research. Each Government department funds scientific research relevant to its own policy interests.

2. DES research spending is different from that of other departments, in that as well as spending funds on its own policy-related educational research (a relatively small sum) it also supports the 'science base'. The term 'science base' is here used to refer to basic and strategic research undertaken in higher education institutions (mainly universities) and the research councils.

3. Information about government spending on research is collected annually, and published by the Cabinet Office in the 'Annual Review of Government Funded R & D'. This shows that total Government spending in 1986-87 is planned to be £4.7 billion, of which £2.4 billion is for defence and £2.3 billion for civil. Of the total for civil, £1.3 billion is for the DES science base, and £1.0 billion for other civil departments.

4. General support for university research comes from UGC block grants and student fees. Support for research councils comes from the Science Budget. Part of the money that goes to the Councils supports their own laboratories, national and international facilities and part is spent by them in universities supporting specific research projects.

The Government's policy

5. The Government set out its policy for the DES science base in its response (Cmnd 9849) to the Education, Science and Arts Committee's report "The Future of the Science Budget". (First Report, Session 1984-85):

"to maintain and enhance the strength and quality of the science base in higher education and the research councils, in order to strengthen the knowledge and skills of the UK in science and technology, and to improve the efficiency, competitiveness and innovative capacity of the UK economy. Consonant with this, the Government's objectives are to encourage:

greater concentration and selectivity of research activities;
close and better working with industry and commerce;
more funding from private sector sources;
better management yielding greater value for money;
increased flexibility enabling faster response to new scientific opportunities;"

6. Significant progress has been achieved towards these objectives, as exemplified by

the new UGC policy on selectivity;
growing collaboration between universities, research councils and industry;
sharper formulation of research councils' priorities;
rationalisation of sites by research councils;
new initiatives being undertaken in response to scientific opportunity and national need (eg molecular medicine, opto-electronics, AIDS research).

Government's expenditure policies

7. Table 1 shows estimated expenditure by universities in support of scientific R & D from general income, together with Science Budget expenditure, in each year since 1979-80. From 1979-80 to the financial year 1986-87, the total spending on research has increased in real terms by 6% using the GDP deflator to adjust for inflation. Comparable total figures for the period of the last Labour Government (1974-75 to 1979-80) are not available; for the Science Budget alone expenditure remained more or less level in real terms over the period of that Government.

8. There is at first sight a paradox between expenditure increasing in real terms, and the criticism that there is a shortage of funds for science. The explanation is partly that the costs of science are rising faster than average inflation as measured by the GDP deflator, and partly that the number of new opportunities for research is growing more rapidly than the available funds.

The present Science Budget issue

9. The issue of Science Budgets which has received attention in the media arose in the following way. On 5 March, a new pay and restructuring deal was agreed for university academic staff. This gave university academics an increase of 16% from 1 December 1986 and a further increase of 7% from 1 March 1988. The Government is providing additional funds - £40 million in 1987-88 - to the UGC to help to cover the costs of the settlement.

10. The settlement also has cost implications for the Research Councils who employ staff in their own institutes paid on university scales and who make research grants to university academics, which include provision for the salaries of university research assistants. The total additional cost of the settlement for Councils - over and above the 2.5% cash uplift factor built into Government plans - is £15m in 1987-88 rising to £19m in 1988-89.

11. The Research Councils will also be affected by the provisional pay and restructuring settlement for the scientific civil service and by settlements pending for NHS staff and the general civil service. The total additional costs of these settlements, over and above the cash uplift factor, is likely to be some £7m in 1987-88.

12. Councils face difficulties in absorbing these additional costs in 1987-88. At short notice their options for making offsetting savings are limited. There has been considerable publicity about SERC's decision to cancel a research grant round, for which the closing date for applications was 1 April.

Science and Industry

13. Progress is being made by the universities and the Research Councils in getting closer to industry. Universities have been set free to exploit and benefit from their own discoveries and inventions and almost all of them have special arrangements for doing this. Other examples include:

- more than 250 Teaching Company Schemes funded by the Science and Engineering Research Council and Department of Trade and Industry in which academic expertise is brought directly to bear on industrial problems and able graduates are trained for careers in industry

- almost a thousand postgraduate students are being trained each year through the CASE scheme (co-operative awards in science and engineering) jointly supported by a Research Council and industry

- the Science and Engineering Research Council has set up special Directorates eg in biotechnology and information technology to work in close consultation with industry; two former Directorates have already moved outside into industrially-based organisations.

14. The most recent major Government initiative to help turn science into marketable goods and services is the LINK initiative announced in December. All Government Departments with a significant research and development programme are involved as well as Research Councils and universities. Under this programme the Government will spend £210m over the next five years on bringing together industry and publicly funded scientists in collaborative programmes. Industry will be expected to meet at least half of the cost of the programmes which will cover a wide range of new science and technology, from molecular electronics and medical lasers to improved road construction materials and advanced underwater robotics.

Science and Education

15. The Government is seeking to lay better foundations for the technologically advanced society of the future through the education system by:

- promoting the study of science by all school pupils from 5 to 16

- sponsoring projects to improve primary school science

- encouraging more physics graduates to enter teaching by offering them an increased income as student trainees

- launching the TVEI, recently extended at a cost of £90m per year

- ensuring that schools have computers for use across the curriculum

- creating an extra 10,000 engineering and technology student places through the £38m IT Initative and the £43m Engineering and Technology Programme

- bringing young researchers into universities through the new blood scheme

- setting up with industry the £350m Alvey programme on advanced IT.

UNIVERSITY SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND SCIENCE
BUDGET EXPENDITURE 1986-87 PRICES

Financial Year	Univ R & D	Science Budget	Total
1979-80	597	565	1162
1980-81	618	551	1169
1981-82	617	575	1192
1982-83	636	573	1209
1983-84	627	587	1214
1984-85	615	600	1215
1985-86	617	602	1219
1986-87	622	615	1237
1987-88	*	*	*

* to be completed

Notes University figures exclude the humanities.

DTI R & D Policy

1. The objectives of DTI's R & D policy include:

- encouraging industry to increase its own investment in R & D in line with other advanced industrial countries

- seeking to secure more effective exploitation of national and international science and technology

- promoting awareness and rapid adoption of key technologies.

2. The devising and financing of industry's R & D programmes must largely be for industry itself since these are commercial decisions which should primarily be governed by market forces. However, there are circumstances where defects in the market mechanism may mean that DTI support for industrial technology can secure an economic benefit to the nation.

3. Following a review of DTI support for industrial R & D, a change of emphasis in the pattern of support was announced in March 1985. The main thrust of the change was that a greater proportion of the Department's support would be made available to collaborative research, advisory services and schemes for encouraging best practice and improving key skills. Less support would be given to projects in individual companies and the criteria for such support would be tightened. Over the period 1984 to 1989 single company project support is set to fall by over 50% while support for collaborative projects and for non-project activities is planned to double.

4. More detail about specific DTI programmes in support of R & D is to be found in the 1986 Annual Review of Government Funded R & D.

5. In 1986-87 about £372m will be spent on R & D by DTI. This is almost 60% higher in real terms than in 1979-80 and represents over one third of DTI's budget compared to only 6% in 1979-80.


02.IV.
AM87

For the attention of David Norgrove. No 10.

ELIZABETH HOUSE
YORK ROAD
LONDON SE1 7PH
01-934 9000

Mike Eland Esq
Private Secretary to the
Lord President
68 Whitehall
London SW1

1 April 1987

Dear Mike,

HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

I sent you yesterday a copy of the statement my Secretary of State intends to make this afternoon on higher education. I said I would be copying round this morning an additional short passage on research funding. This is attached and takes the form of an additional paragraph to go into the Statement after the existing paragraph 11. The paragraph has been cleared by the Chief Secretary. I would be grateful for any comments you may have by 12.30 pm today.

I am copying this to the Private Secretaries to the Prime Minister, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretaries of State for Wales, Northern Ireland, Environment, Employment, Scotland and Trade and Industry, the Chief Secretary, the Chief Whip (House of Lords), to Trevor Woolley and to Bernard Ingham.

Chief

Yours Sincerely,
Rod Smith

R L SMITH
Private Secretary

H E WHITE PAPER STATEMENT

Draft Science Para

12. The White Paper rightly acknowledges that the quality of our research is recognised worldwide. The Government is committed to maintaining and enhancing the strength and quality of the science base, of which our institutions of higher education are a major and essential part. We attach particular importance to sustaining the work of the most able scientists and their teams. The Government is accordingly making available an additional £15M for 1987/88 through the Science Budget. This funding is in addition to the £39M increase in that Budget for 1987-88 which I announced on 6 November last year, and the extra £17.5M over three years for AIDS research by the MRC announced since November. The consequences of the increase I am announcing today for later years will be taken into account when we consider the Science Budget in this year's Public Expenditure Survey. But I emphasise that we, and the scientific community, face difficult choices in the future. We must be more selective. We must concentrate resources. We must get even better value for money from better targeted research. We must exploit our science to the utmost - and that is a matter as much for industry as for Government, the Research Councils and higher education.

For the attention of David Norgrove. No 10.

ELIZABETH HOUSE
YORK ROAD
LONDON SE1 7PH
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68 Whitehall
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10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

The first half of this advocates per capita funding and devolved budgets, and will be entirely familiar to you. The second half discusses education credits.

I am not sure you would gain anything by reading it.

DHW
31/3

BBM04D5

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CONFIDENTIAL

1 CCBG

ELIZABETH HOUSE
YORK ROAD
LONDON SE1 7PH
01-934 9000

Mike Eland Esq
Private Secretary to the Lord President
Privy Council Office
68 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1

NBPM.

31 March 1987

Dear Mike,

I attach a slightly revised version of the statement my Secretary of State intends to make tomorrow afternoon. The text takes account of comments made on the draft circulated under cover of my Secretary of State's letter to the Lord President of 26 March.

As you are aware, after discussions in the course of this afternoon the Lord President has agreed to the inclusion in the statement of a short passage on science funding. I shall circulate a text of this addition cleared with the Treasury in the course of tomorrow morning.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Prime Minister, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretaries of State for Wales, Northern Ireland, Environment, Employment, Scotland and Trade and Industry, the Chief Secretary, the Chief Whip (House of Commons), the Chief Whip (House of Lords), to Trevor Woolley and to Bernard Ingham.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Smith

R L SMITH
Private Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL

HIGHER EDUCATION WHITE PAPER

DRAFT ORAL STATEMENT

1. With permission, Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the Government's policies for higher education.

2. Higher education is crucial in helping the nation meet the economic, social and intellectual challenges of the final decade of this century. We must ensure that our universities, polytechnics and colleges respond to the country's requirements. Important reforms are already underway, and I pay tribute to the efforts that are being made, especially in our universities, to adapt themselves more closely to the needs of the nation. The White Paper we publish today announces new policies in three key areas:

- wider access to higher education to help ensure that the United Kingdom gets the skilled people we need for economic success and to compete in international markets;

- the financing and management of polytechnics and colleges in England; and

- the thoroughgoing reform of the University Grants Committee, along the lines recommended in the Croham Report.

3. It is twenty-one years since the polytechnics were conceived. They have now come of age. They are successful, mature institutions with a strong national role, complementary to our universities. But they are held back by current planning and funding arrangements. Control by individual local authorities inhibits their progress towards meeting the challenges of the 1990s and towards managing their resources to best effect.

4. We have therefore decided to bring forward legislation to convert the polytechnics and other mainly higher education colleges in England to free-standing corporate bodies under Boards of Governors. Local and regional industry and commerce will be strongly represented on these Boards. They will be funded principally through a new Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council which will be independent of Government, although subject to guidance from the holder of my office. This Council will succeed the National Advisory Body and will contract with individual institutions for the provision of higher education.

5. Local education authorities will retain control of those colleges which do not provide predominantly for higher education. The Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council may contract for the provision of degree and full-time HND and equivalent courses at these colleges. Other courses, including all part-time sub-degrees, at colleges remaining under local authority control will become a totally local responsibility: the present expenditure pooling arrangements will end. Responsibility for the 530,000 students on non-advanced further education courses will continue to rest with local authorities.

6. The voluntary and other colleges of higher education which are grant-aided by my Department will be brought within the ambit of the new Funding Council. For the present, however, these arrangements will not be extended to cover the polytechnic and colleges of higher education in Wales.

7. Side by side with the new arrangements for the polytechnics and colleges, we intend to introduce legislation to change the University Grants Committee to an independent statutory body on the lines recommended by the Croham Committee. We accept the Croham recommendations that this body should be smaller, with broadly equal numbers of academic and non-academic members, and a chairman with substantial experience outside the academic world. The new body will be called the Universities Funding Council and its primary responsibility will be the allocation of funds to individual universities under new contractual arrangements.

8. The two new planning and funding bodies which I have announced will help to implement our policies, to encourage more of our young people to go on to higher education. Mr Speaker, the Government already has an outstanding record on access to higher education. Student numbers have increased by almost 160,000 since we took office in 1979. After its fall in the 1970s the participation rate for young people has been increased by 15%, and the number of mature entrants has risen by about a quarter. We remain committed to providing places for all with the intellectual competence, motivation and maturity to benefit from higher education.

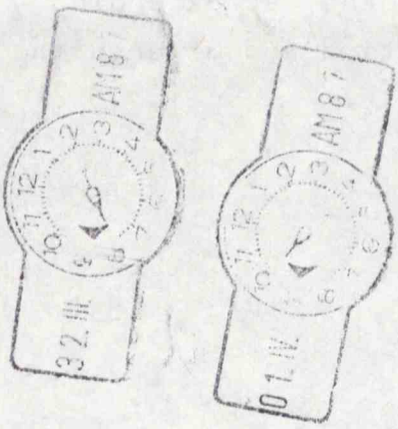
9. Over the next decade, however, the number of 18 year olds will fall by one-third, and student demand will no longer be a sufficient basis for planning. A major determinant must also be the nation's demands for highly qualified manpower. The increase in graduate output already planned seems unlikely to do more than keep pace with the nation's requirements until 1990, and may be insufficient by the mid-1990s. This view is echoed in the excellent report published yesterday by the Council for Industry and Higher Education, which is chaired by my right hon Friend the Member for Lowestoft.

10. For the present, the Government's best judgement is that it should plan for the student numbers envisaged in the higher of the two projections which I published last November. Projection Q, as it is called, involves an increase in full and part-time student numbers to 957,000 in 1990, as compared with 906,000 in 1985-86, a return to current intake levels during the demographic trough, and then renewed growth in the last few years of the century. By the year 2000 almost one in five school-leavers would then be going on to higher education. The Government is concerned to ensure that within the total numbers the shift towards scientific and other vocational courses should be maintained.

11. Attainment of these student numbers will depend crucially on whether this shift can be achieved; on whether the schools and colleges succeed in raising the proportion of young people who qualify for higher education; and on whether the universities,

polytechnics and colleges can admit more mature students and more young people with vocational qualifications. The Government believes that higher education can meet these challenges so that student numbers of the order of Projection Q can be achieved.

12. Mr Speaker, our system of higher education in the United Kingdom is among the best in the world. Our policies are aimed at securing and developing its distinctive strengths, at extending its benefits to a wider section of the population and at ensuring that it serves the nation even more effectively.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SCOTTISH OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

CONFIDENTIAL

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

31 March 1987

Dear Willie,

HIGHER EDUCATION WHITE PAPER - SCOTTISH STATEMENT

I am content with the terms of Kenneth Baker's draft statement attached to his letter of 26 March. He indicated that I hope to make a statement on Scottish issues after his and I attach the terms of a draft which I have agreed with him.

This announces our decision to accept the Croham recommendation that there be a Scottish Committee of the UFC and to reject the recommendation of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council that a separate planning and funding body be established for the universities and other higher education institutions in Scotland.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Wales, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland, Employment, and Education and Science and to the Chief Secretary, the Secretary of State for Trade and the Chief Whip.

Yours ever,

Malcolm

MALCOLM RIFKIND

EML08910

CONFIDENTIAL 30 March 1987

DRAFT STATEMENT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND ON 1 APRIL 1987

With permission, Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement on arrangements for planning and funding of higher education in Scotland announced in today's White Paper on Higher Education. This follows consultations on the recommendations in the Report of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council on future strategy for higher education in Scotland and advice from the Advisory Board for the Research Councils and the Croham Committee on the UGC.

In my statement to the House on 17 July 1986, I said that the Government accepted STEAC's view that there is scope for improvement in the planning and co-ordination of provision in higher education by the universities and colleges in Scotland.

In reaching decisions on the future, I have recognised that 6 out of 8 Scottish universities opposed the central STEAC recommendation for a separate Scottish body with funding responsibilities for both the university and college sectors. I share the views of the universities that they should continue to be, and be seen to be, an integral part of the British university system and believe that that might be prejudiced by removing them from the British funding framework of the UGC and its successor.

Irrespective of the source of funding, it is however highly desirable that both the university and college sectors can plan the development of their provision in the knowledge of what other institutions in Scotland are planning to do. But knowledge is not enough - we need arrangements to ensure that plans can be discussed, adapted and co-ordinated to take account of what other institutions intend to do and to ensure that over all provision in both sectors is in line with likely national and local needs.

That is why we announce in the White Paper that we propose to accept and build on the recommendation of the Croham Committee that the proposed Universities Funding Council should have a Scottish Committee. The Committee will play an important part in planning higher education in

Scotland. It is important that the University Funding Council and its Scottish Committee should take into account the needs of Scottish higher education as a whole. To this end in future the Secretary of State for Scotland shall give the Universities Funding Council guidance on plans for the other sectors of higher education in Scotland and will expect it to have regard to his views on the implication of Scottish needs for the university sector. These will, of course, be consistent with guidance given by my rt hon Friend to the Universities Funding Council. The UFC and the Secretary of State for Scotland will then be able to plan provision, with the help of the Scottish Committee, in the university and college sectors respectively with a clear knowledge of the implications of each other's plans.

I expect the Committee to advise the UFC on the implications of the Scottish education system for the needs of the Scottish universities. It will, in consultation with my Department, consider the demand for higher education in Scotland and the balance of provision between its constituent parts.

Appointments to the Scottish Committee will be a matter for the Universities Funding Council in consultation with the Secretary of State for Scotland. I envisage that the Committee will include members drawn from the non-university sector and employers as well as from the UFC, and the universities and that there will be representation from the Scottish Office.

I believe that the establishment of a Scottish Committee of the UFC on these lines will mark a very important development in the relationship of the Secretary of State for Scotland with the university sector, with far-reaching implications for the proper planning of higher education. For the first time he will have formal access to a group taking an overview of the needs of the Scottish university sector and will be able to discuss with them his views on the priorities for higher education in Scotland and the plans of the college sector.

I am confident that the arrangements will be welcomed by the universities in Scotland. They will be able to maintain their role as part of the British system but will have a new focus for looking at Scottish needs. They will be better able to plan their provision in the light of knowledge

of each other's plans and those of the Central Institutions. The CIs should welcome the more systematic opportunity afforded by the Scottish Committee for joint planning between my Department and the universities on how demands from students and employers should be met. Most importantly, Scotland at large should benefit from the improved arrangements for co-ordination and planning of higher education to meet the changes envisaged by the White Paper between now and the end of the century.

Scottish Office

MWE089A1

EDUCATION

Policy

PTR

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
1-19 VICTORIA STREET
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GTN 215) 5422
(Switchboard) 01-215 7877

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

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

30 March 1987

Dear Willie.

NBPM.

HIGHER EDUCATION WHITE PAPER

I welcome the draft statement enclosed with Kenneth Baker's letter to you of 26 March.

I have just two suggested amendments to make. Add a sentence to the end of paragraph 10:

> "The Government is concerned to ensure that within these total numbers the shift towards scientific and other vocational courses should be maintained."

The beginning of the next paragraph could then become:

> "Attainment of our student number targets will depend crucially on whether this shift can be achieved; on whether the schools and colleges ....."
> (as before)

I am copying this letter to Kenneth Baker and to the recipients of his letter of 26 March.

Yours, Paul

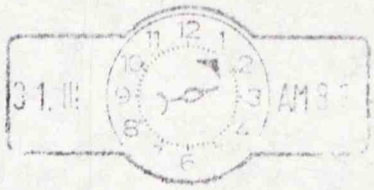
PAUL CHANNON

JG1AYD

EDUCATION

POLICY

PT 12



PRIME MINISTER 27 March 1987

Institute of Economic Affairs Education Unit

"Our Schools - A Radical Policy" - In attached folder.

When Keith Joseph left the government, Stuart Sexton was left without a job. As a result of a proposal which Ralph Harris was enthused about and which Edgar Palamountain was prepared to fund, Stuart has been able to establish an Education Unit at the IEA.

I enclose his first paper to be published next week which is a set of radical policies for schools, with particular emphasis on per capita funding. It is a useful contribution to the public debate, and although this particular paper says nothing new, it augurs well for the future. I assume that its colour has been deliberately chosen to symbolise its connection with the Black Papers of the early 1970s.

Brian Griffiths

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Pancake
PES 30/3

Content with this draft statement subject to the small changes in paragraph 9?

DRN
27/3

Yes mt.

File both copies

VR

CONFIDENTIAL

ELIZABETH HOUSE
YORK ROAD
LONDON SE1 7PH
01-934 9000

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

26 March 1987

Dear Willie,

HIGHER EDUCATION WHITE PAPER

I have now finalised the text for the White Paper on higher education taking account of the points raised at H Committee. Arrangements are being made for it to be published on Wednesday 1 April. I intend to make a statement in the House on the afternoon of 1 April and I attach a draft text for approval.

I understand that Malcolm Rifkind proposes to make a short supplementary statement on the planning and funding arrangements for the Scottish universities.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Nicholas Edwards, John Biffen, Tom King, Nicholas Ridley, David Young, John MacGregor, Malcolm Rifkind and Paul Channon.

Yours ever,

Kenneth

CONFIDENTIAL

HIGHER EDUCATION WHITE PAPER

DRAFT ORAL STATEMENT

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2. Higher education is crucial in helping the nation meet the economic, social and intellectual challenges of the final decade of this century. We must ensure that our universities, polytechnics and colleges respond to the country's needs. The White Paper we publish today announces new policies in three key areas:

- major changes in the way polytechnics and colleges in England are financed and managed;

- thoroughgoing reform of the University Grants Committee, along the lines recommended in the Croham Report; and

- much wider access to higher education to help ensure that the nation gets the skilled people we need for economic success and to compete in international markets.

3. The polytechnics and other higher education colleges have made great strides forward over the last twenty years. They are now successful mature institutions with a strong national role, complementary to our universities. But they are held back by current planning and funding arrangements. Control by individual local authorities inhibits their progress towards meeting the challenges of the 1990s and towards managing their resources to best effect.

4. We have therefore decided to bring forward legislation to convert the polytechnics and other mainly higher education colleges in England to free-standing corporate bodies under Boards of Governors on which local and regional industry and commerce are strongly represented. They will be funded

has increased by almost 160,000 since we took office in 1979. After its fall in the 1970s the participation rate for young people has been increased by 15%, and the number of mature entrants has risen by about a quarter. We remain committed to providing places for all with the intellectual competence, motivation and maturity to benefit from higher education.

9. Over the next decade, however, the number of 18 year olds will fall by one-third, and student demand will no longer be a sufficient basis for planning. A major determinant must also be the [national economy's] demands for highly qualified manpower. The increase in graduate output already planned seems unlikely to do more than keep pace with [national industry's] requirements until 1990, and may be insufficient by the mid-1990s. This view is echoed in the excellent report published yesterday by the Council for Industry and Higher Education, which is chaired by my right hon Friend the Member for Lowestoft.

Too narrow?

10. For the present, the Government's best judgement is that it should plan for the student numbers envisaged in the higher of the two projections which I published last November. Projection Q, as it is called, involves an increase in full-time equivalent home and overseas student numbers to 726,000 in 1990, as compared with 693,000 in 1985-86, a return to current intake levels during the demographic trough, and then renewed growth in the last few years of the century.

11. This ambitious target for student numbers will depend crucially on whether we can make the necessary shift towards scientific and other vocational courses; on whether the schools and colleges succeed in raising the proportion of young people who qualify for higher education; and on whether the universities, polytechnics and colleges can admit more mature students and more young people with vocational qualifications. The Government believes that student numbers of the order of Projection Q are necessary and can be achieved.

12. Mr Speaker, Britain's system of higher education is among the best in the world. Our policies are aimed at securing and developing its distinctive strengths, at extending its benefits to a wider section of the population and at ensuring that it serves the nation even more effectively.


26.III

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

27 March 1987

Dear Rob,

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Prime Minister has not yet had an opportunity to read in detail your Secretary of State's minute of 24 March about the national school curriculum. However, her first impression is that the draft statement to ESAC in particular does not describe what she has in mind. The following comments by Professor Brian Griffiths and me may be helpful preparation for the meeting of Ministers on Friday 3 April. They have not been discussed with the Prime Minister, who may well have different and further comments when she returns from Moscow. But they are based on our understanding of her position.

Our understanding is that the Prime Minister would like detailed basic syllabuses for a core group of subjects to be established, which everyone would be expected to follow from ages 5 to 16. The objective would be that all should attain certain defined minimum standards by ages 7, 11, 14 and 16. Children who failed to attain those minimum standards would be offered remedial help. They would be expected to retake the tests.

The emphasis in this scheme is on required minimum standards. It would be open to schools to add to the basic syllabuses, which indeed they would be expected to do for all children to give breadth and variety and to help develop individual abilities. But the aim would be to guarantee to parents and employers that all children will leave school with certain basic skills and knowledge.

You told me that your Secretary of State envisages three levels of overlapping tests at any given age which children would take according to their ability. This has not I think been explained to the Prime Minister. She may feel that such a scheme would be unnecessarily elaborate at this stage, when the need is to restore minimum standards.

The proposals described in Annexes A and C would set out a curriculum for the core group of subjects, not a basic syllabus. Parents and pupils would know only "in broad terms" what ground the schools were required to cover (Annex C, paragraph 12). There would be attainment targets, not minimum attainment levels. There would be "no question of passing some pupils, and failing others" (Annex C, paragraph 13).

The rather general approach described in your Secretary of state's minute clearly differs from the minimum standards approach. But the freedom the latter approach would leave to individual schools and teachers would depend on how high the minimum level of attainment was set and how far the core syllabus in each subject extended. Further discussion of this would help both to clarify the differences of view and to establish how difficult the minimum standards approach would be to establish with teachers.

Your Secretary of State may feel that the alternative approach is wrong, or would be completely unacceptable to the education world, or that we have misunderstood the Prime Minister's views. But for the next meeting it would help the discussion if Mr Baker could explain more precisely what he would intend by a subject curriculum and how attainment tests would fit into the system (for example would children retake them if they failed to reach an acceptable level for their age?). Indeed it might help if a glossary could be provided of the terms curriculum, syllabus, content, teaching approach, method, course programme and attainment target. The terms "core syllabus" and "core curriculum" have for example been used interchangeably in earlier discussions, whereas it is now clear that these meant different things to different people. Examples from one subject (say primary English or Maths) would be useful.

It would not be appropriate at this stage to attempt to offer a draft of the statement which reflected the minimum standards (or perhaps "core syllabus") approach. But amendments to take the present draft towards it would include the following.

(i) Second sentence of paragraph 2: "It cannot be secured without an education which equips every pupil with the basic skills and knowledge for the challenging...."

(ii) Fifth sentence of paragraph 3: "Every pupil is entitled to a good basic syllabus in the major subjects."

(iii) Paragraph 10, omit the second and third sentences and "also" in the fourth. In the fourth sentence amend final words to read "does not describe the whole of a school curriculum."

(iv) New paragraph after paragraph 10:

"There is a widespread recognition that some of our schools are failing to teach children certain basic skills and knowledge. Multiplication tables and basic grammar are often cited as examples. For the subjects which form part of the foundation curriculum I believe it will also be important to establish core syllabuses which will describe in some detail what our children will be expected to know by certain ages. I emphasise that these syllabuses will be the core or minimum. They will leave ample scope for teachers to apply broadly defined requirements to the needs of their pupils and to local circumstances."

(v) Paragraph 11: "A foundation curriculum, with a core syllabus in each major subject, will do its work only if it helps pupils to attain at least a good minimum standard. The government intends to set minimum attainment levels in the various subjects of the foundation curriculum for key ages - 7,11,14 and 16 are the obvious ages for most subjects. They should relate to skills ..."

(vi) Paragraph 12: "The content of the curriculum for each subject, the core syllabus and the expected minimum level of attainment would be published. Everyone, including parents and employers, would then know what ground the schools were expected to cover. Teachers would still have scope for exercising imagination ..."

(vii) Paragraph 13, omit final sentence.

The effect of these changes would be to combine the two aproaches. It would be possible of course only to adopt the minimum standards approach without attempting to set out broader curricula.

I am copying this letter to Alex Allan (HM Treasury), John Shortridge (Welsh Office), David Watkins (Northern Ireland Office), Robin Young (Department of the Environment), and Robert Gordon (Scottish Office),

Yours,
David.

David Norgrove

Rob Smith Esq
Department of Education and Science

CONFIDENTIAL

MR NORGROVE

27th March 1987

The National School Curriculum

Memorandum to the Prime Minister

1. This is very clear and the objectives in para 3 are precisely those of the Prime Minister. (I take it in para 3(2) "method" is distinct from "content", so that by allowing considerable discretion over "method" one is not imposing a significant contraint on "content".)

2. The only passage which creates difficulties is the last sentence of para 6.

"The curricula and programmes will be sufficiently broad and flexible to leave scope for good heads and teachers to get the details right".

This implies that there will be sufficient breadth and discretion for bad heads and teachers to get the details wrong: but the whole purpose of a core curriculum is surely to prevent this.

An alternative might be

"Although the content of the curricula and programmes will be clearly specified this will leave ample scope to the teachers as to the methods they choose to use.

Annex A

3. Para 2(2) states that legislation would provide for

"A statement of the content of what pupils are required to

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study ..... and the teaching approaches to be used."

This seems to me fine but appears to contradict other passages e.g. the last sentence of 3(2) in the Memo, paras 10 and 12 of Annex B.

Might we suggest that DES provide a glossary of the following terms: curricula, content, teaching approaches, method, course programmes, 'targets and subject curricula' and syllabus.

4. Para 3 "Schools would be free to devise courses within the programme" - what does this mean? How do these programmes relates to the content of the curricula?

5. The Bill would require considerable consultation - as proposed in para 4 - as well as reporting to Parliament the outcome of those consultations.

This could prove a powerful brake on progress: comparable to asking the NFU to reform the CAP. If consultation is to proceed in this way it is vital that the Secretary of State makes a much stronger statement on the content of the curriculum, and does not shy away from using the word syllabus.

6. The supervision arrangements of para 8 would entrust the details to the SEC which has been responsible for introducing GCSE. In para 9 this is made worse by the government entrusting GCE Boards and A level to supervision by the SEC. The Prime Minister will almost certainly baulk at this.

The SEC is not an appropriate body: it would be better if one were to be set up.

Annex C

7. Para 10 "I am concerned with its range, not with its organisation in the schools". What does this imply for the concern over content?

8. Para 12 "in broad terms" etc. This gets to the heart of the matter and will certainly as it stands be strongly opposed by the PM.

9. Para 13 - final sentence - this too gives the game away and needs to be much stronger.

I am redrafting Annex C and will let you have a complete redraft later.

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

Annex C

REDRAFT

Secretary of State's National Curriculum Statement

1. At the North of England Conference in January I said that the time had come to move rapidly to a national school curriculum. This proposition has received public discussion. The Government now intends to start the necessary action with the help of the education service and its customers.

2. Our joint aim is to raise standards of achievement in our schools. It cannot be secured without an explicit curriculum which equips pupils for the challenging responsibilities of adult life and employment in tomorrow's world. Some of our schools offer such a curriculum, though not always to all their pupils. But some offer something less good.

3. The Government believes that this is no longer acceptable. All parents are obliged by law to ensure that their children are educated for the 11 compulsory years. The school system has to provide a good enough curriculum to enable every parent to discharge that duty. But the duty of the parent is also the right of the child. Every pupil is entitled to know what they are expected to learn. Like other rights this can be guaranteed only if it is required and enforceable by law. That is the principle on which the Government now intends to stand.

4. The Government wants the national curriculum to be as good as the best minds in the country can make it. The level of attainment to be aimed at and the content of what is taught should reflect the best practice of our good schools. The duties placed on the schools should leave

scope for good teaching, and for the English tradition that teachers use their professional talents and flair to meet the learning needs of each pupil.

5. But two aspects of the English tradition have outlived their usefulness. First, we can no longer leave individual teachers, schools, or LEAs, to decide the curriculum children should follow. It is no longer acceptable that many children have a much less good curriculum than others through the accident of where they happen to go to school.

6. Second, it is quite wrong that hardly anyone knows with any clarity or in any detail what the schools are trying to teach their pupils. Those who use and pay for school education are entitled to know what the schools seek to teach and how well they succeed in teaching it. Once that is known, schools can be judged fairly. They can no longer be condemned for failure in a task which has not been specified, as often happens now. They can then protect the essentials of the curriculum against the demands of this or that vested interest to add yet another item to an already over-loaded curriculum.

7. A clear definition of the curriculum of every school has other advantages. The school itself has clear objectives, so that all staff know where they are and what is expected of them. Pupils are motivated by clear expectations and parents, employers and the public know better how to give effective support to the school. A good curriculum attracts commitment all round. That commitment in turn promotes high standards of achievement.

8. The Government intends to legislate early in the next Parliament to establish a national curriculum brought about by the co-operative efforts of the education service and its customers. My aim is that when the Secretary of State lays

down the national curriculum, he will not be imposing his will be but giving effect to a broad national consensus.

9. The Government's aim is to make sure that pupils in our ordinary schools, and as far as possible also in our special schools, have a broad and well-balanced foundation curriculum suitable to their abilities and aptitudes which during the compulsory period includes not only maths and English, but also science, a foreign language, history, geography, technology in its various aspects, music, art and physical education. Religious education is covered by the 1944 Act.

10. I have talked about the curriculum in layman's language. I am concerned both with its range and its content. But I recognise that the list of essential subjects which I have just set out does not desribe the whole of a school curriculum. For example, it does not mention essential parts of the curriculum, such as health education, which are not usually taught or learnt as separate subjects. It does not mention choice of additional subjects at age 14-16. It does not say that teaching approaches should emphasise oral and practical work and be properly related to pupils' experience and expectations outside the school. It does not refer to the personal qualities, attitudes and values which are required for a worthwhile and useful life in our open and multi-ethnic society.

11. A foundation curriculum does its work only if it helps pupils to attain a good standard in every part of it in accordance with their abilities. The Government intends to set challenging attainment targets in the various subjects of the foundation curriculum for key ages - 7, 11, 14 and 16 are the obvious ages for most subjects. These targets should allow for variations in ability. They should relate to skills and understanding as well as to knowledge. They

would be used to define the main elements of the national curricula for each subject, extending and amplifying the approach established for many 14-16 courses through the GCSE criteria.

12. The expected level of attainment and the content of the curricula for each subject would be published. Everyone, including parents and employers, would then know what ground the schools were required to cover. Teachers would still have scope for exercising imagination, for experiment, and for responding quickly to new challenges as they arise. But all this should take place within a set framework, known to all, intelligible to all, and as far as possible broadly acceptable to all.

13. Having decided what should be learnt, we need to assess pupils' performance in relation to the attainment targets. Those attainments which can be tested will be tested at the key ages. But we do not want teachers to teach only what is testable, as happened too often with the old 11-plus examinations. So it will be essential also to assess work done in class at the key ages. The tests might be national, but marked by the teachers. The assessments would fall to the teachers. Both would be externally moderated.

14. The far-reaching changes planned by the Government pose a professional task which is large, complex and vitally important. Some of the groundwork has been done, notably in the professional discussions stimulated by successive HMI documents, including the discussion papers in the "Curriculum Matters" series. The next step is a more concentrated distillation of professional and lay expertise and wisdom.

15. I plan to appoint a number of very strong working groups to advise on suitable attainment targets and broadly described and flexible curricula in the subjects of the

national foundation curriculum. Their reports will serve as the focus for statutory consultation before attainment targets and subject curricula are specified in legislation. I intend to start by setting up, as soon after Easter as possible, a working group on maths and a working group on science. Both groups will be thoroughly professional and small enough to work effectively and will reflect the main interests within and outside the education service who have an essential contribution to make. I shall ask the groups to give priority to the primary phase which has so far received less attention than the secondary phrase.

16. The Government now has a plan for getting right what our children learn at school - an urgent and vital task. We intend to call on all concerned to help us accomplish it. I invite them to discuss these plans. After these discussions I propose to send a further memorandum to the committee.

CONFIDENTIAL

7

ELIZABETH HOUSE
YORK ROAD
LONDON SE1 7PH
01-934 9000

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

26 March 1987

Dear Willie,

HIGHER EDUCATION WHITE PAPER

I have now finalised the text for the White Paper on higher education taking account of the points raised at H Committee. Arrangements are being made for it to be published on Wednesday 1 April. I intend to make a statement in the House on the afternoon of 1 April and I attach a draft text for approval.

I understand that Malcolm Rifkind proposes to make a short supplementary statement on the planning and funding arrangements for the Scottish universities.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Nicholas Edwards, John Biffen, Tom King, Nicholas Ridley, David Young, John MacGregor, Malcolm Rifkind and Paul Channon.

Yours ever,

Kenneth

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HIGHER EDUCATION WHITE PAPER

DRAFT ORAL STATEMENT

1. With permission, Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the Government's policies for higher education.

2. Higher education is crucial in helping the nation meet the economic, social and intellectual challenges of the final decade of this century. We must ensure that our universities, polytechnics and colleges respond to the country's needs. The White Paper we publish today announces new policies in three key areas:

- major changes in the way polytechnics and colleges in England are financed and managed;

- thoroughgoing reform of the University Grants Committee, along the lines recommended in the Croham Report; and

- much wider access to higher education to help ensure that the nation gets the skilled people we need for economic success and to compete in international markets.

3. The polytechnics and other higher education colleges have made great strides forward over the last twenty years. They are now successful mature institutions with a strong national role, complementary to our universities. But they are held back by current planning and funding arrangements. Control by individual local authorities inhibits their progress towards meeting the challenges of the 1990s and towards managing their resources to best effect.

4. We have therefore decided to bring forward legislation to convert the polytechnics and other mainly higher education colleges in England to free-standing corporate bodies under Boards of Governors on which local and regional industry and commerce are strongly represented. They will be funded

principally through a new Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council which will be independent of Government, although subject to guidance from the holder of my office. This Council will succeed the National Advisory Body and will contract with individual institutions for the provision of higher education.

5. Local education authorities will retain control of those colleges which do not provide predominantly for higher education. The Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council may contract for the provision of degree and full-time HND and equivalent courses at these colleges. Other courses, including all part-time sub-degrees at colleges remaining under local authority control will become a totally local responsibility: the present expenditure pooling arrangements will end. Responsibility for the 530,000 students on non-advanced further education courses will continue to rest with local authorities.

6. The voluntary and other colleges of higher education which are grant-aided by my Department will be brought within the ambit of the new Funding Council. For the present, however, these arrangements will not be extended to cover the polytechnic and colleges of higher education in Wales.

7. Side by side with the new arrangements for the polytechnics and colleges, we intend to introduce legislation to re-establish the University Grants Committee as an independent statutory body on the lines recommended by the Croham Committee. We accept the Croham recommendations that this body should be smaller, with broadly equal numbers of academic and non-academic members, and a chairman with substantial experience outside the academic world. The new body will be called the Universities Funding Council and its primary responsibility will be the allocation of funds to individual universities under new contractual arrangements.

8. The two new planning and funding bodies which I have announced will help with the implementation of our policies, in particular to encourage more of our young people to go on to higher education. Mr Speaker, the Government already has an outstanding record on access to higher education. Student numbers

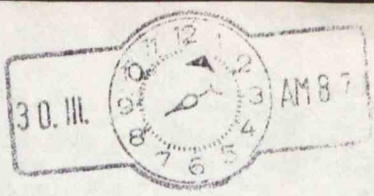
have increased by almost 160,000 since we took office in 1979. After its fall in the 1970s the participation rate for young people has been increased by 15%, and the number of mature entrants has risen by about a quarter. We remain committed to providing places for all with the intellectual competence, motivation and maturity to benefit from higher education.

9. Over the next decade, however, the number of 18 year olds will fall by one-third, and student demand will no longer be a sufficient basis for planning. A major determinant must also be the economy's demands for highly qualified manpower. The increase in graduate output already planned seems unlikely to do more than keep pace with industry's requirements until 1990, and may be insufficient by the mid-1990s. This view is echoed in the excellent report published yesterday by the Council for Industry and Higher Education, which is chaired by my right hon Friend the Member for Lowestoft.

10. For the present, the Government's best judgement is that it should plan for the student numbers envisaged in the higher of the two projections which I published last November. Projection Q, as it is called, involves an increase in full-time equivalent home and overseas student numbers to 726,000 in 1990, as compared with 693,000 in 1985-86, a return to current intake levels during the demographic trough, and then renewed growth in the last few years of the century.

11. This ambitious target for student numbers will depend crucially on whether we can make the necessary shift towards scientific and other vocational courses; on whether the schools and colleges succeed in raising the proportion of young people who qualify for higher education; and on whether the universities, polytechnics and colleges can admit more mature students and more young people with vocational qualifications. The Government believes that student numbers of the order of Projection Q are necessary and can be achieved.

12. Mr Speaker, Britain's system of higher education is among the best in the world. Our policies are aimed at securing and developing its distinctive strengths, at extending its benefits to a wider section of the population and at ensuring that it serves the nation even more effectively.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PRIME MINISTER

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Mr. Baker's paper below discusses his more detailed proposals for the national school curriculum. A particular urgency is that he wishes to give an outline of the proposals to the Select Committee on Education on 7 April, otherwise I would not have bothered you with this now. I shall bring forward the meeting, but it would help if, before that meeting, Mr. Baker's statement is knocked into a shape nearer one you might wish to see.

Mr. Baker's covering minute and his draft statement (Annex C) face two different ways. His covering minute puts the emphasis on the detail, the testing, and the compulsory elements in what he proposes. His statement puts the emphasis on the fact that he is not prescribing detail (eg paragraph 12), that there is no question of passing some pupils and failing others, and that the approach will be a broad one.

Part of the reason for this discrepancy is, I believe, that Mr. Baker believes he has to sell one thing to you and another to the education world. But Brian Griffiths and I agree that there remains a difference of view about the objectives of this exercise. Mr. Baker has still not grasped that you are talking about syllabuses and specified levels of attainment, whereas he is talking about curricula and setting objectives for schools to work towards.

In view of the other pressures on you tonight, I hope you will not feel it necessary to work through these papers in detail. If you agree, Brian Griffiths and I can do that and send to DES some suggestions which might move the statement towards the kind of thing you might be more willing to accept. We would, of course, make it quite clear that these points have not been discussed or agreed with you and that, on your return from Moscow, you might well have different and further points to make. Content to proceed in this way?

Thankyou - yes. I am most grateful MT

DAVID NORGROVE

26 March 1987

JA2ANJ

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

25 March 1987

TERTIARY COLLEGES

In the course of the preparatory meetings for the Central Council speech last weekend there was some discussion on the question of tertiary colleges, and the Prime Minister asked that I should write to re-confirm her views on these.

In general terms she does not support them since she feels that their establishment removes choice for parents, and can result in undermining academic standards especially in science subjects where good teachers who wish to continue with sixth form work would have to move to tertiary colleges thus depriving 11-16 year olds of their services. She is also concerned that children might find tertiary colleges less conducive to study than traditional schools or sixth forms. Childrens' needs vary considerably, and she is anxious that the standards of the more able pupils should not be undermined and diluted. In this context she has noted that many 16-plus pupils benefit from the discipline of a school, and might suffer from the less rigid arrangements of a tertiary college. She also feels that there are a number of sixth form colleges of outstanding quality, and is concerned that these should be maintained.

Could you please arrange to let me have a short note on the current position with tertiary colleges which I might show to the Prime Minister?

(P. A. BEARPARK)

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

PRIME MINISTER

OPEN ENROLMENT

1. I attach a short paper, which I do not intend to publish, which sets out our policy and what is needed in legislation to achieve it.

2. What we want to do is to increase parental choice by allowing parents to apply for places in popular secondary schools which still have the physical capacity to take more children.

3. A method to achieve this is to set new admission levels which in most cases would be the number of children in the school in 1979, the peak year. If this figure was below the physical capacity of the school which it may be in a few cases then there is a way in which the Governors can apply to increase it.

4. We will have to ensure that LEAs are not allowed to obstruct this by allocating a proportionally smaller budget to such popular schools. This would have to be done by our local formula for per capita expenditure. Another note is following on this.

5. This is a new policy and might be announced in the Manifesto, possibly along the following lines:

"Since 1980 parents have had a much greater choice in the secondary schools for their children. This is popular

and appeals are now running at over 10,000 per year. We intend to increase parental choice further. Schools will be required to enrol children up to the schools' agreed physical capacity instead of artificially restricting them as often happens today."

6. I am sending copies of this minute to the Secretaries of State for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to the Secretaries of State for Environment and Employment.

24 March 1987

Department of Education and Science

MO1 23.3.87

CONFIDENTIAL

THE MORE OPEN ENROLMENT SCHEME

Present position

1. Under the Education Act 1980, LEAs (governors in the case of aided schools) are required to admit pupils to the school of their parents' choice unless to do so would prejudice either efficient education or the efficient use of resources or be incompatible with denominational or academic entrance requirements. Admissions are made against published limits for each school. The LEA (or governors) must publish their intended limits and also their criteria for determining admissions (eg proximity to the school) in the event of over-subscription.

2. The admissions limit for a school may vary from year to year: it need not bear any close relationship to the school's physical capacity; and, with falling rolls, many schools' admissions limits are presently set well below capacity - usually because the LEA seeks to balance admissions and resources between the schools in the area.

Every school has a "standard number", a fixed reference point for measuring the number of admissions, which is usually the same as the number of pupils admitted in 1979. Any LEA or governing body intending to set an admissions limit which is lower than the standard number by 20% or more must, under Section 15 of the 1980 Act, submit statutory proposals for the Secretary of State's approval. It can otherwise by its own decision set a limit lower than the "standard number" provided that this is not as much as 20% lower.

3. It is not known how far the LEA's freedom to set an admission limit lower than the "standard number" inhibits the expression of parental preference. But it must do so insofar as many popular schools are "over-subscribed" with an intake lower than the "standard number".

Objective of the Scheme

4. The objective of the scheme is to give more scope for parents to satisfy their preference for popular secondary schools. New legislation will require secondary schools to admit pupils up to the limit of the "standard number", which would be redefined as equal to admissions either in 1979 or in (say) 1987, whichever were the higher, or such other figure as might be approved by the Secretary of State on an application from the LEA or the governing body. The procedures under the Education Act 1980 for pupil admissions would then operate in the light of the new "standard number".

5. The legislation, if enacted by the autumn of 1988 would require LEAs and the governors of aided schools with effect from not later than the school year 1989/90 to admit pupils to each school up to the limit of its "standard number" as redefined in the legislation unless an adjustment of this number had been agreed on application to the Secretary of State.

Procedures

6. The procedures regarding the adjustment of any "standard number" would be similar to those presently applicable to the proposed change of character or closure of a school:

a. The LEA or aided governors with the agreement of the LEA, could set the number higher than as redefined under the Act, and publish this new "standard number" without public consultation or reference to the Secretary of State;

b. to reduce the "standard number" the LEA or aided governors would need to publish a formal proposal to this effect and secure the Secretary of State's approval;

c. objections to such a proposal could be made to the proposer by the LEA or aided governors as appropriate or by local electors and would be taken into account by the Secretary of State, along with any responsive commentary, in reaching his decision.

d. the resulting "standard number" for the school would then be the one approved by the Secretary of State or the "standard number" as redefined under the Act if he had rejected the proposer's request for an adjustment.

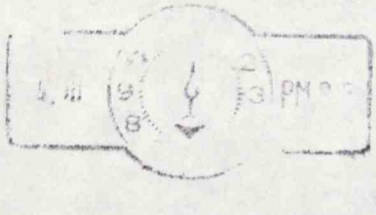
e. If the governors of a county (or controlled) school considered that the "standard number" should be higher than that established by the LEA they could propose an upwards adjustment to the LEA, and appeal to the Secretary of State if they failed to reach agreement. The LEA or the aided governors would be enabled to act similarly in respect of the "standard number" of an aided school.

Changes in Circumstances

7. When publishing proposals under the 1980 Act, as amended, for establishing new schools, or for the change of character or significant enlargement of existing

schools, a new "standard number" would form part of the proposal.

8. LEAs and aided governors would be required to keep the "standard numbers" of their schools under regular review in order to take account of any changes in physical capacity, or type of accommodation and of the requirement of the Schools Premises Regulations 1981. They would, as initially, be able to raise the "standard number" without recourse to a public procedure or application to the Secretary of State, but in order to reduce the "standard number" they would need to follow the procedures outlined in paragraph 6 above.



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PRIME MINISTER

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

1. Following the meeting on 4 March you asked me to set out the time-table for establishing the national 5-16 curriculum in the schools with the immediate emphasis on ages 5-11.

2. As we agreed, I propose to announce before Easter the decision to set up two very strong working groups - one on maths and one on science, with the task of preparing national curricula for these subjects based on attainment targets at key ages. The groups will be set up in May and start work immediately. I shall ask them to give priority to the age ranges 5-7 and 7-11, to report progress after 3 months and to complete their work in 12 months. I shall shortly put to you proposals for the chairmanships of the two groups.

3. What I want these groups to determine is:

(1) attainment targets for the ages of 7, 11, 14 and, to supplement the GCSE, 16.

(2) A clear statement of the elements to be covered to reach these targets. The statement on maths for example will have to be pretty detailed for every age and a sequence of learning laid down. The statements will be more prescriptive than the present profuse practice as regard to the content of what is taught. We must leave discretion to the teachers as to the method which they use to cover the content and reach the tests.

4. Having set up the two working groups for maths and science, I propose to ask Sir John Kingman how we can make more speedy progress in English, indicating that I would like an English working party to begin as soon as possible. This party could draw on the work and membership of his Committee.

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5. Having got work started on these priority subjects, I shall start the other necessary preparations for a 5-16 national foundation curriculum matching those of our successful competitors and equipping our children with the breadth of competence and understanding which employers now look for in addition to improved literacy and numeracy. I propose to set up this autumn further working groups on subjects such as foreign languages, geography, technology, and history.

6. Meanwhile I want immediately to start work on the legislation needed to get the national curricula and targets actually applied in the schools. Annex A outlines the main provisions of this legislation which would be a main part of the major Education Bill whose inclusion in the first session of the next Parliament has been agreed by QL. In summary the legislation will empower the Secretary of State, after statutory consultations, to prescribe national attainment targets and curricula and programmes and empower him to arrange for obligatory testing of pupils in relation to these targets. The curricula and programmes will be sufficiently broad and flexible to leave scope for good heads and teachers to get the details right.

7. Work on devising tests for each subject will start as soon as the relevant working group has put forward the targets and curricula and programmes to which the tests relate. Meanwhile I shall establish administratively a register of bodies capable of doing this work well. I do not intend to give a monopoly of this work to the National Foundation for Educational Research, whose record in this area is not uniformly good.

8. Annex B sets out my time-table. I envisage that:

(1) When the necessary Act is passed in October 1988 national curricula and targets will be available for implementation under the Act at least for maths, science and English.

(2) By the end of the next Parliament an effective foundation curriculum will be taught in all maintained schools and all pupils' performance in relation to attainment targets at key ages will be tested in all its subjects.

9. These plans represent the revolution we know to be necessary. But many thoughtful people who support us and those on whom we rely to bring it off - notably the headteachers - have still to be won over. At present even those who, like John McIntosh, support our aims are averse to the controls involved. We need to make clear that the controls back up a curriculum which is supported by the public and highly respected practitioners. I need to establish working groups whose members, drawn from outside the education service as well as from it, command authority, trust and respect. Effective presentation of our plans will be crucial, in order to scotch groundless fears and false charges and to give our supporters and the healthy elements in education a cause to which they will rally.

10. I propose to announce the decision to set up the maths and science working groups in a prepared statement to the Select Committee on Education, Science and the Arts when I appear before them on 7 April; to outline our plans to legislate for national curricula, attainment targets and testing; and thereafter strongly to develop the presentation of our case, emphasising the gains for standards and calming, as far as I can, the misgivings of our local government supporters. I am sure that we shall most readily secure public support if we are clearly seen to have a bold but coherent plan directed at higher standards and present it in language to which good heads and good teachers can respond positively. A draft text of what I intend to say is at Annex C.

11. On the question of checks and balances, this procedure in my opinion gives too much power to the Government of the day exercised by the Secretary of State to change the curriculum. The only check would be the Parliamentary debate on the Orders. I consider therefore that the Secretary of State should be required to submit the draft Orders which incorporate the curriculum, or any changes

to it to a statutory advisory body, appointed by him and which contains representative people from the education service and industry. Of course such a Committee would be appointed by the Secretary of State and therefore he could dismiss its members if he wanted to and turn it into his instrument. But I think the existence of such a body would act as some check upon the unbridled use of the executive power in an area where that power could be abused politically.

12. May I now proceed on these lines? If you are content, I would like immediately:

(1) to instruct my officials to work out further the resource implications in consultation with officials of the Treasury and DOE.

(2) To begin the work of drafting instructions to Parliamentary Counsel.

13. I shall shortly send you a further paper on the other initiatives agreed at your meeting on 25 February which will contribute to the Education Bill in the first session of the next Parliament.

14. I am sending copies of this minute to the Secretaries of State for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and also to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for the Environment, who were involved in some of our earlier discussions.

KB
Department of Education and Science

24 March 1987

ANNEX A

Legislation

1. The necessary legislation would have the following main provisions.

2. First:

(a) it would list the subjects which the Secretary of State for Education and Science could require to be taught to pupils aged 5-16 - and perhaps allow the list to be amended by regulations requiring affirmative resolutions in both Houses;

(b) empower the Secretary of State to prescribe by order, subject to negative resolution in both Houses, which of the subjects on the list should be included in the 5-16 secular curriculum of maintained schools, and the minimum time to be allocated to the study of each;

(c) empower him, also by order subject to negative resolution, to prescribe in respect of any such subject:

(1) lists of attainments which schools should promote in their pupils by specified ages and in accordance with their abilities ("attainment lists").

(2) a statement of the content of what pupils are required to study - and where appropriate the order in which items should be studied - and the teaching approaches to be used, eg the required emphasis on written, oral and practical work, the balance between didactic and problem-solving approaches, and grouping by ability, in order to achieve the targets specified in the attainment lists.

3. The list of subjects in respect of which Orders could be made would extend only to the foundation curriculum. Other subjects would not be prescribed. The ages to which the attainment lists would relate could vary between subjects but would normally be 7, 11, 14 and 16. The attainment lists for age 16 would be based on the GCSE criteria. The statements of content would be in blocks related to these ages eg 5-7, 7-11, 11-14, 14-16, the last being based on the GCSE syllabuses. In most subjects there must be perhaps two or three overlapping programmes for each block to ensure that all pupils are stretched in accordance with their ability. Schools would be free to devise courses within the programmes - we must give scope to good heads and good teachers and direction to those who need to become better. The statements would be published and made available to every parent perhaps at a small charge. Parents will receive the right under the 1986 Act to be told by their child's teachers what the child is doing year by year. Targets and statements would be reviewed periodically and new Orders made.

Would this also give scope to bad teachers and bad heads!

4. Second, the Bill would require the Secretary of State, before making an Order as in para 2 above, to consult all concerned, including the local authority and teacher associations, and bodies representing industry and commerce, about the proposed content of the Order and to report the outcome of these consultations to Parliament when he makes the Order. The Secretary of State could base the proposed content of an Order on the advice of a committee which he set up for the subject.

5. The requirement for statutory consultations and the Order-making procedure would provide some check on the Secretary of State's power to determine the national curriculum but leave its ultimate determination in his hands. Given the concerns of many of our supporters we would do well to consider adding, as a further check, a requirement on the Secretary of State to use his Order-making powers in relation to statements of content or attainment targets

only after also considering the advice of a statutory advisory body, appointed by him, which contained respected people from the education service, industry and commerce.

6. Third, the Bill would require LEAs, governors, and headteachers to comply with the prescribed statements of content in 2(2) above in exercising their functions in relation to the secular curriculum. It would probably be necessary to adjust the present distribution of these functions under the 1986 Act and to amend school articles of government accordingly.

7. Fourth, the Bill would empower the Secretary of State to make regulations:

(1) requiring LEAs and schools to arrange for tests and assessments to establish how pupils at the ages to which attainment lists relate performed on the items in the lists.

(2) Specifying the testing and assessment arrangements required.

(3) Specifying how the results of tests and assessments must be published.

8. The Secretary of State would entrust the supervision of the arrangements to a body or bodies responsible to him and operating under his general direction - for example the Secondary Examinations Council. It is essential to assess pupil performance against every item in an attainment list, to ensure that they have been taught the essentials and to monitor their grasp of them. Not everything in the statements of content will lend itself to formal testing and assessment, but there will need to be tests at the end of each syllabus - say at age 11 for the 7-11 period - and

also assessments based on coursework - portfolios or design projects, for example, towards the end of the period eg in the last year of primary school for the 7-11 period. The tests would be set externally, using tests developed by such bodies as the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). They would be marked by the teachers, as would the assessments of coursework, but both would be externally moderated. We must keep the testing operation to a manageable scale so as not to encroach on time needed for teaching. The marks or grades awarded would have to be on a clearly understood scale. There would be published descriptions of what each mark or grade meant in relation to the statement of content. The structure must be devised so as to encourage pupils of all abilities to achieve the best of which they are capable. The results should be published in such a form that LEAs and the public could compare the performance of schools, schools could compare theirs with that of other schools, and parents could know broadly how their child had performed in relation to the others in the class, and to all children locally and nationally.

9. Fifth, the Bill would require the Secretary of State's approval to all public examinations taken at school. It would make no sense for him to control the arrangements for the national tests and assessments at age 7, 11, 14 and 16 without having a corresponding control over, for example, the GCSE and A levels and their standards. The latter control would be exercised via the Secondary Examinations Council which already has the function of supervising the work of the GCSE examining groups and the GCE Boards in relation to A levels, including the approval of syllabuses for these examinations. But that function is not at present statutory and the Bill would make it so.

10. The legislation would not extend to independent schools. But the Secretary of State would expect such schools broadly to follow the national foundation curriculum as a condition

of being registered and allowed to operate as a school under the 1944 Act. He would also apply the national foundation curriculum to CTCs and schools which opted to be maintainted by him. Independent schools, CTCs and opted out schools would be able to take part in the arrangements for testing and assessing performance in the national foundation curriculum.

ANNEX B

Time-table

	Legislation	Statements of content	Testing
Early April 1987	Begin work on Bill	Announce decision to set up working groups (WGs) to advise on national statements of content and attainment targets 5-7, 7-11, 11-14, 14-16 in maths and science.	Start compilation of register of agencies capable of developing tests.
May 1987		Announce membership of maths and science WGs	
July 1987 onwards		Set up WGs in English, history, geography, foreign languages, technology, music, and art.	
August 1987		Interim report from maths and science WGs.	

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	Legislation	Statements of content	Testing
November 1987 (assuming this is start of next Parliament)	Introduce Bill		
March 1988		Kingman Committee reports	
May 1988		Maths and Science WGs report. Non-statutory consultations on these reports begin.	Work on devising tests for maths and science begins.
July 1988		English WG reports and non-statutory consultations on it begin.	Work on devising tests for English begins.
October 1988	Bill enacted		
November 1988		Initiate statutory consultations on first tranche of subjects ie those on which early WGs have reported, including, maths, science and English.	Establish new machinery for testing and assessment and for school examinations.

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	Legislation	Statements of content	Testing
February 1989	Make Orders prescribing attainment targets and statements of content for first tranche of subjects.	Initiate statutory consultations on second tranche of subjects ie those on which later WGs have reported.	
September 1989		First tranche of subjects begin to be taught as prescribed.	Promulgate tests and assessments for first tranche of subjects.
October 1989	Make Order prescribing attainment targets and statements of content for second tranche or subjects.		
July 1990			First assessments and tests relating to first tranche of subjects.

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Legislation	Statements of content	Testing
September 1990	Second tranche of subjects begin to be taught as prescribed.	Promulgate tests and assessment for second tranche of subjects.
July 1991		First assessments and tests relating to second tranche of subjects.

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Annex C

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Secretary of State's National Curriculum Statement

1. At the North of England Conference in January I said that the time had come to move rapidly to a national school curriculum. This proposition has received public discussion. The Government now intends to start the necessary action with the help of the education service and its customers.

2. Our joint aim is to raise standards of achievement in our schools. It cannot be secured without a curriculum that develops the potential of every pupil and prepares all for the challenging responsibilities of adult life and employment in tomorrow's world. Many of our schools offer such a curriculum, though not always to all their pupils. But many offer something less good.

3. The Government believes that this is no longer acceptable. All parents are obliged by law to get their children efficiently educated for the 11 compulsory years. The school system has to provide a good enough curriculum to enable every parent to discharge that duty. But the duty of the parent is also the right of the child. Every pupil is entitled to a good curriculum that also suits his personal needs. Like other rights it can be guaranteed only if it is required and enforceable by law. That is the principle on which the Government now intends to stand.

4. The Government wants the national curriculum to be as good as the best minds in the country can make it. The level of attainment to be aimed at and the content of what is taught should reflect the best practice of our good schools. The duties placed on the schools should leave full scope for good teaching, and for the English tradition that

teachers use their professional talents and flair to adapt the work to each pupil and to develop new approaches as new needs arise without waiting for a signal from on high.

5. But two aspects of the English tradition have outlived their usefulness. First, we can no longer leave individual teachers, schools, or LEAs, to decide the curriculum children should follow. It is no longer acceptable that many children have a much less good curriculum than others through the accident of where they happen to go to school.

6. Second, it is quite wrong that hardly anyone knows with any clarity or in any detail what the schools are trying to do for their pupils. Those who use and pay for school education are entitled to know what the schools seek to teach and how well they succeed in teaching it. Once that is known, schools can be judged fairly. They can no longer be condemned for failure in a task which has not been specified, as often happens now. They can then protect the essentials of the curriculum against the demands of this or that vested interest to add yet another item to an already over-loaded curriculum.

7. A clear definition of the curriculum of every school has other advantages. The school itself has clear objectives, so that all staff know where they are and what is expected of them. Pupils are motivated by clear expectations and parents, employers and the public know better how to give effective support to the school. A good curriculum attracts commitment all round. That commitment in turn promotes high standards of achievement.

8. The Government intends to legislate early in the next Parliament to establish a good national curriculum brought about by the cooperative efforts of the education service

and its customers. My aim is that when the Secretary of State lays down the national curriculum, he will not be imposing his will but giving effect to a broad national consensus.

9. The Government's aim is to make sure that pupils in our ordinary schools, and as far as possible also in our special schools, have a broad and well-balanced foundation curriculum suitable to their abilities and aptitudes which during the compulsory period includes not only maths and English, but also science, a foreign language, history, geography, technology in its various aspects, music, art and physical education. Religious education is covered by the 1944 Act.

10. I have talked about the curriculum in layman's language. I am concerned with its range, not with its organisation in the schools. I am not out for example to prescribe subject time-tabling to primary schools. I also recognise that the list of essential subjects which I have just set out does not describe a school curriculum. For example, it does not mention essential parts of the curriculum, such as health education, which are not usually taught or learnt as separate subjects. It does not mention choice of additional subjects at age 14-16. It does not say that teaching approaches should emphasise oral and practical work and be properly related to pupils' experience and expectations outside school. It does not refer to the personal qualities, attitudes and values which are required for a worthwhile and useful life in our open and multi-ethnic society.

11. A foundation curriculum does its work only if it helps pupils to attain a good standard in every part of it in accordance with their abilities. The Government intends to set challenging attainment targets in the various subjects of the foundation curriculum for key ages - 7, 11, 14 and 16 are the obvious ages for most subjects. These targets

should allow for variations in ability. They should encourage and support a broad approach to teaching and learning throughout each of the age-blocks which precede them. They should relate to skills and understanding as well as to knowledge. They would be used to define the main elements of the national curricula for each subject, extending and amplifying the approach established for many 14-16 courses through the GCSE criteria.

12. The targets and subject curricula would be published. Everyone, including parents and employers, would know what schools were required to aim at, and in broad terms what ground they were required to cover. I emphasise the words "in broad terms". I do not believe that subject curricula should be prescribed in detail. Teachers must have scope to apply broadly defined requirements to the needs of their pupils and to local circumstances. They must have scope for exercising imagination, for experiment, and for responding quickly to new challenges as they arise. But all this should take place within a set framework, known to all, intelligible to all, and as far as possible broadly acceptable to all.

13. Having decided what should be learnt, we need to assess pupils' performance in relation to the attainment targets. Those attainments which can be tested will be tested at the key ages. But we do not want teachers to teach only what is testable, as happened too often with the old 11-plus examinations. So it will be essential also to assess work done in class at the key ages. The tests might be national, but marked by the teachers. The assessments would fall to the teachers. Both would be externally moderated. There is no question of passing some pupils, and failing others, but rather of monitoring their progress towards defined targets as a guide to action by their teachers, their parents and themselves.

14. The far-reaching changes planned by the Government pose a professional task which is large, complex and vitally important. Some of the groundwork has been done, notably in the professional discussions stimulated by successive HMI documents, including the discussion papers in the "Curriculum Matters" series. The next step is a more concentrated distillation of professional and lay expertise and wisdom.

15. I plan to appoint a number of very strong working groups to advise on suitable attainment targets and broadly described and flexible curricula in the subjects of the national foundation curriculum. Their reports will serve as the focus for statutory consultation before attainment targets and subject curricula are specified in legislation. I intend to start by setting up, as soon after Easter as possible, a working group on maths and an working group on science. Both groups will be thoroughly professional and small enough to work effectively and will reflect the main interests within and outside the education service who have an essential contribution to make. I shall ask the groups to give priority to the primary phase which has so far received less attention than the secondary phase.

16. The Government now has a plan for getting right what our children learn at school - an urgent and vital task. We intend to call on all concerned to help us accomplish it. I invite them to discuss these plans. After these discussions I propose to send a further memorandum to the Committee.

CF FLAP PT 6
pps pse
24/3

PRIME MINISTER

19 March 1987

Tertiary Colleges

I enclose a note on tertiary colleges which I have just received from the Research Department. There are five schemes for establishing tertiary colleges before the Secretary of State and a sixth is to be put soon. There seems to be strong resistance to this idea among parents on the grounds that standards could well fall.

This was an issue you tackled in part a year ago in response to an article from "Good Housekeeping" sent by Bob Dunn.

Recommendations

1. It would be useful if the Secretary of State knew your general views on this subject, even though he will argue that he has to judge each proposal on its merits: the previous correspondence was with Keith Joseph.

2. Might it be an idea to have a sentence or so in your Central Council speech on the subject - linking standards with choice? I have added a few sentences to the new draft of the education section.

Good mr

BG.

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

TERTIARY COLLEGES

Summary

1. Tertiary Colleges are for the 16-19s and provide teaching for A-levels, vocational subjects and a variety of part-time courses. They usually replace existing 6th forms.

2. There are now 5 proposals for tertiary schemes before the Secretary of State. Another will shortly be submitted by ILEA. Many other local authorities are positively considering schemes.

3. While the case for can be made on the grounds of concentrating resources in view of falling rolls, the case against is strong. Tertiary schemes will destroy flourishing 6th form colleges of proven excellence and undermine the quality of 11-18 colleges by removing their 6ths.

4. Labour supports tertiary reorganisation. The Alliance also does in principle.

5. The government has indicated that each proposal will be considered on its individual merits.

6. A more definite statement that the government will protect all 6th forms of proven excellence would be popular with many - especially parents and teachers. It might give the party a definite advantage in some marginals (see Appendix 2, Cambridge).

Conservative Research Department
32 Smith Square, London SW1

SL/JLS
19.3.87.

TERTIARY COLLEGES

There are 35 tertiary colleges in the country which provide post-16 vocational, technical and academic education (on subjects from 'beauty care' to A-level physics). The tertiaries go back to 1970 and vary in size. Plans for tertiary often (though not invariably) involve the closure of 6th form colleges, and the removal of 6th forms from 11-18 schools, to be subsumed into 16-19 tertiaries.

LEGISLATIVE PROVISION

Section 12 of the 1980 Act provides that where a local authority intends to close, alter the character of, or open a school it must

- publish its proposals and allow 2 months for objections
- submit to the Secretary of State, within a month, the proposals, together with copies of objections and observations on the objections

The Secretary of State may approve, accept, reject the proposals with or without modification.

THE CASE FOR AND AGAINST

The case for tertiary colleges - in its least contentious form - is made on the grounds that education for post-16s should be reorganised so as to concentrate resources, particularly in the light of falling rolls.

The case against is made on the grounds that:

1) It undermines diversity and choice for parents. Many are hostile to the removal of 6th forms or destruction of 6th form colleges.

2) Academic standards, morale and the aspirations of schools deprived of the 6th will be undermined. Good teachers wishing to continue with 6th forms will have to move to tertiary - depriving 11-16s of their services. This is especially worrying for maths, physics and shortage subjects.

3) It can be questioned whether the ethos of a tertiary college will be as conducive to study as a traditional school or 6th form. There is a danger that standards of the more able pupils will be undermined and diluted. At an impressionable age they will be subject to the views of young people who are indifferent (if not hostile) to academic subjects. Moreover pupils may be tempted to abandon such subjects as maths, physics, languages for 'beauty care' or 'leisure'.

4) Many 16+ pupils do need both the individual and general discipline of a school or 6th form (even if it appears lax) and would suffer from the arrangements and laxness of an 'adult' tertiary college.

5) Capital costs involved in reorganisation are enormous. (Present ILEA plan for only 3 divisions estimated at approximately £30 million or more; these would, in addition, lead to additional revenue costs in servicing the debt. Cambridge scheme still at a very early stage - was mooted at £2 m, now estimated at upwards of £22 million).

6) A number of 6th-form colleges of outstanding quality - some of the great successes of the maintained sector - would be destroyed.

POLITICAL PARTIES

While the case for the tertiary often tends to be made on non-partisan, practical grounds (those of concentrating resources and accommodating falling numbers), its most committed protagonists tend to see in tertiary the removal of elitism: trainee hairdressers and plumbers will mix with 6th-form physicists and lead to 'truly' comprehensive non-elitist society - the egalitarian ideal. Both the Labour Party and the Alliance support. tertiary - Labour unreservedly; and the Alliance as the ideal - to be introduced wherever possible.

* The Labour Party Conference (1986) voted for the removal of 6th forms in schools and for the abolition of 6th form colleges and in their places the creation of 'a new tertiary sector for all 16-19 year olds under further education regulations' (LC 56:III).

* The Alliance document The Time Has Come (January 1987) states: 'We are opposed to divisions at age 16 ... we favour a unified approach to post-16 provision, and tertiary colleges, provided that local conditions allow' (p.91).

The Conservatives rate each case for tertiary on its own merits; and have supported the setting up of some tertiary colleges - but not invariably. The Secretary of State (who has the ultimate power to accept, reject or modify proposals) takes into account the views of all concerned, the quality of the school and whether that quality is likely to be maintained. At the moment 5 proposals are under consideration. Mr Baker has made it clear that he intends to look at each case on its own merits and has made no general statement in favour or against tertiary.

AN ELECTION ISSUE

A clear statement of support for good schools with 6th forms threatened by tertiary schemes could be electorally advantageous particularly given the strong feelings of parents and teachers. At the moment five schemes are before the Secretary of State. He will look at each case on its own merit, rather than make any general statement beyond alluding to the quality of the school and the need to maintain it. A stronger statement is needed to reassure parents and teachers:

1) in those areas where proposals are under consideration by the Secretary of State - or about to go to him (e.g. ILEA, see Appendix 1)

2) throughout the country where many authorities are mooting schemes with the object of driving them through regardless (e.g. Cambridge, Appendix 2).

If the Prime Minister could say something definite in defence of good 6th forms and 6th form colleges - as she did on the grammars - it would reassure and win votes. If the Conservative Party were the only party pledged to maintain existing excellent schools - it might have an effect on marginals (e.g. Cambridge). This need not commit the Party to opposing tertiary where existing schools would not suffer.

SHEILA LAWLOR
Conservative Research Department,
32 Smith Square, London SW1

SL/JLS
19.3.87.

APPENDIX 1

The ILEA is thought to want to introduce tertiary colleges into all its divisions. While the ILEA Information Office says that the authority will look at the case for tertiary, division by division, in private members say that they are determined to put tertiary through. At the moment definite schemes have been set out for 3 divisions

Islington (Division 3)

Hackney (Division 4)

Tower Hamlets (Division 5)

These schemes would affect 30 schools at a cost of approximately £30 million.

The scheme is now at stage 2 - the two month period for objections following the publication of proposals. This stage will close on 23 March. The ILEA must then forward their plans, together with comments, to the Secretary of State. The scheme as it relates to the Islington division would result in taking away the 6th form from Highbury Grove and Highbury Fields - both of which have good results, parental support and allow for parental choice. (The 6th form where both schools co-operate is one of the few which continue to teach the classics). The other 6thsin Islington are part of a 6th form centre - the embryo tertiary.

SL
CRD
19.3.87.

APPENDIX 2

CAMBRIDGE

At the moment A-level provision in Cambridge is provided in:

Two 6th form colleges (Hills Road/Long Road)

Two 11-18 schools (Impington/Netherhall)

One College of Arts and Technology (CCAT)

There is also one College of Further Education but it does not offer A-level courses.

The 'Review of 16-19 Education in the Cambridge Area' proposes two schemes for reorganising 16-19 : either

1) A full tertiary system with two tertiary colleges operating under F.E. regulations.
2) A mixed system with one 6th form college (formed by amalgamating the present one) and further education provision with both expanded.

Note: Whichever is adopted the 6th forms at the schools would be kept as would the CCAT.

A full tertiary school would involve closing the 6th form colleges - a nonsense, particularly given the excellence of Hills Road 6th form college.

Hills Road 6th form college is one of the great successes of maintained schools.

- A-level results for November 1985/June 1986 were
  * 92.5 per cent pass rate
  * 50 per cent of passes at grades A or B
  * 42 per cent of all candidates gained at least one grade A
  * 2.7 is the average number of passes
- Each year over 100 pupils go onto degree courses in universities and polytechnics (this year 33 to Oxford or Cambridge)

  The school could easily expand the number of students and the variety of courses offered - particularly technology and business courses.

The tertiary proposals for Cambridge are supported by the Labour group. The Alliance says that it would keep a 6th form college by amalgamating the two existing ones. The collegiate board - (heads of the 6) - favours a single 6th form, an improved F.E. college, the maintenance of the existing 6ths in the 11-18 schools.

- It is not clear that the Alliance can be trusted to leave matters at that, whatever they say. In a marginal seat the Conservatives could make it clear that they are the only party determined to preserve the high quality 6th form colleges.

SL
CRD
19.3.87.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

VC

bc BG

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

13 March 1987

Dear Bob,

BETTER SCHOOLS: CURRICULUM

I should record that since the Prime Minister's discussion with your Secretary of State about the curriculum on 4 March the Prime Minister has once or twice referred to her wish that substantial progress should be made before the end of this Parliament in defining and setting the curriculum and syllabuses, in the terms discussed with your Secretary of State, for children aged up to 7. (My letter to you recording that meeting referred only to the need for the proposed Committees on Mathematics and Science to produce within three months of their being created interim reports on children of primary age. The Kingman Committee would, by implication, be expected to work to the same or an earlier timetable.)

You will wish to bear this in mind.

I am copying this letter to Robin Young (Department of the Environment), Allex Allan (HM Treasury) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours,

David.

DAVID NORGROVE

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

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Coleman
Mr Chamier
Mr Stuart
Mr Nagan
Mr Wilkinson
Mr Gamble
Mr Holmes
Mr Syme
Mr Sheridan
Mr Hardyman

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

FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY
Sir David Hancock KCB

D H Fisher Esq
Chairman of Finance Committee
University College
PO Box 78
Cardiff CF1 1XL

12 March 1987

Dear Mr. Fisher,

Thank you for your letter of 4 March reporting on developments in response to my letters to Sir William Crawshay of 3 and 24 February.

2. I am grateful for the account you have given of the organisational changes now implemented, and for confirmation of the work undertaken by the teams led by Mr Shattock and Mr Gardiner. These represent an encouraging start, and I agree that the College has now discharged the conditions set in paragraph 2 of my letter of 3 February. I have therefore authorised the resumption of UGC grant payments in respect of the College.

3. As I said in my letter of 24 February, I remain deeply concerned about the College's liabilities. I understand that a financial plan is being prepared in the College for discussion with the UGC monitoring group. I recognise that it will take a little time to develop the present outline into a detailed plan and, in particular, to relate it to a coherent academic programme for the College. But, as I know that you recognise, decisions cannot long be delayed. I should therefore be grateful to have from you by the end of this month a statement of the intended timetable for advancing the College's financial and academic plans to the stage where they can be implemented. At the same time, I should be grateful for confirmation that a full budgetary control system will be in place by the end

4. In paragraphs 4 and 5 of my letter of 3 February I set two further conditions for the payment of future instalments of grant: namely a review of the College's Financial Management and Information Systems and of the staffing of the Bursar's office; and the receipt of adequate monitoring information by the UGC. These conditions still stand. I trust that, in the further report I have requested in paragraph 3 above, you will also be able to give me an account of your timetable in respect of the financial management and staffing review.

5. I am copying this letter to Sir William Crawshay, Lord Cledwyn, Lord Elwyn-Jones, Professor Cannon, Sir Peter Baxendell and Dr Kemp.

Yours sincerely,

David Hencot.

Mr Coleman
Mr Chamier
Mr Stuart
Mr Ragan
Mr Wilkinson
Mr Gamble
Mr Holmes
Mr Syme
Mr Sheridan
Mr Hardyman

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

FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY
Sir David Hancock KCB

D H Fisher Esq
Chairman of Finance Committee
University College
PO Box 78
Cardiff CF1 1XL

12 March 1987

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Yours sincerely,

David Hencock.

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. A087/702

PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet: Home Affairs

The Home and Social Affairs Committee (H) this morning approved the White Paper on higher education that the Secretary of State for Education and Science proposes to publish on about 2 April. The White Paper was warmly welcomed by H Committee, subject to some slight revisions to accommodate points taken by the Chief Secretary. The Lord President has it in mind to report this very briefly under Item 2 tomorrow and, given the large membership of H Committee, I do not think that any substantial discussion is needed.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

11 March 1987

CONFIDENTIAL

BRIAAU

Copied to
HOME AFFAIRS:
Civil Legal Aid: Pt 2

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER 2

10 March 1987

'H'

We attach two notes. Firstly, a note of today's meeting and secondly, a resumé of the legal aid scrutiny memorandum from the Lord Chancellor, which will be discussed soon by 'H'.

HARTLEY BOOTH

10 March 1987

A HIGHER EDUCATION -H(87)6.

Kenneth Baker introduced his White Paper which deals with the future of Polytechnics, the Croham Report and higher education into the 1990's.

(i) The Secretary of State wanted to firmly and specifically state in the paper that it was the Government's intention to increase the proportion of 18 year olds going on to higher education in the 1990's to 18.5%. This was necessary because of the fall in the number of 18 year olds in the next 5-10 years. It was a compromise figure between the Treasury's desire to raise the student participation rate by less and Industry's desire to see much larger numbers of trained scientists.

After lengthy discussion it was decided that Kenneth Baker should try and reach a form of agreed wording with the Treasury which toned down his specific aim.

(ii) It was agreed that in future polytechnics should have funding contracts rather than grants.

(iii) Despite Lord Croham's vehement insistence that there should be triennial funding for the 29 polytechnics, the consensus supported the Treasury. Nevertheless, it was agreed that Lord Croham should speak to John MacGregor and Kenneth Baker directly.

B REMANDS IN CUSTODY

Douglas Hurd's paper posed a compromise on remands in custody. Now he is suggesting that there is a new maximum

period for remands in custody of 28 days, but that this is only to be possible after the second remand. Also, he is proposing the safeguard that during that 28 days the remanded prisoner should have the right to apply to a court. The savings suggested in his earlier proposal have probably been reduced by this compromise from about 3½ to £1¾ million. With some reluctance, the Committee agreed with this solution.

C PROFESSIONAL NEGLIGENCE

Paul Channon wants to protect the professionals who cannot get insurance or who find it too expensive. Often company auditors are asked to carry the financial can for business management failure The Lord Chancellor thought that DTI were hitting the wrong target and was keen that the victim should be protected. Nicholas Ridley thought that both should be regarded as part of the problem.

Paul Channon wanted an enquiry. Lord Advocate said that in Scotland, Law Commission was doing useful work on this and related questions. It was decided that the Lord Chancellor would handle this in the forthcoming debate in the House of Lords next week and that he should stall the debate.

THE RESUME OF LEGAL AID SCRUTINY

A Remuneration

1 It is suggested we need to improve Government control over the rates of pay for legal aid work.

2 Chief Secretary takes the view that there should be a simple power for the Lord Chancellor to set rates subject only to the approval of Treasury, and so remove the reference to fair renumeration in the Legal Aid Act.

3 Lord Chancellor prefers to have the duty in setting the rates of legal aid fees to have regard to fair remuneration, but also to take into account other legitimate claims on public funds. This, he feels, would substantially reduce the risk of challenge in the courts, despite the fact that this course would be highly controversial with lawyers.

B "Application fees"

1 The Lord Chancellor is proposing to introduce a fee for all applications to court in civil and criminal matters to deter frivolous applications. This should be a flat fee of £10 for civil and criminal legal aid by way of representation at £5 for legal advice and assistance.

2 This should be refundable where the applicant is ultimately successful.

3 Net of administrative expenses this should yield £8 million per year.

4 This may incur public wrath and a possible challenge in the European Court of Human Rights, but on balance the Lord Chancellor feels he can ride both of these.

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister 2

You may like to be aware that the draft White Paper on Higher Education is to be discussed in H.

The section on polytechnics of course reflects the decisions taken in your meetings.

AJCW
10/3

010

CCBG

OFFICE OF ARTS AND LIBRARIES
Great George Street
London SW1P 3AL
Telephone 01-270 5929

From the Minister for the Arts

C87/1128

The Rt Hon Kenneth Baker MP
Secretary of State for Education and Science
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
London SE1 7PH

9 March 1987

NBPM.

Dear Kenneth,

CROHAM REPORT FOLLOW-UP

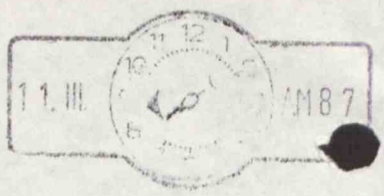
I have been interested to see your letter of 20 February to Tom King enclosing the draft White Paper text on setting up the new Universities Funding Council. WITH DN?

I am particularly interested in paragraph 4.37 since it parallels in many ways the arrangements I am proposing for the Arts Council of Great Britain. I agree with the view that three-year cash guarantees are unsuited to public bodies of this kind; but, equally, I believe we should give them three-year indicative figures, based on the PES settlement, and we have already adopted this practice with the Arts Council, the national museums and galleries and other bodies for which I am responsible. On the same basis I believe it is both necessary and desirable that we should allow them, in turn, to give forward figures to their main clients (in your case the individual universities, in mine major arts bodies such as the Royal Opera House and National Theatre). Further details have yet to be worked out, but I strongly support the principle of offering clients a framework for consistent and responsible management in the medium term.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Tom King, Nicholas Edwards, Norman Fowler, David Young, John MacGregor, Malcolm Rifkind.

Richard

RICHARD LUCE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PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT cc MASTER

file SRW

cc BG

MTG RECORD

BF 2nd PAGE

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

5 March 1987

Dear Robert,

BETTER SCHOOLS

The Prime Minister yesterday held a meeting to discuss the curriculum on the basis of Annex D to your Secretary of State's minute to the Prime Minister of 20 February. There were present your Secretary of State, Mrs. Angela Rumbold, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science, and Professor Brian Griffiths, No.10 Policy Unit.

The Secretary of State said the proposals now under consideration for education reform, which would include the right for schools to opt out of the local authority sector, greater delegation to head teachers and governors and other changes, would amount cumulatively to a revolution. The proposals on the curriculum would be the most revolutionary of all the changes. In order for them to win long term acceptance there would need to be a degree of trans-party support. Even then, it would be insufficient to propose a model curriculum and then not to make it mandatory: with those arrangements quite a number of local education authorities might refuse to adopt the curriculum. His intention now was that children should study a range of foundation subjects which they would carry through until the age of 16. Specialisation would not begin until that age. Attainment levels would be specified and tested at ages 7, 11 and 14 and achievement at those ages would be graded. The tests would be set by outside examining boards.

In discussion, the Prime Minister urged that proposals should be developed first for English, Mathematics and General Science, perhaps at this stage directed only towards children up to the age of 11. Too ambitious an approach would risk delaying change for years to come. It would be enough to set minimum attainment levels, particularly for small children, without attempting to grade attainment. This might be combined with qualitative assessment. There would be a need for remedial education for those children who failed to reach the minimum standard. These proposals should not take long to put into effect: it would be enough to establish best practice based on the experience of a few outstanding schools and then to rely on tests which already existed. The tests could be vetted by the National Foundation for Education Research. It might be necessary for your Secretary of State to take power to withhold grant from local education authorities which failed to follow the prescribed curriculum.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

It was noted that there were arguments against introducing a test at age 14. However, the meeting agreed that to include no test between the age of 11 and GCSE would allow too long a gap and would provide an inadequate target for children at lower levels of ability. Your Secretary of State suggested that grading of attainment would be necessary in order to stretch children of higher ability.

It was agreed that your Secretary of State should create before Easter two committees (which should however not be described as such) to recommend syllabuses in Mathematics and Science between the ages of 5 and 16. These should be directed towards attainment tests at 7, 11 and 14 though the committees would not be expected to specify the tests themselves. The Committees should make suggestions on teaching materials. They should be asked to produce interim reports on children of primary age in order to ensure that action in one area at least could begin as soon as possible. Once these committees had been created, the Kingman Inquiry into the teaching of English should be asked to proceed along the same lines. The secretariat for the committees might be provided by the National Foundation for Education Research.

The Prime Minister has since this meeting asked that the committees should be invited to produce their interim reports within three months of being created. She has also asked that your Secretary of State should prepare a further paper, which need not hold up the proposals mentioned above, to set out in greater detail the way he proposes to proceed on the curriculum and syllabuses, and the detailed timetable he envisages for creation of committees, when they will be expected to report, the consultation period, legislation, and when he expects the changes to have been adopted in schools, both in terms of the teaching and attainment tests.

I attach a list of possible members of the curriculum committees which was brought together by Professor Griffiths.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Alex Allan (HM Treasury), Robin Young (Department of the Environment) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours,
David.

(DAVID NORGROVE)

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

ANNEX B

Curriculum Working Group

Suggested Names	Suggested by
Maths	
Prof S Prais (NIESR) (has done extensive research on the national core curriculum in France, Germany and Japan, and is excellent)	Prof Griffiths
Chairman/member of Examining board (maths teacher)	
Dr Adrian Seville (Registrar, City University)	Prof Griffiths
Peter Jones (Head of Maths, Nottingham Sixth Form College)	
Member of IOD	Sir John Hoskyns
Peter Benton (Chairman of BIM)	
Paul McGee, Chief Inspector of Schools, Croydon (specialist in maths and computing studies, just written an excellent text in maths)	Donald Naismith
Gordon Lees (Lecturer, Crewe & Alsager College of Education)	Miss Bronson Ward

Harry Butcher (maths teacher, Dr Ricketts
Latymer Grammar School,
Edmonton)

Suggested Names	Suggested by
English	
Prof Kingman - Chairman of existing English working party. Chairman/member of Examining board (English)	
Patricia Stoll - (English teacher in North London Comprehensive)	Dr O'Keefe
Donald Stradling - personnel director, John Laing	Prof Griffiths
Richard Hooper, Super Channel	Prof Griffiths
Prof Arthur Pollard (Prof of English at Buckingham, former chief examiner of GCE English and member of Schools Examination Council	Baroness Cox
Jonathan Worthen (English teacher in comprehensive school in Essex: see article on GCSE English - Annex D)	Baroness Cox
Dr Burstall (Director, NFER)	Prof Griffiths
Roy Griffiths, Director of Audio, Oratory School, Brompton	John McIntosh
Angus Graham-Campbell (head of English, Eton) or **Michael Meredith** (English, Eton)	Malcolm Pearson

Mary Fitzgerald (Lecturer, Crewe and Alsager College of Education)

Miss Bronson Ward

Mrs Jill Rattle (head of Regents Park (Comprehensive) School, Southampton

Malcolm Pearson

Other names

Donald Naismith recommends all the following "as people who are convinced that the curriculum should be a planned programme of learning susceptible of demonstrable performance and measurement."

R Scanlon, secondary teacher CDT, Norbury Manor Girls School

Mrs C Philips, head of home economics, Riddlesdown School

Ms Conti, head of Modern Languages, Monks Hill School

Ms P Lewis, Head of Languages (peripatetic) London Borough of Croydon

Miss Smith, head of history at Westwood School

K Beaton, head of maths at Shirley School

Miss Sherwood, head of history, Ingram School

Any of these could clearly be used on other curriculum working party groups.

University College, Cardiff

Postal Address: University College, P.O. Box 78, Cardiff CF1 1XL
Telephone Cardiff ~~44041~~ 87400 Telegrams: Coleg Cardiff

From Mr. D.H. Fisher

~~Department~~ Chairman of Finance Committee.

cc. Mr Bird
Mr. Charnier
Mr. Stuart
Mr. Gamble
Mr. N. Holmes
Mr. Syme.

hab

4th March, 1987.

Sir David Hancock, KCB,
Department of Education and Science,
Elizabeth House,
York Road,
London SE1 7PH

Mr ~~MORGAN~~
We are arranging a meeting to discuss x|.

S. Marston
9/3/87.

Dear Sir David,

University College, Cardiff.

I am writing after consulting the Chairman of Council, Sir William Crawshay, in reply to your letters to him of 3 and 24 February regarding the College's financial condition. First let me say that the College has taken what you have had to say very seriously and I am happy to be able to inform you that the steps you have requested have now been taken. Arising out of paragraph 2 of your letter of 3 February I consulted the Chairman of the UGC and then invited Mr. Michael Shattock, Registrar of the University of Warwick, to form a team of financial managers and accountants. He visited the College from 16 to 18 February to assess the problems and on 20 February he sent me his conclusions. I understand that these conclusions were accepted in principle by the UGC, and your letter of 24 February refers to them. He returned to the College at my inivitation on 2 March with a team of university financial administrators, four of them from Warwick, and this team, augmented by a small team from Ernst Whinney led by Mr. Michael Gardiner, expects to produce a draft Financial Plan which will be considered by our new Planning and Resources Committee on 11 March before submission to the Finance Committee. We regard this new Committee, which I shall chair,as crucial to the strategic planning of the College for the difficult period which lies ahead. Mr. Shattock has accepted my invitation to advise on the review of the College's Financial Management and Information Systems and the staffing of the Bursar's office, in each case drawing on the expertise within the university system as well as from Ernst Whinney.

On 2 March another important step was taken when the Principal, Dr. Bevan, signed a statement delegating responsibility for all financial matters and the day to day operations of the College to a Deputy Principal. I attach a copy

of the statement together with a covering note from me, written with the agreement of the Chairman of Council, appointing Professor Sheridan to act in the place of the Principal. He has now taken up these duties and on his recommendation the College has approved a policy of freezing all vacancies and taking urgent action to terminate, if it can, the overgenerous early retirement arrangements previously entered into with 29 members of the academic and academic-related staff. These are first steps towards taking a secure hold on the College's expenditure. The question of budgetary control at the technical level is being investigated by Mr. Shattock's team and by Ernst Whinney's and I expect recommendations from them on this shortly as a part of their wider review of our financial systems. You may rest assured that as Chairman of the Finance Committee I will see that they are implemented.

By the end of this week I shall receive a draft Financial Plan. As soon as the Plan has been approved on 11 March a copy will be sent to the UGC and we shall proceed to draw up an Academic Plan to fit the new financial projections. The next step will be the report to the UGC on the College's financial systems and the staffing of the Bursar's Office, which as I have said above, Mr. Shattock now has in hand. I am discussing Mr. Shattock's report arising from his first visit to the College with Professor Sheridan who will be in a position to report on the implementation of the recommendations when he meets the UGC Monitoring Group on 12 March. One last and important organisational change has also taken place: the Bursar, Mr. Harris, has resigned his appointment and we have invited the former Bursar, Mr. Starke, who is a qualified accountant, to resume the post on a temporary basis until a new Finance Officer can be appointed. This will ensure that we have an experienced and respected financial manager heading the Bursar's Office and will do much, I believe, to restore confidence within the College.

X/ I hope you will agree that the College has now taken the necessary drastic steps towards putting its house in order which will enable you to release the next instalment of our recurrent grant immediately. A decision on this matter is now urgent both in order to satisfy the outside world as well as to allay fears within the College. We fully recognise that these steps are only a first stage but we are now confident that the College will be able, under Professor Sheridan's leadership, to face up to the difficult decisions which will be required to meet its financial liabilities and to bring its finances back into balance.

Yours sincerely,

Dudley Fisher.

Copy to: Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer, Chairman of the UGC.

Enc.

University College, Cardiff

Postal Address: University College, P.O. Box 78, Cardiff CF1 1XL
Telephone Cardiff ~~44001~~ 87400 Telegrams: Coleg Cardiff

From Mr. D.H. Fisher

~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ Chairman of Finance Committee.

cc. Mr Bird
Mr. Charnier
Mr. Stuart
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Mr. N. Holmes
Mr. Syme.

hab

4th March, 1987.

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Department of Education and Science,
Elizabeth House,
York Road,
London SE1 7PH

Mr ~~Morgan~~
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Yours sincerely,

Dudley Fisher.

Copy to: Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer, Chairman of the UGC.

Enc.

VRD16AM03

cc BG
BI

Prime Minister 2

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE YORK ROAD LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-934 9000

FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE

P A Bearpark Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1A 2AA

4 March 1987

Dear Andy

RUSKIN COLLEGE: ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The Prime Minister asked for a progress report (Part 10) after seeing my Secretary of State's minute of 10 November.

The case of Mr David Selbourne is now the subject of legal proceedings which may not be resolved for some time. Mr Walden has continued to press the College strongly on the broader question of its commitment to academic and intellectual freedom. The College's Academic Advisers have produced a Paper on Academic Freedom and Tutorial Responsibility. This statement has subsequently been endorsed in general terms by the College's Executive Committee.

The Academic Advisers' Paper is unsatisfactory for the reasons explained in the attached letter from Mr Walden to the Principal of the College. It is not an impressive document, and has been criticised in the press. At one point it suggests, in effect, that anyone in the College with unorthodox views should watch his step.

Mr Walden has now therefore invited the Vice-Chancellor of Essex University, Dr Albert Sloman, to lead a team of three to make a special inspection of the College, and to make recommendations on how to secure academic freedom there. Mr Walden intends to make an announcement of the inspection within the next few days. Legal advice is that there would be no conflict between such an inspection, reporting in confidence if necessary to the Secretary of State, and the separate pursuit of the Selbourne case.

In general, Mr Walden believes that we should maintain pressure on Ruskin. It is a particularly bad example of the academic illiberalism that is surfacing in some of our higher education institutions, and the Government must show determination to ensure the freedom of expression, within the law, of academic staff and

students. Ministers will need to be satisfied that Ruskin College, like the other long term residential adult education colleges, is being properly conducted if it is to continue to receive grants from public funds. If the inspection is unsatisfactory, and the College fails to adjust its attitudes on academic freedom, Mr Walden believes that we should reconsider the present arrangements for funding the College.

I am copying this letter to Andrew Lansley (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office).

Yours ever

Cathy

MISS C M ROBERTS
Private Secretary

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

FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE

J Hughes Esq
Principal
Ruskin College
Oxford OX1 2HE

3 March 1987

Dear Mr Hughes,

I have been reflecting on our discussion last Tuesday, 24 February. I am grateful to you and your colleagues, and to the Chairman of the Executive Committee and Dr MacFarlane, for setting out your position. But I remain unconvinced by the College's stance on academic and individual freedom.

The centre of my concern is the paper prepared by the College's Academic Advisers. Its initial affirmation of academic freedom is in effect eroded by qualifications based on the "feelings" or "convictions" of individuals, and on "other values". Paragraphs 17 and 18 seem to suggest that tutors should observe self-imposed constraints in order not to go beyond what some within the College may consider to be acceptable. Some passages could even be interpreted as having a minatory flavour. I am surprised to find such language in a document purporting to under-pin the principle of the intellectual freedom of the individual.

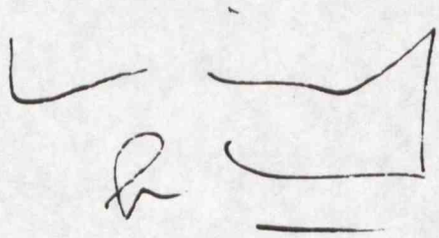
The statement from the Executive Committee is based on the Academic Advisers' Paper, and in general terms endorses it, as does your letter to me of 10 February. Your letter also implies that academic freedom may be circumscribed by ill-defined and emotive concepts such as "racism" and "sexism". In these circumstances, whatever procedural adjustments may be made within the College to deal with grievances, I do not have confidence that academic freedom will in practice predominate.

As I said at our meeting, I do not seek to question the educational and social purposes of Ruskin College. I believe that it is in the interests of the College, just as it is the duty of the Government, to clarify the present situation on academic freedom. I have therefore in mind to ask a qualified, independent person, who has no existing connections with the College, to lead an inspection into this aspect of the College's work.

The procedure which I propose would be an inspection within the terms of Regulation 24(2) of the Education (Grant) regulations 1983 to be carried out by a person authorised by the Secretary of State for that purpose. The person concerned would report to the Secretary of State. He would also be asked to make recommendations as to the principles that should apply in Ruskin College (if not applied already) with regard to academic freedom and the means that should be adopted (if not adopted already) for ensuring that those principles are put into practice. I would of course keep you informed both of the content of the report and any recommendations arising out of it.

If you have any comments on this proposal, I should be grateful if you could let me have them within the next few days.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Chairman of the College's Executive Committee.



GEORGE WALDEN

EDUCATION : Policy : PE12



CONFIDENTIAL

CCBG

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

The Rt Hon Kenneth Baker MP
Secretary of State for
Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON
SE1

NRBM.

4 March 1987

Dear Secretary of State,

CROHAM REPORT/HE WHITE PAPER

I am replying to your letter of 20 February in which you asked for my comments on your proposed response to Croham and on the draft of the second part of Chapter IV of the proposed White Paper.

I am broadly content with your proposal to accept the general thrust of the principal recommendations of Croham which you outlined in paragraph 2(i) to (iii). The advantage of settling these important issues at this stage should lie in indicating more precisely those aspects on which comment will be welcomed and, thereby, focussing the responses. I am also in agreement with the suggestion that the White Paper might react to the three Croham recommendations which are set out in paragraph 4. In particular, while I acknowledge the gap which Croham identifies in our ability to determine overall national needs, I do not believe that an Education Commission such as Croham recommends is likely to be able to function efficiently or to reach sensible conclusions on the profusion of areas which would fall under its scrutiny. Nonetheless, I can see that you would not wish to react negatively, at least in the first instance, to that proposal. The form of words in the relevant paragraph of the draft Chapter (4.40) seems about right.

I do, however, have some difficulty in reacting to what is proposed in paragraph 3 of your letter, not because of any fundamental divergence of view, but because the implications are not sufficiently clear. I cannot, for example, assess what form the

contracts might take, or how the institution's delivery of its contractual obligations can be monitored. How will contracts differ as between different institutions? Will they include all aspects of an institution's provision? Because of these uncertainties, I cannot judge how important it is to change the UGC to the UFC. Is there, perhaps, a danger that by emphasising the 'Grants' or 'Funding' function that this will predominate to the detriment of other important functions such as the planning and co-ordinating of provision? If so, there may be a case for seeking a less specific descriptor, or for a more neutral title such as Universities' Council. This is, perhaps, a matter on which officials could consult as, I would suggest, is the detail of the wording of the draft Chapter.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Nicholas Edwards, Norman Fowler, David Young, John MacGregor, Malcolm Rifkind, Paul Channon, Richard Luce and Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely,

A.C. Maggish

TK

Approved by the Secretary of State and signed in his absence in Northern Ireland

EDUCATION · Policy : Pt 12



CC/STUP

PRIME MINISTER

3 March 1987

National School Curriculum - A Way Forward

At the Strategy Group meeting on Monday you asked for action on the curriculum. The following is one possible way forward. It will meet a fierce and sustained attack from the teaching profession, HMI, teacher training institutions, education theorists and teacher unions. It will also present the Secretary of State with some problems. Nevertheless in my judgement it is what parents clearly want.

Curriculum Working Groups

You need to invite the Secretary of State to set up, as a matter of priority, two Curriculum Working Groups, one for English and one for mathematics. The appeal of these two groups is that they would cover the 3 Rs. Each would have a fairly small membership (say 8 at the most) consisting of teachers, businessmen and parents. They could be launched with a meeting hosted by yourself at No 10; and asked to report within 6 weeks of being set up. Ideally their work would be published as the basis for the way forward.

Terms of Reference

Their terms of reference would be to draw up a national school curriculum in the field of English and maths:

- setting objectives for the curriculum
- establishing a set of syllabuses for each subject

- drawing up a list of recommended textbooks
- specifying levels of attainment at ages 7, 11, 13, 16
- recommending nationwide tests and exams

For English, Kingsley Amis has provided 10 questions which need to be answered by any curriculum working group (see Annex A)

Examining Boards, Tests and the NFER

The curriculum working groups would be required to specify the levels of attainment of pupils at the ages of 7, 11, 13 and 16. These would need to be matched by a national set of examinations which tested pupils knowledge. These examinations could be developed by the existing examination boards. Alternatively the working groups may care to recommend existing tests such as the Neale and Hunter-Grundin tests in reading and the Thameside test in maths, all of which are well regarded.

In addition the National Foundation of Education Research (NFER) has considerable experience in testing. Many of its own tests are highly regarded and because of its national coverage, it has experience at standardising tests across schools as well as relating them to international experiences. This would mean parents could interpret results for their children against a national and international background.

Membership

Membership of the curriculum working groups would be crucial. Suggested names are given in Annex B, including quite a number of teachers. Obtaining further names of reliable teachers is not an insuperable problem.

Objections by the Secretary of State

(a) Need to change GCSE

GCSE was launched at the beginning of this academic year. For teachers it has meant new syllabuses, continuous assessment and new textbooks. The introduction of a new set of core syllabuses will mean a radical revision to GCSE. The teachers are already complaining about their failure to keep up with GCSE: they are bound to be hostile to further changes when they have had such limited experience of GCSE.

The argument which might be used against this position is that a set of core syllabuses is a way of strengthening GCSE and ensuring that by the time pupils start the GCSE course at 14 or 15 they already possess a certain body of knowledge and set of skills.

(b) The Secretary of State has already set up an English Committee

This will be an embarrassment to the Secretary of State. As a result it is important that the curriculum working group and the English committee do not produce conflicting proposals. It would be useful therefore if Professor Kingsman or better still a teacher who is a member of his committee, was appointed a member of the working group. In addition it might be emphasised that the curriculum working group was set up for a very limited purpose whereas the English committee was expected to examine a much broader range of issues.

Neither of these two objections need be overwhelming.

Should the School Curriculum be statutory or voluntary?

This is an issue which needs sorting out in this area, as it divides our supporters.

The arguments against a statutory approach are that

(i) it is capable of serious abuse if we ever had an extreme government, whether of the Left or Right,

(ii) it cramps the individual style of imaginative teachers and

(iii) it inhibits curriculum development.

John McIntosh is not opposed to the idea of a national core curriculum, only to its being made statutory (see his letter at Annex C). He favours a voluntary approach in which the Secretary of State would approve a model curriculum and governors and/or parents would be given the right to opt to have the national core curriculum taught in their schools. He has faith that parents will opt for it.

This approach would work well in some schools, but in others it would meet strong opposition. Much depends on the way in which the idea is marketed. If this was well done, the voluntary approach may be feasible.

The problem raised by John McIntosh is a real one. Kenneth Baker in his proposal gets around it by arguing that a core curriculum which is the result of wide consultation will be seen as independent of any particular Secretary of State. While this meets McIntosh's objection the difficulty with it is that it will be impossible to gain widespread support for the idea of a national set of core syllabuses within the education profession as it is today.

BG.

BRIAN GRIFFITHS

ANNEX A

CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES
8 Wilfred Street, London SW1E 6 PL. Tel: 01-828 1176

26 February 1987

KINGSLEY AMIS'S TEN QUESTIONS FOR ANSWERING BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENGLISH CORE CURRICULUM

1. What importance should be given to the teaching of English grammar and the parsing of words?

2. Should the teaching of correct spelling be regarded as very important or only quite important?

3. Should the discipline be instilled of writing correct sentences and properly constructed paragraphs?

4. How much guidance should be given in the use of dictionaries?

5. How much importance should be attached to developing children's powers of self-expression?

6. How much importance should be given to teaching all children standard English: and how much to teaching regional and ethnic variations?

7. Should children be required to learn passages of English prose and poetry by heart?

8. Should the Bible, in its Authorised Version, be taught for literary purposes?

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9. In teaching literature, should the greater stress be laid on the author's intention or on the pupil's personal interpretation?

10. How much should the literature of the past be studied for its own sake: and how much in order to throw light on present-day questions?

Questions composed by Kingsley Amis for the Centre for Policy Studies. February 1987.

ANNEX B

Curriculum Working Group

Suggested Names	Suggested by
Maths	
Prof S Prais (NIESR) (has done extensive research on the national core curriculum in France, Germany and Japan, and is excellent)	Prof Griffiths
Chairman/member of Examining board (maths teacher)	
Dr Adrian Seville (Registrar, City University)	Prof Griffiths
Peter Jones (Head of Maths, Nottingham Sixth Form College)	
Member of IOD	Sir John Hoskyns
Peter Benton (Chairman of BIM)	
Paul McGee, Chief Inspector of Schools, Croydon (specialist in maths and computing studies, just written an excellent text in maths)	Donald Naismith
Gordon Lees (Lecturer, Crewe & Alsager College of Education)	Miss Bronson Ward

Harry Butcher (maths teacher, Dr Ricketts
Latymer Grammar School,
Edmonton)

Suggested Names	Suggested by
English	
Prof Kingsman - Chairman of existing English working party. Chairman/member of Examining board (English)	
Patricia Stoll - (English teacher in North London Comprehensive)	Dr O'Keefe
Donald Stradling - personnel director, John Laing	Prof Griffiths
Richard Hooper, Super Channel	Prof Griffiths
Prof Arthur Pollard (Prof of English at Buckingham, former chief examiner of GCE English and member of Schools Examination Council	Baroness Cox
Jonathan Worthen (English teacher in comprehensive school in Essex: see article on GCSE English - Annex D)	Baroness Cox
Dr Burstall (Director, NFER)	Prof Griffiths
Roy Griffiths, Director of Audio, Oratory School, Brompton	John McIntosh
Angus Graham-Campbell (head of English, Eton) or **Michael Meredith** (English, Eton)	Malcolm Pearson

Mary Fitzgerald (Lecturer, Crewe and Alsager College of Education) — Miss Bronson Ward

Mrs Jill Rattle (head of Regents Park (Comprehensive) School, Southampton) — Malcolm Pearson

Other names

Donald Naismith recommends all the following "as people who are convinced that the curriculum should be a planned programme of learning susceptible of demonstrable performance and measurement."

R Scanlon, secondary teacher CDT, Norbury Manor Girls School

Mrs C Philips, head of home economics, Riddlesdown School

Ms Conti, head of Modern Languages, Monks Hill School

Ms P Lewis, Head of Languages (peripatetic) London Borough of Croydon

Miss Smith, head of history at Westwood School

K Beaton, head of maths at Shirley School

Miss Sherwood, head of history, Ingram School

Any of these could clearly be used on other curriculum working party groups.

ANNEX C

THE LONDON ORATORY SCHOOL

SEAGRAVE ROAD, LONDON SW6 1RX TELEPHONE: 01-385 0102

FROM THE HEADMASTER: JOHN McINTOSH, MA

Tuesday, 3rd March 1987

Professor Brian Griffiths,
10 Downing Street,
London, SW1

Dear Brian,

As you know, I think we ought to be moving towards a completely independent system of schools and making provision which would ensure that all parents were able to pay the fees. This, and a strengthened inspectorate, would offer the best chance of raising and maintaining high standards, using resources efficiently, avoiding the aberrations which we are witnessing in some local authorities at the moment and ensuring that schools deliver a decent curriculum. I appreciate though that this is something that can only be achieved step by step over a longish period. However, I do hope that we are going to see schools given greater autonomy, unfettered by more and more regulations. I should not want to see us move from LEA control to DES control by sleight of hand. We must be sure that we get it right: once things are on the statute books they tend to stay there for a long time and mistakes made in education take a long time to remedy.

Anyway, I enclose a few thoughts on the idea of a national curriculum.

Sincerely,

John.

THE LONDON ORATORY SCHOOL

SEAGRAVE ROAD, LONDON SW6 1RX TELEPHONE: 01-385 0102

FROM THE HEADMASTER: JOHN McINTOSH, MA

NATIONAL CURRICULUM

I accept that there is a strong argument for a national curriculum, partly in the interests of coherence, continuity and standards and partly because the government has a responsibility in the matter of what is being taught in schools. I would therefore support the idea of the Secretary of State, or a body acting on his behalf, defining a common curriculum for at least the ages of 7+ to 13+. Effectively, the present examination system, which, incidentally, is not imposed on schools by statute, the matriculation requirements of further and higher education and qualifications required by employers strongly influence the curriculum in the fourth and fifth forms and it may not be necessary further to complicate matters by introducing a common curriculum for this age group.

At present there is particular difficulty when children transfer from primary to secondary school. Since the demise of the 11+ examination the primary school curriculum has become increasingly incoherent, presenting secondary schools which draw from a number of different primary schools with a very real problem. For example, we draw pupils from between 60 and 70 different primary schools in any one year: the range of experience, knowledge, standards and expectations is considerable and the first term is spent in trying to get everyone to the same starting point.

While, on balance, I favour a national common curriculum I am opposed to its being mandatory. First, I am very uneasy about any government taking statutory control of what is being taught in schools; secondly, it seems to me to be seriously at odds with the idea of giving schools greater autonomy, making governors more responsible for what is taught in their schools and increasing parental choice; and thirdly, I

think it would meet with strong opposition from some very good teachers, many of whom we can ill afford to alienate at the moment, who would otherwise support the principle of a national common curriculum. The current Bill concerning teachers' salaries (which, incidentally I support) has created a considerable amount of unease in the profession, even among the steady and more conservative minded teachers: I think the suggestion of a mandatory common curriculum might well tip the scales the wrong way!

The independent and aided schools would not I suspect take kindly to having a common curriculum imposed on them, though they would probably support in principle the concept of a national curriculum. We should not forget that a great deal of very valuable curriculum development has been initiated by independent schools.

I should prefer to see the Secretary of State define and keep under review a national *model curriculum.* Governors would be required to state in the information which they publish annually (cf 1980 Education Act section 8 and 1986 Education Act section 30) whether or not the school is using the model curriculum. Schools not using the model curriculum would be required to publish, in some detail, details of the curriculum which they are using in its place. I believe that most schools would adopt the model curriculum partly because (assuming that it is a good model) they would want to use it and partly because of parental and market pressures. The government would in large measure achieve its objective, and probably more effectively because schools would not feel that the model was being imposed on them. Presented and delivered in the right way, I am sure that this could be seen by all as a good move.

The model curriculum might comprise [i] a basic minimum 'core' which all schools would normally be expected to follow; and [ii] suggestions, recommendations and guidance about the structure and content of the rest of the curriculum.

I should also like to see national graded tests available to schools to test children on some or all of the 'core' content of the model curriculum. Although particular tests would not be tied to particular ages, 9+, 11+ and 13+ would be useful benchmarks. Provided local authorities were not able to prevent schools entering pupils, I am sure that many, if not most, schools would eventually use the tests. Parental pressure, particularly in the primary schools, would force their hands in the end anyway. The tests would be an added incentive to use at least the 'core' model curriculum, provide parents with a useful tool for measuring performance and comparing schools, and provide a 'carrot' to motivate children in important basic skills; all of which should raise standards. I realise that an argument against the tests is that schools, primary schools in particular, might concentrate on cramming pupils through the tests to the detriment of other areas of the curriculum, but this is a problem (if it is a problem at all) which can I am sure be overcome.

3. III. 87

3. 3. 87.

10 DOWNING STREET

PM

This is a devastating attack on GCSE English. It is well worth reading.

BL

GCSE English: A Cause for Concern

Jonathan Worthen

The present fifth year in English secondary schools will be the last group of pupils to sit the O Level examination. For those who entered the fourth year in September 1986, this year and the next will see them engaged in the new system, the GCSE, a single system which will replace both O Level and CSE, covering the entire ability range formerly covered by these two previous systems.

The fact that the new examining system is now upon us is due to the activity of the Department of Education and Science under the direction of its former minister, Sir Keith Joseph. (This is not to say that Sir Keith Joseph has created the examination. It is actually the creation of educationalists and, supposedly, teachers, and has been fermenting for a good many years. But it is his will and energy that has now brought in the examination as a mandatory innovation.) The bringing in of the new system has been undoubtedly accelerated by the emergence of education as an important current political (and, of course, electoral) issue. The present Conservative administration is anxious to show concern over the state system (whose defects have become glaringly apparent as comprehensivisation has become the order of the day), and the championing of the GCSE is a major attempt to be seen to be doing something to improve the general situation.

It is, however, my contention that the new examination system will further destroy the standards that comprehensivisation has already eroded; I believe, in fact, that a real analogy exists between the destruction of the grammar schools by a past Labour administration and the abolition of the O Level by the present Conservative administration. Indeed, the Conservative vandalism is even worse than that perpetrated by Labour, for grammar schools and independent schools still exist within a majority comprehensive system, but the new GCSE will be compulsory everywhere, in comprehensive, grammar, and independent alike. The abolition of the O Level, which was in essence the grammar school examination and hence the controller of the grammar school curriculum, means the destruction of the grammar school system of study, even if the schools as institutions continue to exist. The fact that a Conservative administration will engineer this radical change is an irony that will doubtless prove bitter to the true Conservative just as it will be amusing to the Socialist.

What I have to say about the nature of the GCSE examination and why I believe it to be a deleterious development will be confined to my own specialism as a teacher of English. However, I have no doubt that the tendency which underlies the new examination in English can be discerned in other areas also. The first point about the new GCSE (and its chief selling point) is of course that it is one examination for all. Why this is a selling point can be simply explained in terms of popular egalitarianism, which has much in common with old-fashioned envy, and it is the same basic selling point which was used to gain acceptance for the comprehensive system. (Indeed, the new examination *is* the comprehensive school examination par excellence.) No parent will now be disconcerted by the fact that his or her child is doing an examination which explicitly caters for a lower ability range than another parent's child. Everyone will be entered for GCSE, not for O Level (the brighter ones) or CSE (the less able ones); hence until the results come out the difference in ability will not be revealed.

Now, even though the new examination has one title only, in a number of subjects different papers catering for different levels of ability will continue to be set, pupils of different ability levels being entered for the different papers. In English, however, there will be no such distinction; instead, both in 'English Literature' and 'English' a common paper will be given to all ability levels. The term 'differentiation by outcome'[1] is used to explain how pupils of widely varying intelligence will continue to demonstrate their different capacities: if all pupils are given a common question the kinds of answers produced (ranging from very profound and detailed to shallow and sketchy) will reveal different ability levels. This is of course true for certain kinds of question and is no new discovery of modern educational theory. But there are disturbing implications underlying this method of common paper and common questions. If all pupils are to be able even to understand the questions on the examination paper (and the material on which they are based, if the questions are of the commentary/comprehension kind) then the language must be very simple indeed. Those involved in the devising of the GCSE have obviously been aware of this issue, as evidenced by the following extract from the Secondary Examinations Council official booklet on GCSE English:

> . . . traditional discursive essay questions using key words and phrases such as 'discuss', 'describe', 'character sketch', 'give an account of' may be less readily interpreted by students lower down the ability range, and may therefore fail to provide equivalent opportunities for all candidates to show the knowledge and understanding they possess.[2]

Now, language is not some mere cloak thrown over thoughts but the actual vehicle of thought. If certain forms of 'traditional discursive essay' language are dis-

carded in questions, then the traditional discursive essay itself will inevitably tend to disappear. The fact that certain bright pupils at certain schools may well continue to use the language of literary criticism and apply it even when a question is couched in very different language does not reduce the danger. For the tendency will inevitably be in many schools to jettison forms of language (and, therefore, of thought), that do not appear on an examination paper. The type of examination that is set always dictates the nature of the course to be followed, and the type of examination we have here is clearly a levelled-down examination, which will result in a levelling-down of teaching and performance.

This matter of levelling-down is at the very heart of the new examination's attitude to English Literature. As it happens, 'English Literature' will continue to be a separate course from 'English', but this very idea is challenged by egalitarian educationalists and teachers who wish to see the end of English Literature as a separate area of study. For English Literature, as traditionally understood, is a subject which can only be studied properly by a few – say, by the top two or three sets or streams in a year, assuming the school has setting or streaming. This is not to say that English Literature has no part in a curriculum for the less able (indeed, I believe that great literature is an essential element in a curriculum for all abilities); but rather that the kind of mind needed to indulge in and benefit from the critical study of Literature as traditionally conceived is simply not found across the whole ability range. The egalitarian understands this and dislikes it, and is therefore eager to abolish English Literature as a study in its own right. By abolishing it and incorporating its attenuated form into a general English course the egalitarian would achieve his aim of destroying an 'élitist' subject. He has not won – yet – but he is still hoping to do so, and the abolition of the O Level system may well provide him with the opportunity. (The continuing existence of A Level English is a bulwark against such a change, but I fear that it is a bulwark that will come under increasing attack henceforth.) Even if English Literature in the GCSE remains at the moment a separate area, the ground for its removal is already prepared with the compulsory inclusion of a diluted literary study element in the 'English' course (note how the expression 'English Language' has vanished), and with the removal of 'traditional discursive essay' language from the questions. As I have already argued, the removal of this kind of language has a natural tendency to destroy the 'traditional discursive essay' itself, an essay style at one point characterised pejoratively in the Secondary Examinations Council booklet as 'the conventional "Law Court" approach to literature'.[3] The aim of the GCSE is in fact to breed out traditional literary study by surrounding it by a mish-mash of other 'ways' of 'responding' to literature:

> The 'scholarly' essay characteristic of many GCE O-Level examination questions is only one way of responding to literary texts and of demonstrating appreciation and understanding of their structure, meaning and style. Responding to literature (and to non-literary texts for that matter) can be thought of as a process which involves the reader in a 'dialogue' with the text.[4]

Thus, as the Secondary Examinations Council booklet goes on to illustrate, the new GCSE pupil may engage in meaningful 'dialogue' with, say, *The Crucible*, by writing a radio script based on 'the anti-Communist witch-hunt of the 1950s':

> Interviewer: Our first guest is Mickey Spillane, author of 'I, the Jury', 'One Lonely Night', and 'The Big Kill', amongst others; stories about the tough private eye, Mike Hammer, who killed for justice and democracy. A typical scene from one of his books reads:
>
> Narrator: 'I killed more people tonight than I have fingers on my hands. I shot them in cold blood and enjoyed every minute of it . . . they were commies, Lee. They were Red sons-of-bitches who should have died long ago . . . They never thought that there were people like me in this country. They figured us all to be soft as horse manure and just as stupid.'[5]

The tendentious purpose of such material as the above is so obvious that it does not need to be spelled out.

Of course, this emphasis on other 'ways of responding to literary texts' is not new. (In fact, little about the GCSE is new; its 'ideas' have been in circulation since the sixties. What is new is that these ideas are now de rigeur for all.) Frank Whitehead, who in the mid-sixties pleased progressive English teachers with his book *The Disappearing Dais*, had by the mid-seventies realised that this style of teaching led to the destruction of a proper appreciation of literature:

> Increasingly literature has been 'used' – 'used' to propagate a social or political message . . . 'used' to illustrate a predetermined theme such as 'Witchcraft' (bring in an extract from Macbeth) or 'Colour Prejudice' (duplicate copies of 'A Little Black Boy'); 'used' . . . as a launching-pad to get children talking or writing about their own experiences . . . All these now fashionable activities seem to me to imply an erosion of belief in the power of literature as such, in the value of exposing oneself to the impact of a poem or story or novel for its own sake. At its worst the approach seems to carry with it an assumption that anything a pupil says or writes after reading a work of literature must somehow be relevant to it.'

This was written in 1976, yet now, ten years on, the progressive ideas attacked by Whitehead are enshrined in a new compulsory examination, promoted by a 'Conservative' government!

And what of the actual literary texts themselves? How do they fare in the GCSE? Well, we learn from the Secondary Examinations Council booklet that the GCSE General Criteria require that all examinations be 'free of political, ethnic, gender and other forms of bias' and that they should recognise 'the linguistic and cultural diver-

sity of society'.[7] The booklet states that 'one of the particular implications for English Literature is that the traditional "canon" of English Literature will be widened' and that the teacher must 'make sure . . . that the range of texts offered relates equally to the interests and experiences of girls and boys, and meets the requirements for ethnic and political balance'.[8] If one takes this last point regarding 'political balance' seriously, how is one to square this with the tendentiousness of the work on *The Crucible* cited above? Also, 'set texts need no longer be prescribed'[9] in GCSE. In the London and East Anglian Group syllabus, for example, there are no set texts for detailed study and instead very general questions are given which pupils may answer in relation to any texts from a broad list. And texts are (of course!) allowed into the examination; this subversion of the art of memory follows the precedent of the 'plain texts' O Level Literature syllabus, a syllabus which lies outside the scope of this paper but which is held in high regard by GCSE pundits as the 'best of current practice'.

So far, we have used the term 'examination' when referring to the GCSE, but this is a misnomer, for one of the radical elements of GCSE is the compulsory use of coursework as a means of assessment. Again, coursework is not new; it has been in existence for a number of years. What is new is its compulsory use in every subject. In English, in fact, it is possible to do English and English Literature *entirely* by coursework. Quite how a pupil's final result based on 100% coursework can be compared with a pupil's final result which is based on 50% coursework, 50% examination, is a question of great importance, involving as it does the business of true assessment, justice, and standards; but it is a question that, as I shall show, is irrelevant to the kind of egalitarian thinking that lies behind GCSE English. The consideration of a few basic points about coursework should bring us to the heart of the matter.

Firstly, there is the issue of not being a judge in one's own cause, which the teacher inevitably becomes if he is involved in the assessing of his own pupils' work. This is not to say that teachers either en masse or in isolated cases will falsify results to promote their own pupils' interests, but rather that they should not be asked to perform a role which is, properly speaking, beyond their professional capacity. A trained assessor has the time, expertise, and objective distance which the teacher involved in directing the pupils' work cannot have.

Secondly, the conditions under which the coursework is produced surely have to be stringently controlled if the work is seen to be evidence of the individual pupil's ability alone. But this is simply not the case in GCSE English, as only one or at most 'some' pieces (depending on syllabus) are to be done under 'controlled conditions' (which 'need not however be equated with "examination conditions" ')[10], the rest being done at home or at school, supervised or not, with no time-limit specified. Furthermore, though there are broad stipulations in GCSE English as to the nature of coursework, there are no common questions that must be answered at all. Quite the opposite, in fact, for the teacher is encouraged to teach freely, and let the work for assessment grow out of the lessons. Exactly how can pieces of work of such variety (and done under different conditions) be compared for purposes of assessment? They cannot, of course, and here, I believe, we come to the egalitarian principle at the heart of the GCSE. True assessment (objective, fair, measurement of one pupil against another) cannot take place in such a system, and because this is so, assessment becomes a sham. Your 'A' is of no more significance than my 'D'. (This devaluation is quite definitely desired by a number of teachers and educationalists, who can be heard saying that examination results are 'pieces of paper desired by middle-class parents'!) It is no wonder that some proponents of GCSE stress that what they call 'process' (work assignments set over two years) is as important as, or even more important than, 'product' (final competence which can actually be assessed.).

In containing compulsory coursework the GCSE is just like the old CSE; it also follows CSE in its compulsory oral element. Indeed, the comparison with CSE (the lower ability examination which was originally devised for those who could not cope with O Level) is a very pertinent one, for it shows just what kind of examination the GCSE is: in a nutshell, it is a non-academic, even an anti-academic, examination. Many teachers, in my acquaintance, after a reading of any of the GCSE English material, have said, in effect, 'But this is CSE writ large!' The oral element to this new examination borrowed from CSE practice is, I maintain, a particularly meretricious feature of the new system, because its supposed attractiveness is so obviously appealing. And yet it is opposed, I believe, to real learning. Many people (Sir Keith Joseph for one, apparently) are taken by the 'practical' merits of oral English. After all, aren't we speaking all day long, and for so many purposes, often so obviously useful? And will not many pupils pass from school into lives of work and leisure that involve very little written English, but much spoken English? Well, yes to both questions; but it does not follow that oral English is a subject for major study in school English lessons. To begin with, the undeniable fact that we speak so much a good deal of the time means that we are practised in many of the uses of oral English already, and in real contexts that simply cannot be manufactured in school. Frank Palmer, in an excellent essay, says something relevant here, when he remarks on the inappropriateness of trying to train pupils in 'telephone skills' at school:

> All the role-play in the world will not give pupils what is required to say something of any consequence on a telephone: common-sense, a good all-round academic education, naturally-matured relationships and the knowledge and experience of working (in a bank, in a travel agent's office) which comes not from simulation but from experience.[11]

But the GCSE devisers have a concept of oral English that goes beyond learning how to speak well in different situations: they conceive of it as a farrago of every kind of speech, no matter how limited and colloquial, addressed to every kind of audience. Even desultory chit-chat to a friend has its place in such a relativistic mélange. I would

argue that good spoken English results from good teaching based on written English. The higher forms of the written language could be then imprinted to some degree on the spoken – not making the two forms of language identical, but levelling up the vaguer, more inaccurate form of spoken language to the standards of the written form. It is the exact opposite of this – a levelling-down of written English to the standard of a sloppy colloquial – that is the modern trend, now enshrined in GCSE. Not inappropriate here are the words of a recent A Level report on candidates' written language, a written language reduced to the level of casual spoken English:

> It is felt that candidates sometimes have insufficient practice in writing and that in the examination room almost for the first time, some of them find themselves having to turn their ideas not into debating points in discussion, but into sentences and paragraphs. . .. In a cliché-ridden world, it is not expected that candidates can keep their language robust and pristine, but there is a lower depth into which it is fatal to stumble, a depth where expression is so slovenly and sloppy that it becomes meaningless . . . .. (A Level) argument needs to be conducted in a language suitable for communication between candidate and examinaer – what used, once upon a time, to be called educated English. If the present downward trend continues amongst some of the weaker candidates, there are going to be two languages (to add to two cultures, two nations etc.): English as it is written in works of literature, and English as it is spoken colloquially now – a kind of basic communication, language used like a nudge or a nod, part noise, part signal.[12]

It seems to me to be a natural feature of what I consider to be a levelling-down, essentially unacademic examination system, that spoken English – often loose, disconnected, thoughtless, emotional, error-ridden – should assume an important part, dominating lesson-time, turning the classroom into a Babel, making for disruption, and crowding out the teacher's voice.

We move here to the whole organisation of the modern comprehensive classroom, where the traditional situation of individual pupils facing a teacher and listening is replaced by groups of pupils facing each other round tables and talking. The devaluing of the teacher as an authority (both on his subject and as a controller of classroom discipline) is implicit in such a classroom, and implicit in the whole of the GCSE style. Implicit also is the idea that the GCSE is the examination which will make mixed ability a widespread practice. For a single examination (in English at any rate) will give the excuse, which will be readily seized upon, not to set or stream pupils; moreover, the use in the Secondary Examinations Council booklet of such modish language as providing 'classroom activities' and 'inviting' pupils 'to undertake different tasks suited to their own level of ability'[13] points clearly to a heterogeneous class that is not taught as a class. Indeed, the word 'teach' is quite inappropriate here, for in mixed ability 'teaching' (which is insinuated to be the GCSE style) the teacher is a manager of 'tasks' and 'activities', not the acknowledged authority uniquely qualified to disseminate knowledge and cultivate understanding. He is no longer that inspiring presence who, in Frank Palmer's words 'will want to acquaint his pupils with the best and most beautiful things he knows'.[14] Such a teacher will, I fear, be 'extinguished for ever' (to use Edmund Burke's famous phrase) in the classrooms of the future. Already, indeed, there are few such teachers.

At the beginning of this paper it was said that a prime motive in the present Government's bringing in of GCSE was its concern to be seen to be doing something to improve the state of things in education, and Sir Keith Joseph and other voices have suggested that the new examination will serve to improve standards. Now, improving standards is obviously desirable, and a little careful thinking will reveal that there are three broad ways in which actual examination results (as an objective measurement of standards) can be improved. The first is by having a better quality of teaching; the second is by somehow having a better quality of pupils; and the third is by changing the nature of the examination itself so as to make it easier.

If, as Sir Keith Joseph and others seem fondly to believe, the GCSE will raise standards, then one is driven to suspect that this new examination will be easier than the previous systems. This is in fact no idle speculation, as a reading of the GCSE's words on 'differentiation' will serve to show. This new bold examination, apparently, will no longer 'discriminate' as the old order used to do, but will, we are told, 'differentiate'. And what exactly does this special new process entail? The answer, for what it is worth, is that the new system will be a 'radical departure from some current practice where it could be argued that many candidates achieve their marks by relative failure at tasks and where, as a result, they may complete only a small part of the paper successfully'. Henceforth, examinations will be a 'positive' experience where candidates are 'encouraged to demonstrate what "they know, understand and can do" '.[15] Winston Churchill's words are jubilantly quoted by the GCSE proponents (the mention of Churchill doubtless helps to disarm conservative sceptics!) to bolster this new system:

> I should have liked to be asked to say what I knew. They always tried to ask what I did not know. When I would have willingly displayed my knowledge, they sought to expose my ignorance. This sort of treatment had only one result: I did not do well in examinations.

Churchill or not, I make bold to say that all this is sheer humbug. Any good examination gives candidates the chance to 'display (their) knowledge', but in response to the actual questions set on the paper. If a candidate is to gain marks for simply 'displaying' a portion of knowledge, irrespective of whether it is asked for or not, then an examination has not tested whether the whole syllabus has been taught, assimilated and understood, with candidates being measured against each other accurately

and fairly. A true examination, despite what the GCSE proponents say, *is* about 'relative failure' or, what is another way of saying the same thing, 'relative success'. *If* what the GCSE proponents mean is that an examination system that purports to test the whole ability range must set very different papers for candidates of different ability levels, the low level papers gaining lower grades than the higher level, then this is at least sense, but this cannot be the meaning, for such was the system with O Level and CSE, and the GCSE devisers are talking of a 'radical departure' from previous ways. No, I fear that any meaning that actually lies behind the GCSE's euphemistic words about examinations being a 'positive experience' is that the GCSE will be easier to pass. If this is so, and the GCSE produces a crop of higher grades than the previous system, then the whole massive exercise will supposedly be justified: criticism, at least from large areas of the general public, will be disarmed.

But what criticism has there been, in fact? Apart from a few, brief, scattered remarks in the press, there has been nothing loud and sustained, at least that I have come across. In the teaching profession itself, opposition to GCSE some while ago was mixed up with the pay dispute, and was part of a clamour for more time and 'resources' if the new system were to be put into successful practice. This clamour still exists, but it has nothing to do with objections to the ideology behind the new system. Indeed, as has been pointed out many times, 'teachers have been wanting a new system like this for years'.

Well, here is the voice of one teacher who is unhappy about what is happening. I believe that there are many others who think and feel as I do but who are driven to silence by a form of insidious collective coercion that forbids what is termed 'negative' comment. To put it in very blunt terms, a 'negative' reaction to GCSE is hardly a recommendation for promotion. But not to articulate a keenly felt disquiet about a radical change would be wrong indeed, for it would be to concede the assumption that critical thought, if contrary to the prevailing *Zeitgeist*, should be outlawed. That, in a free society, would indeed be intolerable.

Notes

1. *English GCSE: A Guide for Teachers*, Secondary Examinations Council, p.14.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 27–8.
6. Frank Whitehead, 'The Present State of English Teaching' in *The Use of English*, Volume 28, no. 1, p. 14.
7. *English GCSE: A Guide for Teachers, op. cit.*, p. 6.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
11. Frank Palmer, 'English: Reducing Learning to Short-Cut "Skills" ' in *The Wayward Curriculum*, Social Affairs Unit, p. 49.
12. 'University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate Report on A Level Paper 800/3, Chaucer and Other Major Authors, Summer 1977', p. 1.
13. *English GCSE: A Guide for Teachers, op. cit.*, p. 21.
14. Frank Palmer, 'Optional Discipline' in *The Salisbury Review*, Volume 4, no. 4, July 1986, p. 19.
15. *English GCSE: A Guide for Teachers, op. cit.*, p. 11.

Inside Afghanistan: Then and Now

Henry Sargent

I suppose that my image of Afghanistan was like most people's in England. A bit of Kipling, with his scrimmages on the North-West Frontier: wild tribesmen, gorges and defiles, treachery and heroism. Then there was the image, since the place is in the East, of exotic scenes, Muslim fanatics, teeming, poverty-stricken peasants and disease under a baking sun.

That's what I would have written in my schooldays, if I had been asked to do an essay on the country. By the early 1960s, however, the youth of the West were flooded with accounts of the mystic East: of strange rituals, of stranger knowledge, of people with civilisations which made ours look like nothing. This conception, fostered by all kinds of idealists and malcontents (and some who were both) filtered into my mind. I was twenty-five years old, and I was ready for the Mystic East.

Heading for India overland in an old car, I met streams of bearded, long-haired enthusiasts coming the other way: Australians and New Zealanders, gripped by the urge to find their roots in the Old Country. Whether it was in Yugoslavia, in Istanbul or in Iran, they were there. For the most part unwashed, often stoned on cannabis, as often exhibitionists, they usually wanted to talk only about themselves. I got no information worth knowing about Afghanistan from them, except, perhaps, that it was the only place in the East with hardly any beggars, and where the people fed you on request.

But Afghanistan was my goal. As soon as I got into the Eastern Iranian province of Khurasan, everything changed. The people spoke clearly and with assurance, they held themselves up straight, the very air seemed different. These were hard people, I could see; but they did have something which I was to find throughout Afghanistan – and I still do not know what it is.

Iran, at that time under Mohammed Reza Pehlavi, was something of a grotesque. No expense was spared to attempt the Westernisation of a people who needed food, not armies, who lacked education, and did not need

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

3 March, 1987.

Thank you for your letter of 28 February to the Prime Minister. I know she enjoyed her meeting with you and your colleagues, and found it valuable. She will be interested to see your letter.

(David Norgrove)

Professor K.J. Durrands

VR

CONFIDENTIAL

CCBG.

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

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

NBPM

The Rt Hon John MacGregor OBE MP
Chief Secretary of the Treasury
Parliament Street
LONDON SW1P 3AG

3 March 1987

CROHAM REPORT ON THE UGC: HIGHER EDUCATION WHITE PAPER

Thank you for your letter of 27 February. I readily take many of the points you make, but am anxious on the other hand not to hasten to reject more of Croham than is really necessary.

2. You are right in your para 2 that we are not intending to set up the PCFC with a specific responsibility to "advise on needs", in the way that has featured in the UGC's terms of reference in past years - nor in the more restricted form suggested by Croham for its successor. But I am not convinced that we should positively rule out this role when writing of the new UFC. I would prefer merely to indicate that these bodies are not to be encouraged in that direction, using a rather gentler formula in the White Paper than you have drafted. Would you perhaps agree to this insertion at the end of para 4.35:

> "...to the precise terms of reference of the UFC, although the Government would not see these including a specific standing invitation to the Council to advise on levels of funding: rather, the emphasis should be on the Council's allocative role. In this process the Government will take into account..."

3. In your para 3 I am glad you are not suggesting any drawing-back from the established process by which the Government periodically provides guidelines. But certainly a set of guidelines issued annually would be a bit over the odds, and I suggest we put this in the form

> "The Government should provide guidelines at appropriate intervals to set the framework for the planning process which the UFC and the universities should conduct".

I think this modification could just about co-exist with the introductory words of the paragraph, which imply acceptance here of essentially the recommendations in the Croham Report.

CONFIDENTIAL

Cont../..

4. Having said this, which I think would represent an improvement in any circumstances, I must go on to reflect on the wisdom of rejecting so roundly the triennial funding recommendation itself. Further study could prove rewarding, I believe, and I would now prefer to re-work para 4.37 as follows:

> "In addition to early guidelines from the Government to assist the UFC's planning work, the Report recommends that so long as the general rate of inflation is expected to be below 5%, the grant allocations from the Government to the Council and from the Council to the universities should be set out in cash terms for a period of three university financial years, on the basis that grant will not be reduced other than in a national emergency during that period. The Government recognises the importance of giving higher education institutions as much advance information as possible about the total resources likely to be made available and will expect the new UFC to give universities planning parameters for the medium and long-terms. The precise manner in which this should be done is for further consideration in the light of the comments made by the interested parties on the detailed recommendations in the Croham Report."

5. As for the UK Education Commission, I continue to think it unwise, because it is neither essential nor urgent, to move in so soon for the kill. I could accept your formulation with insertion of the words "at this stage", but would be reluctant to be more decisively rejective of the recommend-ation.

6. What you say in your para 6 touches of course on both the PCFC and the UFC. You will be aware that it is from the Croham Report that the idea of top-slicing comes. Subject to safeguards of the type which Croham notes, this seems to me the most sensible procedure within the reality that there is nowhere else from which the running costs of the funding bodies can be taken. I would certainly not want my Department, if this is at all avoidable, involved annually in the details of precisely what the running costs budget of the PCFC and UFC ought to be. If you are suggesting that that is necessary, even though there would be reserved powers to constrain extravagance if necessary, I would want to argue the case further. Perhaps our officials could discuss this further. But, like you, I see no need for the point to be covered explicitly in the White Paper.

7. I fully take your point about pay determination. I shall draw specific attention to the issue in my paper for H Committee and hope our officials can agree a suitable text for the White Paper itself before the Committee meets.

8. I hope that these suggestions do not cause you any difficulty. I would intend to include these amendments in the draft of the White Paper which I should circulate to H Committee colleagues in the course of tomorrow.

9. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Willie Whitelaw, Nicholas Edwards, Tom King, Norman Fowler, David Young, Malcolm Rifkind, Paul Channon, Richard Luce and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

EDUCATION POLICY PT 12



University College, Cardiff

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From.....

Department of.....

The position of the Principal

The attached statement has been issued by Dr. Bevan following discussion with the College authorities. We welcome the arrangements proposed. We have asked Professor Sheridan, in whom we have great confidence, to act as the Deputy Principal referred to in paragraph 4, and he has accepted the task.

Dudley Fisher.

Chairman, Finance Committee

for Chairman of Council.

PRINCIPAL
C.W.L. BEVAN, C.B.E., D.Sc., F.R.S.C.

Telephone No. 44211

Telegrams:
Coleg, Cardiff

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CF1 1XL

1. The Principal has already delegated responsibility for all financial matters to one of his deputies - Professor Lee Sheridan - and is content to treat that delegation of his powers as irrevocable during the remainder of his time in office. His deputy has all necessary executive powers in this area and will report to the Finance Committee and be responsible to that Committee.

2. The Principal, while offering his cooperation to the investigative team led by Mr. Michael Shattock, would not expect to be involved in the investigations or to be consulted on the team's recommendations, which would be a matter for the Council. Consequently he would not be in a position to comment thereon or on their implementation.

3. In these circumstances the Principal considers that it would be inappropriate for him to continue to chair the Senate, the General Purposes and Development Committee or the Planning Sub-Committee - these bodies being obviously closely concerned with the investigative team's likely recommendations.

4. In order to facilitate the day to day operations of the College the senior administrative officers' reporting function should be transferred to one of the Deputy Principals, who may, at his own discretion, consult the Principal.

C W L Bevan

2 March 87

University College, Cardiff

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C W L Bevan

2 March 87

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DCBS

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Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

2 March 1987

The Rt Hon Kenneth Baker MP
Secretary of State for Education and
Science
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
LONDON
SE1

NBM -

Dear Kenneth.

CROHAM REPORT FOLLOW-UP

WITH DN?

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 20 February to Tom King.

I very much welcome the thrust of the main recommendations of the Croham Committee, and your propsed response to them. I am particularly pleased to see the prospect of a body in which the voice of the universities' principal customer, namely industrial and commercial employers, will be heard much more effectively. I attach some drafting suggestions aimed at bringing out more clearly in the text of the prospective White Paper on Higher Education our acceptance of the Committee's key recommendations.

I hesitated only over one, perhaps relatively minor aspect of your proposal: to call the new body the "Universities Funding Council". I wonder whether this title does full justice to a body which will have a planning and management as well as a funding role. You might care to consider "Universities Commission" or simply "Universities Council".

Copies of this letter go to the recipients of yours.

Yours

JF5BTD

PAUL CHANNON

999-1



ANNEX

UNIVERSITY FUNDING: THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE AND ITS SUCCESSOR

Suggested amendments to 17/2/78 draft of the proposed White Paper on Higher Education

4.34 extend as follows:

> "...its chief conclusion was that the UGC should be reconstituted as a more broadly based but smaller University Grants Council, an independent body under the sponsorship of the Secretary of State for Education and Science, with revised terms of reference, an eminent figure with substantial experience outside the academic world as its chairman and improved procedures for planning and managing the university system. The Secretary of State would enjoy a reserve power to issue directions to the Council. The new Council should be formally incorporated, preferably by legislation".

4.36 clarify the second indentation by adding "but it will continue to have the power to add additional earmarked allocations for special programmes (as in the case of the Engineering and Technology programme launched in 1985)".

4.37 for the avoidance of doubt in the last sentence add:

> "against that background, and within the Government's guidelines, it will be or the new..."

4.40 substitute for the square bracketted section:

> "...have been long debated. The Government is not at present persuaded that a Commission would be helpful. It will consider this proposal further, taking account of any comments made by interested bodies, in the light of the interdepartmental review of prospective demand from employers for new graduates foreshadowed in chapter 2 (2.13)"

EDUCATION - Policy: Pt 12.



PART 11 ends:-

PROF. DURRAND to PM 28.2.87

~~CST to SS/DES 27.2.87~~

PART 12 begins:-

SS/~~DES~~ DTI to SS/DES 2.3.87


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