

HEADTEACHERS' ROUNDTABLE

DOORSTEP MANIFESTO

GENERAL ELECTION 2017

Our Children's Education...
Our Nation's Future

Schools that Enable All to Thrive



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INTRODUCTION

Our Children's Education...Our Nation's Future

Our nation's future – whichever Brexit we have - is inextricably linked with the quality of our children's education.

This general election is likely to see education discussed more by politicians and the electorate than at any election since 1997. The reasons are simple and of huge concern:

- Rising class sizes and more limited support for children due to funding cuts;
- A shortage of teachers as recruitment targets are missed and too many teachers leave the profession at a time we have ever increasing numbers of pupils coming into our schools and;
- Ensuring we have a school place for every child in a well maintained school building.

We believe sufficient school funding, the supply of enough great teachers and maintaining school buildings to a high standard must be the direct responsibility of any elected Government. The Secretary of State for Education should be held accountable for these three key areas.

Too often politicians have failed to focus on their responsibilities; instead, they have followed personal preferences, such as the creation of new grammar schools or providing free school meals for all – rather than what really matters – creating the conditions to ensure high quality teaching.

The creation of more grammar schools, along with, inevitably, hundreds – possibly thousands – of secondary modern schools, will be hugely damaging to the nation's children. A second class education for the many, particularly, but not exclusively, for those from more disadvantaged backgrounds, is not just educationally unacceptable but morally and economically disastrous.

The current Conservative Government has held a consultation on new grammar schools but refuses to publish the results. Yet the evidence is overwhelming: selection damages the quality of education a nation's

children receives. What we must demand is a high quality education for every child, not selection and privilege for the few.

Quite simply, what every child requires is a great teacher teaching them.

Our challenge was to provide a straightforward, useful document for parents, grandparents and professionals to use, on the doorstep, to help you ask the important questions of our prospective Members of Parliament and Local Councillors on two key issues:

- Ensuring our schools are properly funded;
- Ensuring the supply of great teachers to our schools.

Keep education the key issue in this Election; our nation's children deserve it!



STEPHEN TIERNEY
**CHAIR OF HEADTEACHERS'
ROUNDTABLE**

CEO BEBCMAT
(@LeadingLearner)



ENSURING OUR SCHOOLS ARE PROPERLY FUNDED

Questions to ask our prospective Members of Parliament/Local Election Candidates

- "How are you going to make teaching more attractive to our best graduates if, according to the Institute of Fiscal Studies, you are cutting school budgets by 8% by 2020?"
- "Spending on school may be at record levels, but that is because we have more children of school age than ever before and costs are rising. How will you ensure that school budgets in their ENTIRETY are protected in REAL terms for the duration of the next parliament?"
- "Many schools now are looking to create super classes of 60-100 children in the school hall because they cannot afford enough teachers due to budget cuts. What are you planning to do to prevent that? What is your maximum class size?"
- "The nation's children should be provided with a broad curriculum, great support and enriching activities. Is your party willing to fund schools properly so our children have the same opportunities as previous generations?"

Why Does The Funding Crisis Matter?

- Without adequate funding schools can't employ enough high quality teachers and you may have heard that your local school(s) are going to have to make teachers redundant because they can no longer afford to employ them.
- This is likely to lead to children and young people being in large or very large classes. This is worrying for many parents and grandparents because their child/grandchild is less likely to get the personal attention s/he needs.

- The other way schools are trying to balance the budget is by reducing the number of subjects they teach. This means the curriculum pupils receive is becoming narrower and children's individual talents won't be nurtured in the way previous generations of children have been.
- In addition, many of the extra, wider curriculum experiences are being reduced either because the school can't subsidise them or increased workload for staff means it is not reasonable to ask them to keep doing more. These are the often experiences pupils remember and value about their time at school, for years afterwards.
- Schools are also having to make many support staff redundant. These staff often work with children with additional or special educational needs. In the years ahead there is a great deal of concern that some of our most vulnerable children will not receive the support they need.
- Some schools are no longer pleasant places to teach or learn, with leaky roofs, poorly maintained or decorated class rooms and in some cases unresolved health and safety issues. Our children deserve better than this.

Key Information to support your questions

- Government ministers and Members of Parliament state they are spending a record amount of money on schools, somewhere around £40-£42 billion. Whilst this is true, they fail to tell you that between 2015-2025 another million pupils will be in England's schools. The additional money is for the extra pupils.
- School funding has been cash flat for years; this means that over the past few years, despite costs

increasing massively for schools, the amount of money they receive for each pupil has stayed the same.

- The National Audit Office predicts that schools will have a £3 billion shortfall by 2020. This is about an 8% real terms reduction in their budget; for an average size secondary school that is around £500,000 and for a primary school it is about £100,000.
- The problem is worse for schools or colleges who have sixth form pupils; the cut in their funding is much greater.
- In addition the Education Support Grant (funding used by academies/local authorities to provide additional support and support services to pupils) is being cut each year and will disappear totally next year. This has removed another £200,000 from a secondary academy's budget and £40,000 from a primary academy's.
- The money used to maintain school buildings was significantly cut in 2010 and the backlog of major repairs is building up.

Further reflections and policy suggestions

- School funding should be increased and the real terms cuts in funding reversed. Funding should explicitly support the most vulnerable children, such

as those with special educational needs or from disadvantaged backgrounds. Our children deserve this; our nation needs to invest in our future.

- The Government has wastefully spent millions of pounds on: Free Schools & University Technical Colleges which have closed a few years later; unnecessary academy conversions; Troops to Teachers; and the National Teaching Service, which should have been used to fill the £3 billion funding gap.
- Whilst increasing taxes is not popular, people often support a rise in taxes if the extra funds raised are for a specific purpose. A one pence rise in all rates of income tax could raise £5.5 billion for education, reverse the current cuts and avert the potential problems.
- Every penny of taxpayers' money should be spent wisely by Government on what matters most; funding for schools should be spent on maintaining the great schools we already have – of which 89% are good or outstanding – great teachers and support staff and ensuring schools are well-maintained, decorated and fit for purpose.





ENSURING THE SUPPLY OF GREAT TEACHERS TO OUR SCHOOLS

Questions to ask our prospective Members of Parliament/Local Election Candidates

- “Great teachers are at the heart of a great school. What is your party going to do to make teaching a more attractive career to our best graduates?”
- “Some teachers are working over 60 hours a week. The average hours a week a teacher works is well over 50 – how is your party going to help reduce teacher workload?”
- “New grammar schools mean new secondary moderns. The research says that new grammar schools attract the most experienced and better qualified teachers. What is your position on creating new grammar schools and, as a result, new secondary moderns?”
- “The current government has missed the targets for teacher recruitment for the past four years. What are you going to do to ensure your party would hit the teacher recruitment targets in the future?”

Why Does this Matter?

- For our children it's simple: if we want our children to thrive in an increasingly changing world, they need the best education possible. And the best education requires the best teachers and the best support staff. Only great teaching in every school will make our country's education system great. It's that simple.
- For our nation, it's just as simple: to be competitive in a global economy we need to ensure our children have the best education and training; in fact, our education system needs to be World Class. Without great schools, for every child and young person, we

simply won't educate a generation of young people to the standard we require as a nation economically.

Key Information

- Government ministers and Members of Parliament claim that we have more teachers than ever before. However, with another million pupils in schools between 2015 and 2025 we still don't have anywhere near enough.
- Many Headteachers are reporting that the number of people applying for teaching jobs is decreasing and that candidates are variable in quality. This affects some schools and areas more than others and teachers in some subjects are much more difficult to recruit. Science and Mathematics teachers are in particularly short supply. Government targets to recruit teachers have been missed year after year and there is no government plan to meet recruitment targets in the future.
- Approximately 10% of teachers are leaving the profession each year; the main reasons, according to the Parliamentary Education Select Committee, are workload issues created by too many government initiatives and excessive, unhelpful accountability.
- Far too many people train to become teachers but then never go into the class room or leave within the first few years.
- The current system for recruiting graduates to enter teacher training is complicated and increasingly confusing for potential entrants. The changes to teacher training have been rushed through and are a major reason we are struggling to recruit good quality graduates to the profession.



Further reflections and policy suggestions

- Given the current teacher recruitment and retention problems, more effort must be focused on reducing teachers' workload. Too many poorly thought-through central government initiatives, including excessive concurrent changes to curriculum and examinations, are causing problems. Ofsted and the accountability system needs to be more proportionate and recognise the effectiveness of schools, including those working in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country, rather than the questionable conclusions it is currently making.
- To enhance retention introduce 10th Year Funded Sabbaticals for teachers in their 10th, 20th or 30th year. The sabbatical may be deferred for personal or professional reasons. Teachers would be entitled to engage in educational research, deepen subject and subject pedagogical knowledge, support the development of Initial Teacher Trainees, engage in placements in different school contexts and or countries, or undertake a placement in an industrial or commercial environment.
- All schools should offer a high quality, research-informed professional development programme for all teachers. There is no shortcut to securing

great teaching in every classroom in this country; improving the quality of teaching so that it raises students' achievements requires substantial and sustained professional development.

- Enabling teachers to engage with research to inform their practice will require a commitment to funding additional non-contact time for defined periods. Whilst this would require additional funding, it would improve children's outcomes and lead to a boost in the future economy.
- Schools, in partnership with Initial Teacher Education providers, will deliver a two-year Induction Programme for all entrants to the teaching profession with a five-year pathway to a Professional Qualification with Master's Degree Equivalence and the potential to progress to Doctorate level available. This will help improve the quality of teaching, increase the attractiveness of the profession to our best graduates and retain more teachers. Such a move will make teaching the profession of choice because of the quality of professional learning.
- We should introduce a Regional Initial Teacher Education Macro Cluster structure to enable regional stakeholders to work together to develop a longer term strategic plan based on rolling three year guaranteed funding streams.





ABOUT US

The Headteachers' Roundtable

is a non-party political group of Headteachers operating as a think-tank, exploring policy issues from a range of perspectives. Our goal is to provide a vehicle for people working in the profession to influence national education policymakers so that education policy is centred upon what is best for the learning of all children.

The original core members of The Headteachers' Roundtable met through Twitter in 2012. The think-tank initially consisted of secondary and special school Headteachers and formed in response to frustration regarding Government educational policy and the Opposition response to it. The group has now extended to include primary school colleagues. Its origins and subsequent growth are down to the power of social media as a tool for connecting people to try to bring about change where they believe it is needed.

The five principles guiding our work are:

1. The pace of educational change should not be affected by party politics;
2. Schools must be able to offer all their pupils the chance to thrive;
3. Educational change should begin by identifying the desired outcomes for children;
4. Prioritising high quality teaching & learning and the curriculum will lead to world class assessment and accountability;
5. The teaching profession should be centrally involved in developing future education policy.

Key Headteachers' Roundtable Policy Proposals

1. Clearly define and enforce the Secretary of State for Education's Core Responsibilities

The Secretary of State for Education should be

responsible and held accountable by Parliament for the provision of sufficient and fair funding to all schools; a supply of enough good, highly qualified teachers and well maintained/decorated schools so every child has a place at a good local school.

Outside of this only evidence-based, well-supported and necessary policy changes should be permitted so the excessive workload created by poorly planned or short-lived, ineffective government driven changes are minimised. The public repeatedly show high levels of trust for school leaders and teachers; politicians must do the same.

2. Establish a National Standard in Education School Quality Mark

It is now time and eminently possible to establish a multi-year contextualised progress measure for each secondary school and post-16 College. This measure should be used to exempt all schools and colleges from further inspection who have achieved above a stated benchmark, for example above -0.5 for Progress 8. This would mean precious taxpayers' money is no longer wastes on inspecting good schools and colleges.

This would also help the excessive workload and culture of fear created by Ofsted that is so damaging to schools and the retention and recruitment of teachers and school leaders.

3. Create an Institute of Chartered Safeguarding Officers

The safety and well-being of the nation's children must be one of our highest priorities. We all too often hear of disturbing stories of neglect, abuse or radicalisation. Sadly, these issues are not going to go away.

The current inspection of safeguarding by Ofsted, usually years apart, is inadequate. Safeguarding responsibilities should be removed from Ofsted and instead be part of a regularly audit of school's safeguarding policies, procedures and practices. This would ensure continuous improvements were made by all schools supported by well trained, highly qualified registered Chartered Safeguarding Officers.

4. Establish a National Recruitment Fund & Team

One of the greatest challenges the country's education system now faces is ensuring greater equity and equality of outcomes. Children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly white working class children, start and finish education behind their more affluent peers. Schools serving the most disadvantaged communities struggle to recruit and retain the staff required to make a difference. A National Recruitment Team & Fund should be established.

Applicants to the National Recruitment Team must be able to provide evidence of prior impact on pupil outcomes over a number of years. There should be three to five year contracts available with security of tenure for talented leaders who commit themselves to working in schools in the most socioeconomically deprived areas of the country, with a guaranteed post once they have finished that three/five-year contract. Exceptionally high quality professional development and a generous relocation package should be available so successful applicants so they can be moved to areas of greatest need.

5. Established an Expert Working Group to consult and report, to the Secretary of State, on a means of determining the quality of education offered by Special Schools, Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Education Providers.

The Expert Working Group's remit should be to establish whether there is a valid and reliable means of determining a Special School's, Pupil Referral Unit's or

Alternative Education Provider's effectiveness.

It should report on the funding of these providers and whether the current arrangements are sufficient and fair including the level of funding required to place pupils in independent special schools. Further work could be consideration of the High Needs Funding block which the evidence suggests is insufficient to meet the needs of pupils.

6. Promote a National Baccalaureate

Promote the concept of a National Baccalaureate that encompasses all learners and qualifications, without seeking to promote one particular brand of Baccalaureate at the expense of the wider framework. Establish the National Baccalaureate based on core learning, a personal project and a personal development programme. It would aim to help broaden the curriculum and recognise the achievements of pupils within a broader view of education. Give public support to the role of the National Baccalaureate Trust as an independent body with a remit to develop the framework at grass-roots level.

7. Assessments in Primary Schools

Key Stage 1 Assessments should be discontinued as a means of holding primary schools accountable both as an attainment measure and as the basis of any value added measure. This should include the Phonics test though the use of phonics as an approach to the teaching of reading retains our support.

The use of Teacher Assessed Writing as a basis for accountability, at the end of Key Stage 2, should also be discontinued.

If you would like to read about these policy proposals in more detail please see our Alternative Green Paper: Schools that Enable All to Thrive & Flourish.





ABOUT US

Origins

The Headteachers' Roundtable originated from a roundtable meeting on 12 October 2012 at The Guardian newspaper offices. It grew out of frustration regarding current government educational policy and the Opposition response to it. Its origins and subsequent growth are down to the power of Twitter as a tool for connecting people to try and bring about change where they feel it is needed.

Core Purpose

We are a non-party political headteachers' group operating as a think-tank, exploring policy issues from a range of perspectives. Our goal is to provide a vehicle for people working in the profession to influence national education policymakers so that education policy is centred upon what is best for the learning of all children.

Composition of the Core Headteachers' Roundtable Group

January 2017

Binks Neate-Evans – Headteacher, West Earlham Infant and Nursery School, Norwich

Caroline Barlow – Headteacher, Heathfield Community College, East Sussex

Chris McShane – Founding Member, Headteacher
Focus Learning Trust Wilton Campus

Dave Whitaker – Founding Member, Executive
Principal, Springwell Special Academy & Springwell
Alternative Academy and Director of Education (SEN &
AP) Wellspring Academy Trust

Duncan Spalding – Headteacher, Aylsham High School,
Norfolk

Helen Keenan – Headteacher, Brownhills School,
Walsall

Helena Marsh – Principal, Linton Village College &
Executive Principal, Chilford Hundred Education Trust

Jarlath O'Brien – Vice Chair – Headteacher, Carwarden
House Community School, Surrey

John Tomsett – Founding Member, Headteacher,
Huntington School, York

Jarlath O'Brien – Vice Chair – Headteacher, Carwarden
House Community School, Surrey

Jon Chaloner – Vice Chair – Founding Member, CEO of
GLF Schools

Katie McGuire – Principal, Oasis Academy Nunsthorpe
Keziah Featherstone – Headteacher, Bridge Learning
Campus, Bristol

Liam Collins – Headteacher, Uplands Community
College, Wadhurst, East Sussex

Rob Campbell – Founding Member, Headteacher,
Impington Village College and Executive Principal,
Morris Education Trust, Cambridge

Ros McMullen – Founding Member, Executive Principal
of Midland Academies Trust

Sally Hamson – Vice Chair – Headteacher, Wollaston
Community Primary School, Northamptonshire

Stephen Tierney – Chair – CEO of BEBCMAT (Christ the
King, St. Cuthbert's & St. Mary's Catholic Academies)

Tom Sherrington – Founding Member, London

Vic Goddard – Founding Member, Principal, Passmores
Academy, Harlow

Permanent Special Advisors to Headteachers' Roundtable

Dr Rebecca Allen – Director, Education Datalab

Lucy Crehan – Author of *Cleverlands*

Laura McInerney – Editor, *Schools Week*

Professor Sam Twistelton – Director of Sheffield
Institute of Education



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