

## Evidence for Select Committee

### What the purpose of education for children of all ages should be

The purpose of education should be to enable young people to become:

- wise, knowledgeable and skilful citizens; and
- proactive and curious learners

with an individual sense of responsibility for their own health, development and welfare and a collective sense of responsibility for the success of civic and cultural society and the economy.

As John Ruskin put it

“Educate, or govern, they are one and the same word. Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know. It means teaching them to behave as they do not behave . . . It is not teaching the youth of England the shapes of letters and the tricks of numbers; and then leaving them to turn their arithmetic to roguery, and their literature to lust. It is, on the contrary, training them into the perfect exercise and kingly continence of their bodies and souls. It is painful, continual, and difficult work; to be done by kindness and by watching, by warning, by precept, and by praise,—but above all—by example (18:502; 29:485).”

### What measures should be used to evaluate the quality of education against this purpose?

Given the arrival of BIG DATA we should be evaluating the success of the System at several levels through tracking destinations, outcomes and resilience in the face of obstacles over much longer timescales for a sample of the population in each school.

### At system level – our measurements should help us know whether our investment in education is enabling our citizens to:

- Add to the vitality of the economy, civil society and cultural capital (via employment rates across social groupings, economic growth measures, improvements in perceptions about social cohesion across different socio economic groupings and evaluations of the scale and vibrancy of our cultural capital?)
- Fulfil their potential whatever their starting points (measures of reduction in equity gaps)
- Distribute the benefits and assets of our country productively and in ways that close social and economic gaps (measure of social mobility)
- Live healthy, creative and fulfilling lives (physical and mental health trajectories, measure of social cohesion and/ or unrest)

### At school level – is our investment in education in schools resulting in:

- Improving long term trajectories of learning employment, and economic and social welfare for pupils – measured through long term trajectory / destination tracking via big data sets described above
- Improving progress and achievement in core skills in primary – *measured through on line adaptive, diagnostic tests which make a contribution to learning as well as monitoring such as the NGRT test being used by EEF*
- Enhanced social, creative and cultural capacity for young people *based on assessments by teachers and other specialists* of their engagement in the humanities and the arts and through assessment of knowledge and, skills and techniques in realising original ideas and translating them in to things of worth
- Improving progress and achievement in STEAM – measured through standardised tests at 16 and / or 18 and analysis pupil progress tracking within schools
- Improving social skills and techniques (measured by teachers through evaluation of the outcomes of group work and evidence of group collaboration skills and evidence about pupil leadership and volunteering). Employers value this highly and are concerned about young people’s over emphasis on their own individual performance over that of the team / organisation. *There is an urgent need to invest in the development of evaluation measures, ideally ones that can make a formative/ diagnostic as well as a summative contribution.*
- More effective learning environments (whole school for teachers and pupils and within class for pupils) - measured by documentary analysis, observation, surveys and focus groups, ie a continuing of development of the OFSTED framework building, for example on the new assessments regarding CPDL.

### How well is the current education system doing against these measures?

**Improving long term trajectories** – there are serious concerns about the widening gap between the most and least affluent members of society in England. The pay ratio between Chief Executive and employees is out of control. The much higher levels of youth unemployment and part time and low level employment amongst young people are deeply worrying.

**Improving progress and achievement in core skills in primary** – changes in assessment and the curriculum make it difficult to track this. There probably are improvements but it is unclear whether these are improvements in passing test or in achievement.

**Improvements in STEAM** – the lack of confidence in and understanding of the GSCE examination system, especially in the extent of changes, the levels of revisions arising from



re-marking and extent to which arrangements for validation were changed make this very hard to judge - and a matter of serious concern.

**Improving social skills and techniques** – this is not currently measured even though it is matter of great concern and interest to employers. Some schools do invest heavily in student collaboration eg as part of student leadership and via Philosophy for children techniques and student enquiry. But this is vulnerable to budget pressures.

**Enhanced cultural capacity** – not currently systematically measured. The introduction of EBAC jeopardises this.

**More effective learning environments** – not yet known. The creation of a national Standard for CPD is likely to be helpful here.

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