

A Great Education for All

The Headteachers' Roundtable Education Election Manifesto 2015



Twitter: @HeadsRoundtable

Find us at: <http://headteachersroundtable.wordpress.com>

Contact us at: headteachersrt@hotmail.co.uk

The Headteachers' Roundtable

The core membership of The Headteachers' Roundtable met through Twitter. The think-tank 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.

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We are 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.

Composition of the Core Headteachers' Roundtable Think-Tank

Rob Campbell – Principal, Impington Village College, Cambridge

Jon Chaloner – Headteacher of Glyn School, Epsom and Executive Headteacher of GLF Schools

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

Vic Goddard – Principal, Passmores Academy, Harlow

Ros McMullen – Executive Principal, David Young Community Academy, Leeds and CEO Leaf Academy Trust

Chris McShane – Headteacher, Quilley School of Engineering, Eastleigh

Tom Sherrington – Headteacher, King Edward VI Grammar School, Chelmsford

Duncan Spalding - Headteacher, Aylsham High School, Norfolk

John Tomsett – Headteacher, Huntington School, York

Dave Whitaker – Executive Principal, Springwell ('Special') Community School and Barnsley PRU

Ruth Whymark – Headteacher, Cranmer Primary School, Merton

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A Great Education for All

Only great teaching will make our country's education system great. It's that simple.

We believe that the education policy priorities for the next parliament must be focused upon continuously improving the quality of teaching in our schools. However, to enable teachers to teach as well as they possibly can there are a number of key issues we need to address.

Our system is increasingly fragmented in terms of institutions and qualifications; the accountability system continues to suppress rather than unleash the creative energy of teachers; we're still not addressing some of the fundamental causes of underachievement and as applications for Headships decline in number we're facing a leadership recruitment crisis.

Our Headteachers' Roundtable Education Election Manifesto is not an exhaustive list of all that needs to be done to improve education in this country, not by any means. However, we believe that our policy proposals represent a coherent road map to delivering the great education system the young people in this country deserve. Launched on May 7th 2014, exactly one year before the General Election, we want our Education Election Manifesto to stimulate discussion around five key policy areas:

- *A World Class Teaching Profession*
- *A rigorous, inclusive and flexible curriculum and qualifications framework*
- *Intelligent accountability*
- *Coherence in a fragmented system*
- *Tackling Underachievement at the Source*

Our manifesto outlines ten key policy proposals; over the coming months we will produce more detailed policy statements suggesting how each proposal could be implemented in practice.

And at the heart of our manifesto is the commitment to improve continuously the quality of teaching in our country's schools. We will only provide our children with great teaching if we can recruit the very best graduates to the teaching profession. We have to raise the status of teaching as a profession: high status is one of the key attractions for potential entrants to teaching.

To become the most respected profession, research-based education policy-making needs to become the norm. When teaching is the profession of choice for our very best graduates we must then provide them with the very best continuous professional development.

Make teaching the profession of choice for our brightest graduates by guaranteeing the best professional development programme bar none and we will have the best educated children in the world.

With a great education system we can make this country great. It's that simple.



1. A World Class Teaching Profession

We know that the top-performing systems recruit their teachers from the top third of each cohort graduating from their school system.¹ If our country is going to emulate the top-performing systems, raising the status of teaching is imperative. If we can raise the status of teaching we will attract our best graduates to the profession; research shows that the key to attracting the best graduates to become teachers isn't raising salaries, it's raising status.² And once we have attracted the best graduates into teaching we have to keep them in the classroom. Invest in great professional development and we will make teaching the stand out life-long profession for graduates; the benefits to our teachers and our children will help secure the future prosperity of our country. No matter their route into the profession, we are convinced that teachers should have QTS.

POLICY PROPOSAL 1a: To introduce the entitlement to a professional development programme leading to QTS for all teachers after a maximum of two years' induction and a Masters-level professional qualification after five years.

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.³ In order to improve the quality of teaching and increase the attractiveness of the profession to our best graduates, 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 Masters Degree Equivalence. This will make teaching the profession of choice because of the quality of professional learning.

POLICY PROPOSAL 1b: To implement the blueprint for the College of Teaching⁴ with compulsory membership for all teachers.

Raising the status of the teaching profession in this country to become the finest in the world requires us to implement the blueprint for the College of Teaching. We must commit to the creation of this College, no matter how difficult we might find the process. Government should play a role in bringing The College into being but, thereafter, it should be run for teachers by teachers. Improving pedagogy will be its core purpose. Membership should be compulsory for all teachers, with schools given the freedom to pay fees on teachers' behalf from school budgets. It will be the main body to represent the profession, independent of government, setting standards for teachers based upon on-going research into effective practice. We need to develop a professional culture where all teachers are continually refining their teaching skills; The College will be empowered to enforce school compliance in delivering teachers' entitlement to professional development. The other key function of the College of Teaching will be to support the growth of great school leaders to meet the pressing demand for talented Headteachers.

¹ <http://www.smhc-cpre.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/how-the-worlds-best-performing-school-systems-come-out-on-top-sept-072.pdf>

² Husbands, Chris, Great teachers or great teaching? Why McKinsey got it wrong (October 2013) Blog: <http://ioelondonblog.wordpress.com/2013/10/10/great-teachers-or-great-teaching-why-mckinsey-got-it-wrong/>

³ Yoon et al., *Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement*, Regional Educational Laboratory At Edvance Research Inc, REL 2007 – 0033, http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/pdf/rel_2007033.pdf

⁴ The Prince's Institute, A new member-driven College of Teaching – A Blueprint (February 2014) <http://www.princes-ti.org.uk/CollegeofTeaching/default.shtml>



2. A rigorous, inclusive and flexible curriculum & qualifications framework

The current system of qualifications is highly fragmented, creating numerous barriers to success for individual learners across the spectrum of ability and career orientation. Employers are faced with a difficult challenge to make sense of the qualifications and there is no record of the full scope of a student's educational experience. Diversity of curriculum provision across the range of post-16 institutions leads to students receiving vastly different educational experiences. Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities are virtually excluded from achieving success in the current system. The Headteachers' Roundtable has been working with a range of partners to develop and trial a Baccalaureate model that we believe addresses these issues.

We also recognise that there is a growing consensus around the need for students to continue the study of English and mathematics throughout their compulsory education and our goal is to build that into our framework as the qualifications that we need are developed.

POLICY PROPOSAL 2a: To introduce a National Baccalaureate framework following the Headteachers' Roundtable model.⁵

The National Baccalaureate encompasses technical and academic learning, a personal development programme and an extended personal project: it is a holistic umbrella qualification for all learners with tiered outcomes at Advanced, Intermediate, Foundation and Entry Level. All learners can aspire to achieve the National Baccalaureate qualification accompanied by a universal transcript for employers and Higher Education institutions. In conjunction with effective Information, Advice and Guidance and strategies to support transition for all young people from Year 11 into appropriate post-16 provision, the National Baccalaureate will ensure all students have access to an excellent, rounded education that prepares them for work and for life.

POLICY PROPOSAL 2b: To introduce progressive qualifications in English and mathematics up to Level 3 to facilitate continued study to 18 for all learners.

In principle it should be possible for all learners to access continuous learning in English and mathematics in conjunction with their core learning, whether academic or technical, regardless of the level they reach at Key Stage 4. As a first step, it would be possible for many existing A level and BTEC courses to be adapted to explicitly accommodate aspects of learning in English or mathematics. Longer term, our proposal is to commission examination boards to develop and trial a set of stand-alone slim-volume courses to enable all students to demonstrate their learning up to Level 3 in English and mathematics. Within five years, English and mathematics would become a requirement of the National Baccalaureate at the appropriate level for the final award.



⁵ <http://headteachersroundtable.wordpress.com/2014/01/19/htrt-english-baccalaureate-trial-update-jan-2014/>

3. Intelligent accountability

It's our view that the high-stakes nature of the current accountability frameworks has created a culture in schools that restricts the rate of improvement we need and deters high calibre school leaders from seeking the responsibility of Headship. Inspection processes are flawed and the use of data measures is too simplistic given the consequences for falling below progress and attainment targets. Our system is more orientated towards compliance than towards innovation; more pre-occupied with short-term gains than deep-level improvement. This is extremely unhealthy.

We welcome recent clarifications to the OfSTED framework regarding the end to grading lessons⁶ and proposals for light-touch inspections for Good and Outstanding schools⁷. We also welcome the changes to Performance Measures including the Progress 8 measure. However, there is still much further to go to mitigate the damaging effects of high-stakes inspection, to reduce inconsistency and to include the voice of professionals who know each school well and understand the context in which they operate.

POLICY PROPOSAL 3a: To implement an Intelligent Inspection Framework

Intelligent Inspection will require a raft of reforms to the current framework. These will include:

- Requiring an OfSTED trained Headteacher representative to be included on every inspection team;
- Introducing a school commentary on every OfSTED inspection report prior to publication, referencing peer and self-review perspectives;
- Introducing tiered inspections according to risk assessment so that OfSTED's resources are focused on producing more accurate inspections of schools that need the greatest improvement;
- Conduct lesson observations for context only, removing the flawed practice of lesson grading;
- Inspecting each school's Continuous Professional Development provision in line with our *Developing a World Class Teaching Profession* proposal above.

POLICY PROPOSAL 3b: To stabilise Performance Measures

Our key proposal is that, despite some residual flaws, Performance Measures should not be amended for the period of the next parliament to ensure stability. However, the Ebacc measure should be dropped as, with Progress 8, it is now redundant and will detract from the wider National Baccalaureate development.

In order to avoid the continuing over-simplification of data such that important details are lost, schools should be required to provide a standardised annual data commentary on their website accounting for their performance outcomes and trends over time. This will facilitate intelligent evaluation of the school's performance against a range of criteria. The commentary should include a statement of action against areas of relative concern.



⁶ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/why-do-ofsted-inspectors-observe-individual-lessons-and-how-do-they-evaluate-teaching-schools>

⁷ <http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2014/mar/21/michael-wilshaw-ofsted-speech-ascl>

4. Coherence in a fragmented system

Recent policy has placed great significance on creating an array of new institutional arrangements; as yet there is no firm evidence that this in itself has improved outcomes for young people. It is perverse that certain schools, irrespective of the standards they deliver, are given greater freedoms than others at the same time as introducing national curriculum reforms from which a high proportion of schools can opt out. There is no justification for these differences given that the children we teach do not have control over where they go to school. In order for us to build a system of great schools for all young people, with the institutions and resources we have, we should seek to level out the freedoms and funding opportunities for all schools.

Meanwhile, the biggest division in our system, that between primary and secondary schools, has not been addressed in a systematic fashion at all. Significant gains could be made if the professional expertise of primary and secondary teachers and leaders was exchanged routinely so that teachers have the highest possible expectations of the children they teach in order to maximise the progress children make between Year 5 and Year 8. Cross-phase communication around curriculum and standards should be systematic and a process in which all schools are required to engage.

In both of the proposals below, it is implicit that we need to examine the role of Local Authorities, academy sponsors, multi-academy trusts and chains in maintaining the structures that bind schools together in collaborative partnerships for the benefit of all children. Powers and responsibilities that sit with this middle tier need to be levelled out and strengthened as necessary.

POLICY PROPOSAL 4a: To harmonise freedoms across maintained schools and academies

We should introduce legislation to harmonise school freedoms such that children in any school can access the same broad curriculum entitlements and opportunities, regardless of their school's accountability and financial structures. School funding and access to capital grants should be harmonised regardless of maintained or academy status. The level of school autonomy in relation to delivery of the National Curriculum should apply to all schools equally. Freedoms and constraints surrounding pay and conditions, including a decision to implement performance-related pay or not, should apply to all schools.

POLICY PROPOSAL 4b: To Introduce Transition Standards Grants to incentivise innovation towards systematic primary-secondary progression

We think all schools should be required to participate in processes that secure sustained progress for all children as they make the journey from primary to secondary school. Teachers and school leaders should exchange information routinely on students, standards, curriculum and assessment across Years 5 to Year 8; this should include spending time in classrooms and examining student work and assessments. Given that some excellent practice is already in place and there is a risk that a government-prescribed system would be overly bureaucratic, we propose to stimulate innovation in this area through access to Transition Standards Grants. In addition, schools will need to demonstrate to OfSTED that they have excellent institutional knowledge and evidence of student tracking derived from their engagement with cross-phase processes.



5. Tackling Underachievement at the Source

The Pupil Premium, whilst welcome, has so far had a very limited impact upon raising the educational outcomes of the socio-economically deprived. The key intervention to tackle underachievement needs to be aimed at the families of the very young because the die is cast by the time children reach school age. If we do not tackle this issue at source we will never properly eradicate the cycle of generational underachievement. On that basis, it makes sense to re-direct some Pupil Premium resources towards this area of policy.

The other huge issue which needs addressing is how we attract high quality Headteachers to lead under-performing schools. At the moment there is no incentive for good Headteachers to take on the difficult challenge of leading a school in special measures because failure can mean the end of their careers: the cost of failure is too high. There is a similar issue surrounding English and mathematics specialists.

POLICY PROPOSAL 5a: To develop a National 0-5 Parent Support Strategy

We need to develop with some urgency a national inter-agency strategy supporting all parents to create an optimal home learning environment for under 5s. Whilst recognising that families in socio-economically deprived communities will have the greatest need, our aspiration should be to establish universal entitlements to services that help all parents maximise their childrens' health, well-being and learning in the period before they arrive at school, whenever that may be. Parents who need support to develop their child's language development, self-esteem, school readiness and broader aspirations should have access to education-orientated services in their communities.

Building on the evidence from research in this important field, we propose funding a series of extensive pilot projects that work with parents, schools, health and social services to explore the most effective way to deploy resources. This is a long-term strategy that will require cross-party commitment before the results are seen; however it is unacceptable to ignore it any longer and we need to make start. Within five years, we should be looking towards the implementation of a National 0-5 Parent Support Strategy.

POLICY PROPOSAL 5b: To establish a National Recruitment Fund

In order to attract great leaders to areas of greatest need we should establish a National Recruitment Fund which will provide well-targeted funding for areas of deprivation to attract talented Headteachers, English and mathematics teachers. There should be three-year contracts with security of tenure for talented leaders who commit themselves to working in schools in the most socio-economically deprived areas of the country, with a guaranteed post once they have finished that three-year contract.



A Great Education for All

Less is always more. If we try to change too much we often end up changing very little and damaging what we didn't want to change in the first place.

Our ten policy proposals are a modest collection of coherent ideas which, if implemented fully, would result in a huge improvement to the education system of this country.

Implementing our proposals will take the will of politicians and a commitment to investing in education; without investment, growth is very difficult to establish.

If we are going to grow great teachers and provide a great education for all, we have to invest in improving the quality of education in this country.

It's that simple.

Ten Policies towards a Great Education for All

- 1a: To introduce the entitlement to a professional development programme leading to QTS for all teachers after a maximum of two years' induction and a masters-level professional qualification after five years.
- 1b: To implement the blueprint for the College of Teaching with compulsory membership for all teachers.
- 2a: To introduce a National Baccalaureate framework following the Headteachers' Roundtable model.⁸
- 2b: To introduce progressive qualifications in English and mathematics up to Level 3 to facilitate continued study to 18 for all learners.
- 3a: To implement an Intelligent Inspection Framework.
- 3b: To stabilise Performance Measures.
- 4a: To harmonise freedoms across maintained schools and academies.
- 4b: To Introduce Transition Standards Grants to incentivise innovation towards systematic primary-secondary progression.
- 5a: To develop a National 0-5 Parent Support Strategy.
- 5b: To establish a National Recruitment Fund.



⁸ <http://headteachersroundtable.wordpress.com/2014/01/19/htrt-english-baccalaureate-trial-update-jan-2014/>



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