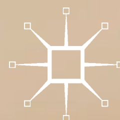
EDUCATION ACROSS THE UNITED KINGDOM 1944–2017

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND PARTNERSHIPS



Education Across the United Kingdom 1944–2017

Robert McCloy
Editor

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Local Government, Accountability and Partnerships

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Preface

Local Government Revisited

The history of education in England is littered with the abolition of institutions before anything better has been put in their place. The replacement of grammar schools *en masse* by comprehensives is a case in point. The removal of local education authorities from any meaningful role in the national system, foreshadowed in the government's White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere', to become in the prime minister's words 'a thing of the past', is another.

Local education authorities were called into being and held their position for over a hundred years to prevent education from falling into what was then called 'formlessness'—precisely the state of affairs which awaits the national system if the proposals in the White Paper, more a blueprint for incoherence, are ever implemented. No-one can say with any clarity where in practical terms the boundaries of responsibility, now being redrawn, between parents, faith groups, private interests, philanthropy, business, the schools themselves, let alone central and local government will finally come to rest, nor how and to what extent, the national system should be planned, if at all.

Pragmatism 'what works' has replaced principle to a dangerous degree. At risk are the founding principles we still take for granted; that education is a birthright not a commodity to be bought and sold, that it should be available to all on an equal basis and that it is a public and not a private responsibility. Becoming clearer in the absence of a mediating layer of responsibility between those who provide and those who use and depend on the education service are the dangers of over-regulation, greater inequality, inefficiency, financial malpractice, lack of transparency, accountability and public involvement, not least, continuing low standards and under-performance.

'Educational Excellence Everywhere' claims that its proposals 'sit squarely' within the government's agenda for greater devolution. They squarely do not. Why of all the public services is education, one of whose traditional strengths was precisely its diffused nature, held to be the only one not able to benefit from and contribute to devolved arrangements? Why are chain stores, banks and the like judged suitable to provide schools but not great cities belonging to the 'northern power-house'?

In this collection of essays, educationists review the contribution local government has made to the national system in the past and argue there is no inherent contradiction between the government's policies towards school improvement and local government as a major partner. On the contrary, many would be advanced through local government's involvement to the benefit of all concerned. The new pattern of devolved arrangements now emerging provides an invaluable opportunity (for a re-vitalised role for local councils) (for the re-vitalised role for local councils outlined here). It should be taken.

London, UK Robert McCloy

Editorial Commentary

Of its nature, the study reflects differing perspectives. Experience of the education service has not been uniform. The voices vary in which accounts are rendered. What they have in common, however, is a perspective of careers mainly spanning the 1960s to the 1990s, and reflection upon subsequent developments. In this, they reflect concerns uppermost and especially characteristic of that period. Issues which later take on sharper relief are not necessarily less important albeit receiving less attention, such as the foundation and development of faith schools, the impact upon learning of digital technology, and the transformation of higher education by its exponential expansion.

The study identifies seven emergent themes of concern.

Education's Purpose

The first and overwhelmingly the most critical relates to the education's purpose. In the beginning, it was broadly recognized as an essential instrument in safeguarding and developing civilization. Herein was the justification for the state's partnership with the churches in the

superintendence of the service but also for the churches' concentration of resources on its provision. This is evidenced, in particular, in Chapter 2 (treating with experience in the immediate post war years), Chapter 4 (describing the church/state dimension), and Chapters 5 and 7 (relating to Northern Ireland and Scotland). However, with the passage of time, this basis became increasingly obscure as society at large became more secular and the state, institutions, and practitioners turned to measurable outcomes and giving priority to aspects of education capable of improving economic performance in a competitive world. This metamorphosis, never complete, is glaringly first witnessed in this narrative in the 1960s as consumerism assumes a stronger position in society and helps to shape education provision, as alluded to, for example, in Chapter 1 (giving an overview), and Chapter 2 (when referring to the Thatcher administration). It climaxes in the Great Education Reform Movement (GERM) and is a dominant theme, again, for example, in Chapter 3, treating with metropolitan England, and Chapters 6 and 7, in discussing developments following devolution in Wales and Scotland. The narrative, notwithstanding, records with approbation, a challenge to GERM and a partial reversion to a more comprehensive commitment to education's purpose, again referred to especially, in Chapters 6 and 7, relating to Wales and Scotland, and taken up as a concluding theme in Chapter 10.

The Changing Character of the Administration of Education

A second major development, central to the focus of this study, was the fundamental change that occurred in the nature of local government's education administration. Initially, the function was largely discrete discharged by a local education committee with high levels of autonomy with little direction from either central government or other local government committees, described in Chapter 2. For the most part, too, the education committee was not in contention with a developed system of governing bodies. This status was buttressed by the Association of Education Committees and reinforced by its associated and authoritative professional journal 'Education', as considered, in particular, in Chapter 9.

Duly this position was undermined: first, by a Labour government intent upon the reorganization of secondary education and then by a Conservative government resolved to take charge of the curriculum and much else (considered, in particular, in Chapters 2 and 3); second, successive re-organizations of local government, affecting both the scope of jurisdictions and internal working, themes in varying contexts of Chapters 2–7, showing how each country was affected; third, the general adoption of corporate management, manifested especially in England, as noted in Chapters 2 and 3; and fourth, the centralizing of authority and the scattering of various elements of the service to other agencies, phenomena noted especially subsequent to devolution and discussed, in varying contexts, in Chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7.

Intrusive Politics

A third characteristic is the growth of politics in education's administration. In the wake of the 1944 legislation there was so much to be done there was a limit to how far the political impulse could reach, as shown in the instances of England (Chapter 2) and Wales (Chapter 6). Initially, it was both commitment to the spirit of partnership enshrined in the legislation and necessity that shaped conduct. Nevertheless, as noted in the narrative, there were national and regional variations: South Wales and other urban areas often witnessed the active engagement of local government politicians in detailed administration. In contrast to later developments, however, professional officers exercised decisive influence. Progressively, party politics gained ascendancy and professional authority declined most notably from the 1970s, as cited in Chapters 2 and 3. Subsequent to devolution, the dominance of local political involvement was increasingly qualified by government ministers, both in Whitehall and in the devolved administrations. Throughout the period, the status of the education officer was progressively compromised by the removal of its statutory status and its more overt subordination to other disciplines.

The Weakening of Local Democracy

Fourthly, the period has witnessed a progressive weakening of democratic accountability for the administration of the education service. In one process, the centralizing of decision-making in Whitehall or devolved administrations, democratic accountability was, in a sense, being emphasized. However, the concomitant necessity to establish intermediate agencies, such as regional commissioners, made this an unreal concept. What was being lost was a tangible sense of democratic localism, as considered, in particular in Chapter 9. The establishment in England of Free Schools constituted an extreme instance. In other instances, for example, in Wales (Chapter 6), the weakening of local government exacerbated by the need for operational economies, resulted in the necessity of authorities having to combine operations thereby obscuring, at a practical level, the identity of those democratically responsible.

The Abandonment of Trust

A fifth casualty of the period was the general abandonment of any real sense of trust. Initially, there was a high presumption that the teacher was a professional trusted as a doctor and lawyer to discharge duties in relative freedom. Supervision had a 'light touch.' Not only was the teacher accorded autonomy in the classroom but institutions were generally given a wide measure of freedom to operate. The curriculum was broadly shaped by examination boards dominated by professional staff; and teachers, in the classroom, exercised wide discretion over methodology and teaching content. Inspection, by the standards of a later age, was characterized by encouragement and gentle guidance: it was neither authoritarian nor inquisitorial. This aspect is discussed, for example, in Chapter 6 relating to Scotland. A critical consequence has been a serious problem of staffing morale, recruitment, and retention.

The Fractioning of Education

A sixth phenomenon has been the fracturing of provision: 'the seamlessness' of the service has been steadily abandoned. The founding legislation laid stress upon the unity of education which included every activity from playgroups to advanced higher education, from the carefully structured formal class to the casually unstructured. This had its genesis in the history of the development of education over centuries as well as a realization that boundaries would necessarily be contrived and that an all-embracing approach would the better serve the community. Sport and recreation, further education, higher education, careers guidance and awards administration are instances of major activities that have been detached from other education provision.

Benign Developments

Whilst the foregoing developments are recognized as being largely deleterious in their impact, amongst phenomena of a benign effect has been a broad willingness to be less insular in the search for reform, as considered, for example in the chapters relating to Wales and Scotland. Thus the experience, for example, of Finland and Ontario, in the quest for education improvement, is recognized as meriting thoughtful adoption in the United Kingdom, in particular, in the promotion of the teacher as a highly skilled, well trained, highly-regarded, and trusted professional, and the deliberate promotion and safeguarding of effective intermediary local supervisory bodies between the state and individual institutions the better to sustain mutual support and raise standards.

These themes help to fashion the concluding chapter offering a new dispensation.

Acknowledgements

This publication of its nature has been a collaborative enterprise. Whilst its early stages sprang essentially from a band of retired educationists wryly witnessing current confusion and resolving to bear witness to a better dispensation, its latter crucial stages owe more to the successful search for a publisher, duly Palgrave Macmillan, their shrewd counsel, and the ordered recasting of the assembled materials. The quest for a publisher, rarely an easy task, was undertaken by Caroline McCloy who brought to the exercise a determined energy, tack, and highly persuasive skills, in liaising between the publisher and contributors, recruiting a most helpful advisor, in the person of Richard Evans, for the chapter on Scotland and locating material relating to the Global Education Reform Movement.

Special indebtedness is owed to Professor Jane Davidson, Wales' first education minister and currently pro vice chancellor of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, who made a decisive contribution to the chapter on Wales. Eleanor Christie, Senior Commissioning Editor for Education at Palgrave Macmillan, thoughtfully prompted making more directly reference in the text to the publication's international relevance and advocating a possible phasing of the historical narrative. The editorial team, led by Robert McCloy, welcomed these proposals and has sought to incorporate them.

Converting the material into the publisher's house style, including font, spacing, treatment of bibliography, foot/end notes, coordinating the index, and finalising the text for the printer, fell to John Ashley, a local historian with practical experience of these time-consuming tasks. Necessarily, this stage involved detailed discussions with contributors. In these latter stages, too, much fell upon Laura Aldridge and Rebecca Wyde, Eleanor's Editorial Assistants, when schedules for the printer and attention turned to arrangements for the launch. The editorial team are especially grateful to all for the help received and needless to say for their tolerance and fore bearing, including that of Simon Blundell, the Reform Club's ever forebearing librarian locating texts not immediately accessible.

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George Low is an editor, author, and publisher by background. After university at Hertford College, Oxford, He joined Purnell's the printer and publisher, as a subeditor on Finding Out magazine, a new weekly for primary education. After three years, went on to be assistant production editor at *The Observer*, where the weekly magazine was being created. After working on the *Guardian*, George Low became deputy editor and then editor of the weekly *Education*, where he became known for his encyclopaedic knowledge of local government and his passion for adult and continuing education. He was the founding editor of *Education Journal*. He was a school governor in Richmond in primary and secondary schools for 20 years. Since retiring he has continued to write for various publications, including *The Times Educational Supplement* and the *Independent* as well as my old company (EPC).

Dr. Robert McCloy was brought up in England and Wales and attended numerous schools following evacuation to South Wales. He attended Lampeter. University of Wales and St. Catherine's College, Oxford and went on to teacher training in Birmingham. Having experienced local government through the Youth Council he entered education administration, his aim—to make a positive difference. This he did and rose quickly through the ranks in Cambridge, London Borough of Ealing to become Head of Education and Recreation of Kingston Upon Thames Surrey for some years and was made Chief Executive of the council. He has been both member and Chair of several professional organisations as well as being a school governor for consecutive years. Since retiring Dr. McCloy has completed a Ph.D., continued to study and write prolifically.

Donald Naismith, CBE entered education administration in Bradford after a spell of teaching at Crown Woods Comprehensive School, Greenwich. Between 1974 and 1994 he was successively director of

education for the London Boroughs of Richmond upon Thames, Croydon and Wandsworth, whose policies helped to shape and advance Margaret Thatcher's educational reforms. He was responsible for the first publication of examination results (Richmond), the resumption of responsibility for the curriculum by Croydon Council which triggered government acceptance of the idea of the national curriculum and replacing Wandsworth's comprehensive system with one based on specialist and free-standing schools following the abolition of ILEA, in so doing coming as near as possible to Margaret Thatcher's ideal of a social market, demand-led system. On his retirement, he was appointed CBE and Chevalier des Palmes Académiques.

1

They Knew Not Whither They Travelled: A Tour d' Horizon

Robert McCloy

Illusion and Reality

In the beginning, it seemed such a noble quest. Yet, as the years passed that dream seemed to fade and more mundane concerns became the focus of attention in much that was done and attempted in the politics of education, the subject of the following historical survey. At the subject's core are myths galore: that larger institutions, higher expenditure and bespoke premises would yield better results, however defined; that politicians make policy leaving it to others to carry it out; that corporate management has been a boon, both to local government and to education, that the quest to reorganize is rationally rooted; and that it can be presumed reforms to address perceived deficiencies will, at the very least, be an antidote to inertia. Such tacitly-held assumptions will be placed beneath the lens as will be other, and, for the most part, more positive beliefs entertained over the last seventy years. For, truth to tell, it is a record of accomplishment, as well as

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one of thrashing around to marginal beneficial effect, if the international comparative performance tables are to be believed.

A History in Three Phases

The narrative falls into three phases: 1945–1979, 1979–1997, and 1997 to the present. The phases are not discrete and alternative categorization would be possible, for example, there is a case for identifying the winter of 1973/1974, under a Labour government, as the commencement of the second phase as demonstrated in Chapter 3. It will be noted, too, in Chapter 5, that in the case of Northern Ireland, the commencement of the phases is at variance occasioned by local conditions. Nevertheless, what is proposed here accommodates fundamental shifts in emphasis in the nature and operation of local government's education service, the second phase's commencement in 1979 coinciding with the advent of a Conservative government. The first was categorized by the high autonomy of that service; its focus upon supply, of staff, buildings, and resources generally; its general dominance; its operation within a culture of trust with its partners, central government, the churches, parents, and teachers; its tacit assumption that the purpose of education was about cultural enrichment; and its reluctance either to direct the curriculum or to be inquisitorial. The second phase, its commencement the advent of the Thatcher administration; confirmation of the rise of consumerism; the passing of a less deferential age; and the subordination of the education service to corporate management. The third phase, commencing on the eve of the new millennium, coincides with devolution; a general adaptation of the Global Education Reform Movement, a focus upon institutional performance and assessment, international comparisons, and education's economic purpose; a side-lining of local government; centralizing of direction; and, in England, free schools, and academies.

Beyond These Islands

Though the focus of immediate attention is the United Kingdom, it is little to be doubted that what is to be revealed had its counterpart in other countries. The lessons learnt here might well have relevance elsewhere. Nor need it be supposed that any special virtue attaches to experience in these islands.

In any case, pioneering institutions can ossify and have often more to learn in due time from those they once inspired. It is also the case that there is much that has a common foundation throughout the world. The research, for example, of Dunbar, has convincingly shown that in general, the optimum organization for relationships of any significant substance numbers not more than 120, and that this has remained the case for thousands of years and is commonplace throughout the world. By the same token, the insights offered by Elmore relating to the factors principally contributing to real and lasting institutional success clearly merit replication. His analysis of conditions in New York's second district shows how sustained improvement throughout a system, rather than in an isolated and necessarily contrived situation subjected to a concentrated energy, can be accomplished.

The writer's own insights, gathered in study tours of British Columbia, Ontario, Finland, Texas, and West Virginia, powerfully suggest a commonality of basic conditions and the absolute need to be open to learn from each other's experience. As critically noted in the following account, many countries were outperforming the UK and were successfully finding the means to produce exemplary results. It was not to be doubted that here was warrant to believe in the need for an exchange of practices. As demonstrated in the following narrative, the findings of the OECD proved to be a decisive influence on UK politicians and educationists. Reactions however, varied. Some defensively, initially challenging their relevance or interpretation. Duly, their validity accepted, they became the spur to reform. This latter process has led to much soul-searching and, again, as illustrated in the narrative, some of the reactions proved to be, in the light of subsequent reviews, harmful over-reactions. Nevertheless, the OECD has proved to be a major influence for good and an important means by which trial and error in each country can play its part in raising international standards.

A United Kingdom Analysis

What is being examined relates to the four home countries. Whilst some deal with England, with its considerably larger population and because many London perspectives informed developments more

widely, particular attention has also been paid to Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Therein there are common characteristics: comparable patterns of social mobility and inequality, similar patterns of certification, and a labour market that had sustained a distinct pattern of a relatively low level of full-time post 16 education and training. There are differences in nomenclature. But beyond that, the patterns were never identical. Relations between the principal actors—churches, teachers, parents, government, and local government—greatly vary. There are strong differences in attitude towards selection and social inclusion. The roles of the churches and private education vary considerably between the four countries. The economic conditions of Wales and Scotland powerfully shaped Britain's welfare state. Since the 1970s, Conservatives and New Labour have remade Britain with the preoccupation of target setting and powerful institutional management. There is, in consequence, a strong case for studying what has worked or not worked throughout the four countries.

Phase 1: 1945–1979

The principal initial focus is from the passing of the Education Act of 1944 [1945, in Scotland, 1947 in Northern Ireland] to the dawn of the Thatcher age. The opening scene is set in post-war Britain, when the local education authorities metaphorically swam ashore as triumphal legions promising peace and plenty. The nature of the 1944 constitutional settlement will be considered. In essence, the picture painted will be one of hope and general consensus about the ability of education to create a better world.

The 1944 settlement neither sought rigid conformity nor a command system wherein authority filtered down from the minister. What was put in place was a system of dispersed responsibility with the classroom teacher expected to enjoy high autonomy within the classroom. The head teacher above all to be a teacher, expected to lead by example; and governing and managing bodies called upon to exercise a watchful eye, give general guidance and encourage support. The education committee, made up of all members of the local council but, significantly,

complemented by representatives of the churches and the teaching professions, was foremost the body to embrace all parties in the interests of education. It was there to give local accountability, encourage an equitable allocation of public resources, give general superintendence, and provide common services. It was not intended to be the direct manager of all that went on in the education service. Essentially, it was a pluralist arrangement with the churches occupying a crucial position. In England, the Church of England was a major provider having often been, at an earlier stage, the *only* provider. Its stake in Wales was proportionately smaller. The Roman Catholic Church also had a significant presence in all four countries. Other churches, too, were represented in the overall provision.

It is important to reflect upon what was then recognized as the purpose of education. It was palpably intended to go beyond the imparting of utilitarian skills: it was to mould character, impart values, and be a social instrument. In short, it was an agent of civilization. When Butler briefed the War Cabinet on the contents of the legislation the Nazis had yet to be defeated and he alluded to this wider role.[1] The carefully negotiated arrangements about the churches' stake in provision had their genesis in the recognition of education's decisive part in communicating values and nurturing society. There were differences of view as to how far the churches, institutions, and individuals were at liberty to fix the parameters of provision, but there would have been few then who would have sought to limit them to the inculcation of skills. Whilst there was an overt determination to remove ignorance, to impart a body of knowledge, there was also a general recognition that there was value in learning for its own sake in the pursuit of human happiness. In this moment of hope and promise, in the wake of pre-war and wartime grief, progressive education with its emphasis upon a child-centric individual fulfilment flourished.

They Never Had It So Good

As austerity gave way to a measure of prosperity, from the late 1950s, supply problems eased and the pace of school and college building accelerated. Much was left to individual officers, delegation was taken

for granted, agonizing and consultation by the standards of a later age, were relatively limited. Increasing national prosperity however, meant that staffing remained a serious problem. Whilst limited opportunities in the interwar period had been a boon to the teaching profession, the wider opportunities now available meant that it was harder for local education authorities to recruit and retain gifted staff. The brave secondary modern school and technical school, intended to enjoy parity of esteem with the grammar school, were often casualties as they struggled to cope with large classes and many pupils yet to be inspired by a relevant curriculum that remained elusive.

Notwithstanding, for the most part, councillors, serving on education committees and on managing and governing bodies, were caught up in a commitment to education foremost, rather than to party politics. Indeed the scale and the significance of the education service often made it the preferred route to office rather than other local government functions. The focus however, remained on the supply of resources: recruiting staff and commissioning property. In all this, there was a general willingness for education committees and institutional governing bodies to be guided by professional staff.

Union militancy was a key factor since with overall shortages of staff it was possible for staff to negotiate from a position of relative strength as education officers and heads of institutions sought to fill posts. It cannot be doubted that there were many appointments made, and subsequent indifferent performances ignored that would not have been countenanced in earlier or later years when recruitment was easier. For the moment however, the earlier substantial respect for institutions, and the local education authority was one such, having been raised to heroic status by the 1944 Act, still held. However, tensions were already present and indeed education, along with the destabilizing effect of war, the impact of increasing mobility and the cultural effect of mass entertainment, were challenging old certainties of both virtue and humbug.

Much of substance, nevertheless, was accomplished, apart from acquiring sites and planning new buildings on a vast scale, including those for further and advanced education. Inspection and advisory services now flourished, their *modu*s *vivendi* replicating best practice in current modern management, of encouraging and supporting, rather

than inquisitional visitation. Classroom supplies multiplied and specialist provision, in the form, for example, of music and outdoor pursuit centres, now developed. Supporting students in advanced education significantly increased. Locally, the education service was left to get on with its affairs. Other local government departments in any case, had their own pressing priorities.

However, the 1960s were to prove a watershed. What were in effect to be a series of revolutions, spurred by war and much else, had been gestating somewhat in the period of austerity and its aftermath. A return of a Labour government in 1964, part cause and part effect, was now to take place, providing the first revolution, profoundly affecting what had been when viewed retrospectively, a period of stability for the local education authority.

It All Starts Falling Apart: The First Revolution

The 1960s and 1970s were in effect the period of the first revolution. In the beginning, in spite of an exponential expansion that was taking place, local government structures and the local education authority were recognizably the same as had existed for much of the century, albeit, as noted, the local education authority's position had been powerfully buttressed by the 1944 Act. Local party politics in the pursuit of distinctive education policies were relatively muted: professional responsibility generally prevailed. Corporate management was largely non-existent though financial and architectural services were decisive contributors to the education service. By the end of the period, all had been fundamentally disturbed.

An initial catalyst had been the Labour government's plan to establish comprehensive secondary schools. The instrument in England and Wales was statutory guidance in the form of circular 10/65. Parallel processes occurred in Scotland. The rationale for change was accepted by many and was, by no means then, a matter of party political commitment. Many in the local education authority world, whilst they had often sought to promote the secondary modern and technical school to the end that they could genuinely enjoy parity of esteem with the

grammar school, knew well that their attempts were failing. It was not simply a case of parents and the public at large harbouring misconceptions, the reality was that it was harder to staff secondary modern and technical schools in the numbers and with the skills needed. In spite of much effort to improve selection procedures 'the eleven plus' examination remained an imprecise tool. Even if it proved to be a reliable predictor of performance, the overall debilitating effect on secondary education was considerable. That is not to deny that there were exemplary secondary modern and technical schools that rose above the inequalities of the system. They might have succeeded if they had been granted resources to facilitate highly specialized provision, smaller classes alongside other measures conferring higher community recognition, including staff remuneration.

As further and higher education expanded, further tensions developed: the former became a competitor for the school sixth form, the latter for the university. Throughout, what was bedevilling development was a snobbishness as to the perceived inferiority of the practical and the technological running in parallel, with the fact that in both, the secondary modern and technical school and later the polytechnic, the vast redirection of resources that would be needed to ensure that each was distinctive and equal to its competitor, was not to hand. A fundamental shift in cultural values would have been needed.

Phase 2: 1979–1997

Though, as indicated, the initial phase, characterized by relationships of trust between the partners of government, local government, the churches, and teachers, had been challenged, it remained recognizable. With a clarity, more obvious in retrospect than at the time, local education services had enjoyed high autonomy, without the involvement of corporate management, within local government, and focussed overwhelmingly and successfully upon the supply of services, in a relationship of trust with institutions, rarely interfering with the curriculum. It was now set to change dramatically: the historical narrative's initial phase was over. The second phase, 1979–1997, coincides with Conservative governments in office.

As noted, the metamorphosis had begun to take place under an earlier Labour administration and it would be mistaken to assume that the changes which were now to accelerate were completely unrelated to what had already taken place. Party politics had already spread throughout local government with individual members increasingly committed to support specific actions, agreeing in private prior to committee meetings their voting plans. Local government, in its territorial character as well as its internal workings had been reorganized. Parents, in effect, as consumers of a public service, became generally more articulate. Amidst a general rise in prosperity, not only was a higher standard of provision possible, but also the public at large aspired to higher standards. The autonomy of teachers was severely compromised. Progressive education was increasingly viewed as over-indulgent: a new purposefulness now became orthodox. These developments were not unrelated. Greater prosperity came with greater consumerism and competition. The demand for measurement intensified, wherein there was a danger that an institution's more abstract purposes, its role in inculcating cultural values and less susceptible to such an analysis, could be marginalized. Though surely never officially intended, as society in general became more materialistic and secular, that wider and more generous civilizing mission could become more elusive. A parallel managerial effect was increasingly manifested in higher education where the demand for quantity output and economy seemed to have a similar effect.

Nationally, the robust and insular Association of Education Committees (AEC) had yielded to the Council of Local Education Authorities (CLEA), a compound of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities and the County Council Association. AEC was formally wound up in 1977. This new arrangement was most palpably an instrument of corporate local government within which education was a subset, though one of significance.

Losing patience with local education authorities resisting comprehensive education, the Labour government had brought in legislation to reform by compulsion. Whilst the outgoing Labour government in its early years had sought to collaborate with the local education authorities, the churches and teachers' unions, recognizing them as partners in the provision of education, their actions however benignly intended,

nevertheless crucially undermined the system. The cajoling of education authorities to create comprehensive schools, the corralling of higher education institutions into larger units brought the ministry into micro-management and, ultimately irrevocably compromised the very purpose of the local education authority.

The Conservative government was more combative in style. As far as the local education authority was concerned it was really a case of the good cop [Labour] and the bad cop [Conservative]: neither was sympathetic to promoting the cause of the local education authority. The former's countenance might have been friendlier and the latter's grimmer, but there was little to choose between them in the impact they had upon local government. The remaining grammar schools were saved. In the new dispensation, priority was quickly given to the market economy in education and promoting greater commercial involvement in the provision of local government services. This hardly chimed well with the guiding principle of promoting equity that local education authorities had sympathetically endorsed following the enactment of the 1944 legislation.

In parallel, was a determination to cut expenditure. Devolution of greater responsibility to individual educational institutions was seized upon, not simply because it constituted a more rational way of working and as such had long been espoused by many authorities, but, as some supposed, in enactment of the principle of *divide et imperator*. Though the legal fragility of catchment areas for secondary schools had been long understood within local education authorities, they had generally been maintained in the interests of economical planning and accepted by most parents. However in an age of greater parental power, the principle was put to the legal test. The significant *Greenwich* judgment swept away the hitherto semi-inviolate catchment area and another prop in the structure was removed.

Here was a government not at heart committed to working with the old partners: the general approach was accordingly not to retreat from the incursions made by its predecessor but rather to expand the campaign. In a sphere where the economy dictated further public subvention, training, and employment, the government promoted the cause of the Manpower Services Commission and a comprehensive network of

area manpower boards. It was valid enough to give employers a larger stake but this could have been achieved, as it generally was in colleges of further education, by adjustment to arrangements within the local education authorities, had there not been a determination that they be bypassed. This initiative was, in effect, to develop a parallel administrative network, in part duplicating the mission of the local education authority as envisaged in the 1944 Act. It required much dexterity on the part of LEA officers and principals of further education colleges who, now *Janus*-like, faced two ways. It was not long however, in this fracturing world, before the area manpower boards were succeeded by training and enterprise councils, and in turn, by training councils. In this process the writer, a self-confessed Vicar of Bray figure, latterly a director of education and then chief executive, sought to work with the changing world, becoming a member of the West London Area Manpower board and subsequently its chairman. Likewise rather than resisting their creation, he played a part in creating a training and enterprise council for South West London based upon Kingston, and served as chief executive adviser to the education committee of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. Duly, nevertheless, the local education authorities lost control of the polytechnics, the colleges and institutes of higher education, the sixth form colleges, and colleges of further education, most becoming self-governing corporations.

As for the school sector, the local education authority's role became more tenuous, with much delegation now, by compulsion, transferred to governing bodies. Schools could also now ballot to sever their links with the LEA and become grant-maintained schools, being funded directly by the ministry which would recover the cost from the LEA. The 1988 Education Reform Act, not applicable to Scotland, also brought in the national curriculum, with core foundation subjects, pupil testing against attainment targets and, in its wake, published school performance league tables. The *secret garden*, earlier incautiously entered by a Labour government, was now being trampled upon with furious energy.

In the public higher education sector, the polytechnics aspired to be numbered amongst the universities, and in spite of spirited efforts by local education authorities to honour the substance of the original

intention, that polytechnics should be locally rooted with a distinctive technological bias, when offered the opportunity to be universities free of local authority control, eagerly accommodated the government's desire, for reasons short of altruism. The Kingston authority had firmly resolved to encourage its polytechnic, of which it was especially proud, to develop a distinctive 'applied learning' agenda with an emphasis upon engineering, and vigorously supported the polytechnics' National Advisory Body.

The 'wind of change' continued to blow across the local education authorities. A Downing Street conference in 1985, attended by the writer, played its part in examining what was now needed in the world of education. There was general unanimity that political involvement in education's management at a local level had to be curbed, and that in higher education performance had to be measured, but that the sector itself should play the key role in determining the instruments. It was not good news for the shrinking world of the local education authority. A soul-searching Society of Local Government Chief Executives (SOLACE) submitted a paper about the changing role of councillors in this turbulent world.[2] Concern as to the future was the focus of CLEA's conference in 1991 when Howard Davies, in his role as chairman of the Audit Commission, doubted whether LEAs could or should survive, it falling to the writer to counter the argument.[3] A reconfiguration of the boundaries of authorities offered another opportunity for further destabilizing an already fragile world. That exercise set out to create unitary authorities throughout England in the belief that a two-tier system was expensive and confusing. It ended in a mishmash of some unitaries and the maintenance of a two-tier arrangement elsewhere, and, arguably, greater confusion.[4] As for Wales and Scotland, uniformity prevailed with unitary authorities.

Phase 3: 1997 to the Present

The second phase in this historical narrative, as indicated, was characterized by an accelerating ambivalence concerning the nature of local government's role. Central government had become more assertive, within local government education was subordinated to closer local political scrutiny and

corporate management assumed a dominant position. The abolition of the ACE had been a crucial event. However, further radical change was now to occur. Much, of course, had been pre-figured, for example, the Education Reform Act, applicable to England and Wales, and the legislation removing Further Education from local government. Financial pressures resulted in a reduction of local authority advisory services coinciding with central government's insistence that local government was responsible for institutional outcomes. The Global Education Reform Movement, now variously interpreted in each of the four countries, resulted in a focus upon institutional improvement and increasing government [Whitehall and devolved] direction with a further diminishing of the role of local government. Ironically, this is leading to the emergence of new ad hoc regional public administrations as manifested in regional education commissioners, in England; regional school improvement consortia, in Wales; a possible regional education network, in Scotland; and the establishment of new education regions, in Northern Ireland.

With New Labour, devolution accentuated differences between the four home countries. In Northern Ireland education was to be subject to equal opportunity scrutiny, the influence of Ulster Unionists and the Roman Catholic bishops restricted, and the end of secondary selection and league table publication announced. In Scotland, in contrast to England spending was higher, comprehensive education almost universal, and there was less social segregation. There was an emphasis upon accountable management but nevertheless a higher cooperation between the teachers' profession and the state than in England. In Wales, there was general comprehensive school provision, proportionately fewer church schools and less social segregation than in England; and high respect for teachers but increasing concern about the system's success. All four countries nevertheless accepted the need to craft education to compete internationally.

The return of Blair's Labour government confirmed the downward trajectory for the local education authority in England. Somewhat as a bone thrown at Labour-controlled authorities, the grant-maintained schools established by the Conservatives were returned to the general superintendence of the authorities. However there could be no mistaking as to the true purposes of the new regime. The intention had been

to abolish local education authorities and it was only the prospect of general unwelcome protests that saved them, at least for the moment. As it was, the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998, took further the initiatives of the Conservatives. 'County' schools became 'community' schools, a nomenclature making more obscure the relationship with the former county and county borough councils. The abolition of grammar schools became dependent upon a local vote. The concept of the Conservative's city technology colleges was developed to include additional specialisms [technology, arts, languages, sports] and would no longer be limited to urban areas. Up to 10% of pupils could be selected according to aptitude. It was envisaged that ultimately all secondary schools would be so transformed.

In the ministerial high command of education, school and social services for young people were to be brigaded, encouraging a parallel reordering in local government, though some councils had anticipated the move. Higher education, including the inheritance from the local education authorities was now linked to the ministry responsible for industry. This constituted a further destabilizing of the local education authority by the fusion of what was left with a major part of social services that had, since the Seebohm reforms, created a comprehensive family-based caring service with a distinctive culture, and staff trained especially for that task. Initially, at least, it seemed likely that time would elapse before the benefits of this union outweighed the problems arising from officers unfamiliar, and often untrained, for their new work.

March 2016 witnessed announcements by the Cameron government of its intention to abolish substantially local authority involvement in education as far as England was concerned, its apotheosis in centralizing decision-making, having been achieved when Gove, as education minister, personally determined the school history curriculum. However, as respite, with a change of government consequent upon the Brexit referendum, the new government aborted the March decision and relocated Higher Education within the Education ministry. To the grief of many, the May government announced its intention to permit the establishment of new grammar schools. This controversial proposal was dropped in the wake of the failure of the administration to win the hoped-for substantial parliamentary majority in a suddenly convened

election. In the unexpected new conditions, coinciding with outbreaks of extremist violence, a search for consensus now prevailed, offering some financial easement for education and, hopefully, its more active engagement in countering extremism, and, along the way, a deeper understanding of the purposes of education.

Assessment

On the eve of the fading away of the last vestiges of the local education authority in England, remnants possibly surviving elsewhere, it is possible to offer a judgment as to why the collapse of such a once significant institution occurred. Beyond the truism that it is the fate of all institutions to decay, it is possible to identify both external and internal agents at work. As for the former, it is now clear that the impulses of the mid-1960s, on the part of the ministry which first breeched the historic partnership, were set to grow stronger as the years passed. Blood had been scented. It mattered not whether Labour or Conservative led the ministry: the process was in one direction only, towards the eclipse of the local education authority.

Ostensibly, the aim in mind was the improvement of education but the means swung from ministerial micromanagement to acceptance of a kind of new age free state wherein each institution become a law unto itself though subject to inquisitional visitation. The ministry's apparent manic behaviour was prompted by a sincere but desperate search for an ideal system, or, at the very least, one that would assuage the perceived concerns of an increasingly articulate, consumer-driven public. The process has yet to be played out. At one level, it is certainly possible to point to improving institutions and there are instances where excellence has replaced failure. But progress is not uniform. Institutions upon which the spotlight shine often improve but there are others in their shadow that do not. In a market economy of course, it is not the case that all enterprises survive and it provides no demonstration that eventually there will be universal excellence. The local education authorities were essentially custodians of equality and even if that state were never fully attained it was surely part of their hard wiring. In an age

of generally increasing prosperity, consumerism prevailed and choice became an accepted and desirable end in itself, and because it was thought that this would most assuredly stimulate improvement.

Mobility, too, had also irrevocably compromised territorial community: increasingly more people lived in one local government area and traveled to work to another. Education was not isolated from these social changes and in many instances would have been a stimulus to the very conditions to which it could fall prey. The overall period also progressively witnessed a bureaucratic elaboration of procedures as established routines were found wanting or in need of refinement. It need not be supposed that this was malign in intent: the purposes were generally crafted with the sole purpose of effecting improvement. Nevertheless as in ancient *Byzantium*, the cumulative effect was to create greater complexity and cost. It was not simply issues of health and safety that gave rise to this effect. In the attempt to embrace the best practice of the commercial world, a premium was placed upon the precise definition of goals, designing programmes to ensure their accomplishment and the pursuit of measurable outcomes. Whilst this energy brought some greater clarity it was surely achieved at a great price: time so spent would not necessarily be available for other tasks, such as crucial personal professional relationships.

A major casualty has been the marginalization of the civilizing agenda, taken for granted in 1944, as consumerism and the market economy have increasingly taken command. Ironically a state-driven focus upon assessment and measurement, ostensibly intended to raise standards and improve the UK's international competitiveness has failed, as revealed in published statistics. Possibly, suggesting the limitations of this approach is the fact that the UK, the fifth most prosperous world economy, according to some assessments, remains a very popular destination for migrants, some citing the very qualities that impelled the 1944 legislation and which have been increasingly, but accidentally, marginalized. Amongst these may be cited a reputation for free speech, fair play, absence of corruption, tolerance in matters of belief and politics, freedom of movement, equality under the law, and creative expression. A further dimension is the fact that pressure upon teachers

taught to excel, needs to be tempered by a rigorous examination, into such deleterious effects as low morale and resignation on the part of the former and disaffection and psychological disturbance of the latter.

Looking back over the years, one further fundamental casualty was a failure to assess with any degree of objectivity the extent to which the 1944 settlement had succeeded or failed; and whether a sharply focused determination to make it work, with necessary adjustments, would have brought superior results, at lower cost and less waste, than most of the succeeding reforms, however well intended.

Though, obviously, it would be possible to take an alternative date as the starting point, the seminal character of the 1944 legislation suggests its selection. In touching upon some of the key developments that have occurred since, the narrative suggests that some were ill-advised and others so much part and parcel of larger social and cultural changes that they could no more be resisted than the incoming tide. Of the former may be counted: the excessive trespass by central government into the *secret garden* of the classroom. Whitehall-imposed costly regulation, a concentration upon measuring at the price of wider issues, and the distraction locally, to marginal beneficial effect, of excessive party politics, corporate management and a semi-constant predilection to embark upon reform without thoughtful analysis of the reasons. Of the latter, which must be accepted with good grace, are the public's demand for choice, rising standards, and reasonable equity.

These conclusions are predicated on the notions that, within reason, education's excellence is better ensured by general stability, and that some form of accountable local entity, juxtaposed between the state and individual institutions is necessary to hold the ring, guarantee reasonable equity and provide or license, at reasonable cost, common services. In essence, in an imperfect world, the market, with important elements of choice fully to be encouraged, has to be regulated for the avoidance of abuse. The restoration of an earlier form of the local education authority is neither possible nor desirable. How a new structure might be fashioned is the subject of an optimistic coda to this study.

Notes

1. Secret Draft White Paper, 'Educational Reconstruction,' War Cabinet, July 9, 1943.
2. SOLACE submission, including a contribution of the writer, to the Audit Commission, May, 1990.
3. The theme was further developed at a conference promoted by Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte in January, 1992.
4. The writer contributed a paper to the Association of District Councils to this effect in September, 1994.

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2

Partnership and Confidence 1944–1979

Robert McCloy

Prologue … When I was a child I saw darkly … then face to face …

The purpose of this chapter, treating with the first phase of this book's historical narrative, had been to give one person's account of the 1944 Act's impact. It turns out to be a tale of education's inequalities and duly a quest for their amelioration, prompting *en route* an addiction for sociology and community and much trimming of sails. Only with hindsight is this pattern discernible: at the time it seemed much more accidental.

In the beginning, there was a moment when local government had reached its zenith but was embarking upon its decline, first, with the loss of individual welfare support, then property evaluation, and shortly, the public utilities. Momentarily, there was to be a high noon: the semi-autonomous local education authority. Initially witnessed, as through a glass darkly; then, with increasing clarity; and culminating,

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with a more assured understanding. The first quickly-moving scenes are set in wartime ‘Doodlebug Alley’, with a school boy’s experience of council and private education; in east Kent in war’s immediate aftermath, of a church secondary school; and then in south Wales, of private and local authority grammar schools, and a first close encounter with council administration. Thereafter, came higher education in Lampeter, Oxford, and Birmingham, providing insights into the inequalities of provision. Work in Birmingham, in the early 1960s, included teaching in grammar and bilateral schools, and a community centre wardenship, and dealings with city hall. Subsequent culminating scenes are set in Cambridgeshire and London. The narrative falls into three parts: vagrant student, neophyte administrator, and professional bureaucrat, and concludes with an assessment.

Part 1: Vagrant Student

The Promise of a Better World

The opening scene is set in the Second World War, when, as noted in the tour d’horizon, the local education authorities metaphorically swam ashore as triumphal legions promising peace and plenty. This coincided with another invasion, of Normandy, holding the greater attention of most, including the writer, who accompanied his godfather in checking the seaworthiness of landing craft.

Much of the Thinking Had Been Around for a Long Time

The 1944 Act, announcing the new order, was hardly the stuff of novelty. Much had been rehearsed in earlier reforms: the Hadow report of 1926[1] would segregate infant and junior school provision from secondary provision; the Spens report, a decade later,[2] sought greater specialization in secondary education and a rise in the leaving age. The interwar financial crisis and the looming war limited what could be done.

By 1939, 88% of the secondary school population still remained in elementary schools. There was now however, a new determination to turn dreams into reality.

The Essence of the New Order

The act specified free full-time education for all between the ages of five and fifteen. Beyond eleven all were to receive at least four years of full-time education in secondary schools designed for their needs. As soon as possible, the full-time leaving age was to be raised to sixteen. There was much more, as made clear by R. A. Butler, the president of the board of education, in introducing the second reading: *there was full commitment to participative working with local authorities, the churches and professional staff*. There would be a system of full and part-time further education, now an LEA duty, and provision covering health and welfare, namely, meals, milk, medical inspections and assessment, employment advice, transport and, as necessary, clothing.[3]

Current Realities

The semi-autonomy of the service was fiercely protected by education officers and by the new ministry. Party politics was a temperate activity. Staffing and planning were major preoccupations. Improvisation was characteristic of the period. Teachers, variously competent, gifted, or failing, were trusted to do their best; classes often large, accommodation inadequate, materials in short supply and libraries, if existing, modestly stocked. By standards later prevailing, discipline was high. The welfare elements were of a piece, addressing urgent need.

A 'Liberal' Settlement

The Act was a characteristic British compromise: it sought to accommodate, within a public system, local government and the church. Recognizing the leading role of the local education authority, it buttressed

the Church's position by the instruments of voluntary controlled and aided schools, the agreed syllabus for religious education, membership of the local education authority and a daily act of Christian worship in all schools.

Unfinished Business

There were ambiguities. Society had been destabilised by war. Whilst Butler and the Conservative party knew that there could be no restoration of an earlier social order, they practised gradualism. Others sought more radical solutions. Shortly, with a Labour government, nationalization of industry to accomplish equity was an energy informing debate about the new order, of which education had been a first measure. Two further reforms loomed: private education's abolition and schools serving balanced communities, the former anticipated by many, the latter sketched on the planner's drawing board, optimistically following the creation of the garden cities.[4] Expectation was high but fate again played its part. The underpinning of the system—that all secondary schools would enjoy *parity of esteem*—became a casualty, attributable to imprecision, austerity and social competiveness.

As Viewed Imperfectly at the Time

When the white paper[5] was published in 1943, the writer knew not of its existence: he was but eight years old. Nevertheless, he was witness to the disruptive effect of evacuation: had already attended three schools, one maintained by Monmouthshire county council, a Roman Catholic convent school in London, and shortly another, maintained by Kent county council in Eynsford, a village in 'Doodlebug Alley'. This institution, derisively referred to as 'the council school', accommodated mixed infants and juniors in three gas-lit classrooms with coal fires, whitewashed walls, outside toilets, a barren playground with air raid shelter, to which the classes frequently fled to sing 'Ten Green Bottles', or so it seemed.

Earlier, a local board school had been established, incorporating the village British trust school, whose premises were unfit, which was duly inherited by Kent County Council. Hitherto, there had been a parallel

National school [Church of England]. At the prompting of the county council the two schools were to amalgamate, the National Society, at the prompting of the vicar, agreeing to yield its stake in local provision. However, after discussion, it was agreed that the former National school building would become the council's senior school. That school yet operated but its days were numbered and this remnant of the church's direct role in local education, which had existed since the seventeenth century, when pupils had assembled in the church chancel, passed into history. Though the church ceased providing a school it played a decisive role in management, providing a member and often the chairman of the managing body.

Nothing is remembered of what was learnt in the infant and junior school: the regime neither oppressive nor solicitous. The teachers were women. Class teaching with reliance upon the blackboard, along with recital of tables with the singing of 'The British Grenadier', are recalled. The highlight was a Christmas play, of unknown plot, featuring pupils holding rods to which were attached cardboard stars. One featured the moon. In rehearsal this was the writer's responsibility. For the live performance in the village hall, relegated to the ranks, an acting career ended. This negative view, echoed in an HMI report, needs to be placed in the context of regular 'Doodlebug' alerts and evacuation of the classroom. On the positive side, from the perspective of an administrator urging head teachers to be foremost teachers, as so many fled the classroom to 'do' administration, the head had a full-time teaching load and possessed neither office nor secretary with telephone.[6]

The parish church was where the writer's father played the organ and where, without singing competence, the writer was enrolled as the solitary chorister, though it fell to him to pump the organ. The father, a man of the theatre, now in the Royal Army Medical Corps locally stationed, produced Saturday morning woodwork lesson shows in the village hall engaging members of the corps, to the approbation of the village, which in spite of, or because of bombardment housed, six barrage balloon sites and practised military manoeuvres and D-day preparations. It was a lively community. It seemed a self-contained world: everybody knew everybody and though there was a recognizably clear-cut social order, with landed gentry at Lullingstone Castle, a 'squire' and his wife

living in ‘Little Mote’, the Alexanders, the principal farmers, and the vicar, astride the structure, all participated in community activities, including bonfire night, harvesting, Christmas parties, and victory celebrations. This was true also of soldiers and airmen, the latter welcoming the young taking a lively interest in their barrage balloons.

The social structure was reinforced by the fact that most secondary school pupils remained in the village, in the former National school building, where pupils were segregated, with modest specialist rooms: for boys technical work; girls, domestic science. This senior school enjoyed a local reputation for kindly discipline and exemplary teaching. Its guiding light had come to the village in early pre-war days, as headmaster of the National school, and directed the older boys right up to the closure of the premises, when, under the provisions of the 1944 legislation, the older pupils were enrolled at the secondary modern school in Swanley. It is doubtful whether this would have been for the pupils or the community a material improvement. As evidence of an integrated community, its head had also been the village scout master. He, too, had a full-time teaching load and was bereft of office and secretarial assistance. The HMI inspection reported very favourably on the senior school. Both schools might well have benefitted from heads long in post.

There were, however, fissures in the social fabric. Though friends were made in the village, there could be no question of duly transferring to the senior school in the village: shortly enrolment at Sevenoaks Preparatory School occurred. That boys’ institution, catering for an eight to thirteen age range, established by an Anglican clergyman, had been owned since the 1920s by an Oxbridge Gallipoli veteran, who with a fellow head, presided with kindly vigour. This, the fourth school experienced, had echoes of the second, the convent school in London: uniform and parents aspiring to a less egalitarian world, a juxtaposition then immediately recognized. It occupied an elderly Victorian house, whose two-tier bare soil garden, in pre-war days portentously named the ‘upper’ and ‘lower quads’, pupils now shared with the headmaster’s geese, though the latter, in the ‘lower quad’, were fenced-off.

Possibly because the classes were smaller, and the stay longer, the teaching had greater impact. One male teacher, recollected as being an Austrian refugee, stimulated the writing of sustained pieces and

tolerated lively classroom participation. The distinctive marks of private education were in place: apart from uniform; pupils were addressed by their surname and, when sharing that of others, distinguished by suffix, 'major', 'minor', 'one', 'two', and 'three' etc. [a friend was 'Smith Seven']; Saturday morning woodwork lessons; and cricket at the Vine Cricket Club ground. Compulsory milk was distributed by officious 13-year-old prefects in the basement, whilst lunch, with over-cooked cabbage, required recourse to the British Restaurant on the other side of town whither the classes walked in crocodiles. Nature study involved visits to Knowle Park and a perfunctory examination of trees. The school offered Latin and a range of arts subjects but no science.

The 1945 elections involved assistance, free of any allegiance and concern about the 1944 Act, at the Sevenoaks Conservative party constituency headquarters. Older boys from the village attended Sevenoaks School which also took boarders. These, too, were beneficiaries or victims of a system which many mistakenly believed, especially in the light of the Labour Party's election victory, would be swept away as a corollary of the 1944 legislation. A dominant feature of the 1944 legislation that affected most was the provision, by the Kent Education Committee, of school meals, milk and free public transport. It then seemed surprising that this embraced travel to and from a private school and the milk therein consumed.

How further reform was to be played out in west Kent was not immediately to be known. A further move now took place: to east Kent, to St. George's, a two-form entry boys' Church of England secondary school in Ramsgate on a cramped site, of rudimentary design possessing a single science laboratory and a woodwork room. The latter's gifted master, emergency trained, was an inspiration in introducing book binding. Its hall, used for assembly, physical education and meals, was shared with the adjacent girls' school. Nearby was the parish church with which the school was linked, and to which the whole school processed for a weekly service. Discipline was firm and the teaching energetic but, rarely received the writer's undivided attention. There was neither library nor staff room: a school medical inspection, the only one ever experienced, took place in a classroom. Staff, at break time, congregated in the corridor, chatting, smoking and leaning on radiators.

The initial form master, a product of Winchester and a promoter of courtesy in an institution of rough demeanour, successfully encouraged an interest in scouts which led to a first position of responsibility, that of patrol leader of the Woodpigeons and leading a campaign to clear rubbish from local beaches, and necessitating a first ever encounter with a council officer, the district surveyor. More followed: introduction to Canterbury Cathedral, Archbishop Fisher and 'Red' Dean Hewlett Johnson.

Corporal punishment was taken for granted and liberal face slapping in the teaching of grammar was a regular torment, as was physical education. A zeal for clause analysis, parsing, and drawing straight margin lines prevailed, rather than rhythm, plot and drama. Weekly, there would be visits to a distant sports field and, a highlight, the school attended the latest film, Olivier's Henry V, a first encounter with that monarch hitherto missed, in the changes of school as chunks of history were either missed or boringly repeated. There was a glaring discordance between what was experienced and the more attractive fictional portraits of school offered on radio by Buckeridge's Jennings and his prep school, and in a live performance of 'Good Bye Mr Chips' in a nearby school'.[7]

Three years' later, a further uprooting took place: to Swansea and enrolment into a sixth school, Dumbarton House, a private mixed secondary establishment, in many respects similar to Sevenoaks Preparatory School. What that school lacked in material resources it more than compensated for in the effectiveness of its staff [some unqualified], again, assisted by its small classes. Like the Sevenoaks school, it occupied a large house, the garden constituting the playground. The forms and rituals were more relaxed and less deference shown to staff, though they were generally regarded with affection.

That institution was also a diarchy: in this instance, two brothers, each gifted teachers, exemplifying the concept of fully engaged teaching headmasters, though as owners, there would have been significant inescapable administrative responsibilities. As in the case of Sevenoaks, there was little provision for practical subjects. Games necessitated a walk to a nearby recreation ground. School assembly took place in the garden, the younger of the headmasters leaping to an adjacent ledge and

briskly conducting a service, making announcements and easily maintaining attention, not least when he announced the King's death. A feature of the regime was the College of Preceptors examinations taken a year earlier than the contemporary GCE. Invigilation was relaxed and struggling examinees were prompted to a degree short of collusion.

There was yet to be another direct school experience, involving a part-year's attendance at Dynevor School, one of two of Swansea's boys' grammar schools for sixth form studies. This establishment was physically similar to the school in east Kent but, though recently bombed, had more specialist accommodation. The teaching exemplified success by specialization. Teaching styles varied: one ill at ease with questioning interruption as carefully composed notes were dictated, another assiduous in encouraging performance as essays were returned, and yet another, appreciative that a student was sharing his delight in flora and fauna on a Saturday morning excursion. Though neither Swansea schools was a church foundation, each took for granted the state's status as a Christian country, the latter making use of the adjacent Baptist chapel for an impressive weekly service.

The church's significant and continuing role in education was found in a lively youth club with an inspiring incumbent, a programme of debates, visiting speakers, the conduct of formal business, country dancing, church pilgrimages, seaside excursions, and general socializing. Those attending, from the interwar Townhill housing estate, had church membership in common, and came from a mix of school backgrounds. Contact was made with other youth clubs, maintained directly by the local authority, having a less formal character, their programmes focusing more prominently upon 'pop' music, modern dancing, games, coffee and soft drinks and the promotion of a casual atmosphere largely free of adult supervision.

Membership of the Swansea youth council, prompted by the dedication of the borough's youth organizer, constituted an introduction to the rituals of local government meetings and an infection with lasting effects. From this moment, public service was identified as a worthwhile path, alongside that of the church. The youth council was a significant instrument in teaching democracy. Duly the vice chairmanship beckoned, as did participation in organized debates with youth councils

further afield and exposure to the media. The ministry of education was rightly to report favourably upon this local youth service.

In this 'wider' world something of the unfolding developments were discerned: the planning of comprehensive schools and the youth and community service. Here was first encountered the secular 'community centre', both complement and challenge to church: their promotion a priority and their ambitious purposes incorporated in the Scheme for Further Education in 1948.[8] The staunchly Labour local authority had expanded its administration to accommodate its post-1944 role, by 'two assistants to the director'.[9] K. R. Pilling, an external candidate appointed with the further education brief, was subsequently to occupy the similar post in Birmingham whither the writer, then a part-time community centre warden, met him. Pilling's interest in community centres is possibly reflected in his attendance at a London conference on the subject in 1946.[10]

The authority had prepared a Scheme for Student Awards which required revision following submission to the ministry,[11] reconstituted the committee and its many subcommittees,[12] and set about developing a school meal service.[13] Witnessed, too, was local government's tolerance of the churches' role in youth work, where they were strongly represented on the youth subcommittee. Severe national restrictions on building projects had virtually halted any development of a physical character, a replacement building for Swansea Grammar School being then this authority's priority.[14] Much effort, nevertheless, was spent on crafting the Development Plan, a ministry requirement, which would feature comprehensive schools, the Church in Wales seeking none, the Roman Catholics two, to be rebuffed by the authority.[15]

The 1944 Act had required authorities to constitute committees representative of interested parties to prepare by April 1, 1947, the Agreed Syllabus. Belatedly, this was done, in November 1946.[16] The Syllabus was crafted by the Welsh Society of the Institute of Christian Education and taken off the shelf at the eleventh hour. Possibly, reflecting a local sense of priorities, accommodation for the raising of the school leaving age was quickly approved and, noticeably, for an authority famed for its members insisting upon being involved in detailed management, delegated responsibility to the director to make other consequential

arrangements.[17] Notwithstanding, the furniture orders still necessitated further sanctioning by two subcommittees, the education committee and the minister of education.[18]

The minutes for the period show that the education committee, through the agency of subcommittees, was heavily involved in the appointment of staff. In this sphere there was little delegation to the director. Contrariwise, what the education committee was free to do on its own accord was severely limited by its requirement to prepare Schemes for specific operations, for example, further education, student awards, and youth employment. Spending on capital projects, be it the replacement Swansea Grammar School or three vans for the school meals service, also required the minister's approval. Following a limited reorganization of a few schools, the details of which had to be approved by the minister, the ministry insisted upon a down-grading of the Burnham grouping which fixed the heads' salaries.[19] Additionally, HMI conducted inspections of individual institutions and services upon which its reports were benign, concerns tactfully expressed.[20]

Characteristic too, of the period, was the alacrity with which the ministry's demands were made pretext for staff increases which chimed well with an authority promoting full employment, bitterly remembering pre-war conditions. It was, nevertheless, proving increasingly difficult to fill posts, the director reporting thirty-three clerical vacancies.[21] The ministry duly required all authorities to establish for each secondary school a governing body thereby curbing the intrusive role of councillors.[22]

Shortly, matriculation into Saint David's College, Lampeter, occurred. This was a small degree-awarding Anglican foundation, then exemplifying most successfully collegiate life, by its Oxbridge architecture. Routines including chapel attendance and dining in hall, dress codes, and the personal care of academic staff, focussing upon teaching rather than term-time research.[23] On graduation, three years later, a move was made to Oxford University for further study, which included an encounter with C. S. Lewis, an impressive advocate of orthodoxy, and the discovery that 'parity of esteem', far from being a desirable goal, was its antithesis.[24] Oxford was, of course, an enriching experience but whilst it demonstrated the church's continuing creative role, it was doing so within a broader inequitable system that seemed unfair.

A further three years and a move to the civic University of Birmingham was made to undertake teacher training. The Victorian premises were in the city centre, 'digs' in the suburbs, and one heard about what had happened since the 1944 Act's enactment. The narrative did not challenge the Act's quest for equality: the sociological impact of secondary school selection was the focus of attention. The inequality of provision drove all before it, as exemplified by A. E. Halsey, then on the staff.[25] Nothing was detailed of the success of the tripartite system featuring *parity of esteem*. Positive references were made to bilateral establishments with grammar and technical/modern 'streams' existing side by side. Comprehensive schools, few in number but large in size, were recognized as the coming orthodoxy. The problem of teaching mixed ability groups was to be ameliorated by streaming and by its more benign variant, setting. Little is recalled, of any analysis of the problems attendant upon creating large institutions.

Teaching practice embraced two assignments: Kingstanding primary school in the north of the city, where staff were practitioners of progressive education, the physical resources adequate and the pupils amenable and happy; the second, Halesowen Grammar School, with a well-appointed building [offering the first experience of a school library], tractable pupils, calmness, and an angst-free staff. For a PGCE dissertation subject, experience had prompted the selection of an examination of the collegiate system, arising from psychology lectures on group behaviour and the benefits of buildings and distinctive routines designed to support combined educational and community purposes.[26]

Reflecting upon the foregoing vitally important formative stage, it is possible to discern certain characteristics, nor is it difficult in hindsight to identify likely prompts. Of the former, is a propensity to be given or assume 'leadership' roles, be it patrol leader in the scouts, chairman of the youth club, vice chairman of the Swansea Youth Council, president of the Junior Common Room, or chairman of the Guild of Dominies, in university. A second characteristic is the general absence of any doctrinal zeal, be it party political or religious. A third characteristic is a propensity to move to the practical, be it organizing scouts in clearing up rubbish from Broadstairs' beaches, or being a college chapel clerk. As to prompts for such traits, it might be supposed that these included

regular moves from one setting to another with the concomitant requirement to adjust, parents with an assured social self confidence in no way sustained by high income, and being exposed to a version of the church that was, for the most part, of the via *media*, more Richard Hooker than John Wesley.

Part 2: Neophyte Administrator

Earning a Crust

The quest for employment was easy: jobs were plentiful. Birmingham offered much and shortly a post at Handsworth Grammar School beckoned, in a Victorian district in the north of the City. Already in an area being radically transformed by immigration, this all boys' voluntary aided school remained overwhelmingly Caucasian, academic in purpose, formal in procedure and successful in performance. Its buildings were old and cramped and sixth form lessons, for minority subjects, sheltered where best they may. The headmaster, a clergyman, presided with dignity, composed the time-table with no other assistance than pencil and rubber. It was he, rather than any lightly regarded HMI, who gave solemn judgement on each class to the assembled staffroom, which rose to its feet when the second master announced his arrival. Staff consultation was muted. Daily school assembly, in 'big school', was uncompromisingly moral and free of spontaneity. Discipline was firm but not oppressive. Corporal punishment was accepted but rationed. 'I am not a caning machine', said the headmaster, to whom had been sent a recalcitrant pupil.

The world was, however, changing. Senior staff ruefully reflected in the smoke-filled staffroom that standards were not as high as they used to be, notwithstanding the current exemplary performance. It was not simply that the school's neighbourhood was in flux, greater trauma was occurring in society at large. Older staff, assembling near the fire place, feared for the future; the younger, closer to the door, more welcoming. Unions were agitating for higher teacher remuneration: wages for local car factory workers were considerably higher.

To supplement income, teaching English as a Second Language was in prospect, when part-time employment by the city as a warden of a community centre run by a voluntary association attracted attention. Here was practical engagement with the community, without the certainties expected in the church, a deterrent to ordination; and scope for 'administration', an emergent penchant, and an escape from marking, an emergent aversion. The centre, largely modest timber buildings, served an amorphous interwar housing estate in the south of the city, an area of attenuations of other communities each possessing more distinctive characters.[27] Nevertheless, the association was energetic, developing a programme of dancing, drama, snooker, whist, women's club, billiards, table tennis, cricket, and youth work, which was complemented by the activities of affiliated groups, wedding receptions, and party political clinics. The area's adult education principal attended the association's management committee.[28]

The association had requested the city to appoint a paid warden in the absence of sufficient voluntary leadership. An accommodating further education subcommittee, whose attendant officer was none other than K. R. Pilling, hitherto encountered in Swansea, rose to the challenge. A shrewd committee concluded that a *part-time* appointment would best protect the admirable voluntary character of the centre.[29]

Here was a task free of immediate supervision. It was neither well paid nor one of prestige but it was an opportunity to make things happen. It was an environment in which new ideas were not blocked by procedures or competing management structures. Though funding was minimal much actually could be achieved by simply getting on and doing it, be it knocking down a wall, painting a corridor, designing posters, or coaxing the diffident to 'have a go'. Here was an environment free of tight control. In one instance, however, an initiative involving sessions for mentally-handicapped people was vetoed by the LEA. Crucially, however, it exposed the limitations of community building by formal education structures: what was central was common activity, of rallying around issues of concern, such as immigration, cited below. Reflection and analysis was to come later, in coming to terms with the Cambridgeshire Village College and its collision between dream and

reality, and much later, in focussing upon attempts to make substance of the rhetoric about community building in Wales.

Duly, this task was tackled with the promotion of activities for the housebound and disabled, including meals and transport, with further youth clubs, and the occasional community debate, one such, on immigration, involving Enoch Powell whose allusions to 'rivers of blood' were still reverberating. Bingo and rock'n'roll could balance the accounts but the centre's purpose had to go beyond such a diet, or so the warden claimed in a submission to the further education subcommittee.[30] The city's education and welfare services proved to be supportive and much was achieved by a mix of voluntary effort and the city's encouragement and financial 'top–up'.[31]

The further education committee and the youth employment subcommittee [of which the warden was a member] were theatres for discussion, rarely directly addressing issues of strategy. Much was ritualistic, the detail immense: the formal acceptance of schedules of appointments, leaves of absence, and purchases. Nevertheless, matters of strategic consequence could arise from references by officers or members reporting, for example, on possible areas for economy or what had been noticed in college visits undertaken by councillors. A crucial part was played by the Birmingham Council for Community Associations, of which the warden was an active member, which acted as a conduit with the city which also gave it financial support.

The day job, however, was another matter. The quest for experience in a secondary school making provision for the full ability range prompted a move to a bilateral school, now in the eastern part of the city on the post-war Tile Cross housing estate. Though the buildings were new, the school was on two sites. What was to be the school's 'lower school' incorporated a separately administered adult education operation. The school nevertheless had the advantage of growing progressively without incorporating predecessor institutions. A distinctive ethos characterized by clear leadership, stylish uniform, a house system, tutorial groups, purposeful discipline and the wearing of gowns by teachers, made it a distinctive part of an evolving educational system.

Comprehensive education for all was in prospect. In a transitory period, this hybrid mixed county school prospered and quickly demonstrated what could be achieved for a full range of pupil ability. What was truly remarkable was the general absence of any sense of demarcation between pupils of differing abilities, though skill sets operated for the principal subjects. The resolve to ensure that the needs of all were met led to the imposition of an excess of groupings: for in addition to tutorial groups, houses, forms, and sets, the institution was also organized into lower, middle, and upper schools.

As a senior house tutor [head of house] and deputy head of the lower school, alongside general and sixth form teaching and editing the school's magazine, the Sir Wilfrid Martineau School, provided experience complementing that of Handsworth Grammar School, the Billesley and Yardley Wood Community Association and service on the City's Youth Employment Committee. In retrospect, it was not surprising that what came next was a move to Cambridgeshire, the birthplace of the Village College, to take up a post in administration.

Part 3: Administrator

All Is Flux: Reorganization of Local Government and Education

A Fortuitous Move

Though teaching was appealing, administration had been an attraction. Simultaneously, applications were made for the deputy headship of Swanley Comprehensive School, near the childhood home in Kent, and three administrative posts, one in Birkenhead, another in Havant, and a third in Cambridgeshire. Fortuitously, the last was the first to interview candidates and thither the move was made.

In the interwars years, Henry Morris had been that county's maverick education officer successfully introducing the village college as an imaginative means of addressing community need and the Hadow reforms.[32] A community centre, embracing school, adult and agricultural education,

youth and youth employment provision, clinic, public library, voluntary and statutory services, run as one enterprise, seemed to make sense in the light of the recent experience.

A Ghost Prowled the Corridors of Shire Hall

By the late 1960s Morris had gone but his ghost prowled the corridors of Shire Hall. Many had served under Morris and newcomers were left in little doubt that his writ still held. George Edwards, now the chief, mercurial and stylish in prose and appearance, was his own man but guarded Morris's legacy. Reorganization had resulted in the recent union of the administrative counties of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely, within which Cambridge was an excepted district.[33] Barely had the new order settled when the Labour government issued *Circular 10/65*.[34] The county's new character and the government's new circular now presaged a re-generation, or a de-stabilizing, of the village college.

Perhaps understandably, initial tasks were limited. The writer was, in any case, immeasurably grateful for having been selected for the post, worked long hours, to the neglect of family, and feared that superiors would find him wanting. An early assignment was to explore the possibility of developing nature reserves, prompting his first bureaucratic decision: the designation of a general file with the prefix 'N' for 'Nature Reserve', and thereafter subfiles for each of the putative reserves. Shortly and without any particular enthusiasm for the subject, arrangements were made to meet specialists in the university for counsel and progress was quickly made, including publishing a booklet of the county's flora and fauna.

Surprised that the cause of comprehensive education was not popular in Shire Hall, a weekend was spent devising a system for the Ely area. This was duly annotated 'The problem with this scheme is that it could be implemented.' Though papers were drafted for the Policy Sub Committee these were for relatively minor issues. However, the unimportant Youth Employment Sub Committee was another matter. Here free rein was given, [or rather, seized]. Expansion, in part occasioned by extending the service into the Isle of Ely hitherto provided by the

ministry, and a general agreement that careers advice be made available to grammar school pupils, provided lively material for meetings hitherto dormant. This included the establishment of an 'Adjustment to Work Unit' which [prompted by a visit to Portsmouth to see the pioneering inspiration] was immeasurably aided by a Cambridge Labour councillor, soon to be ennobled, Lady David.

Given time, however, aided by staff movement, further roles were taken on, most notably as assistant education officer with responsibility for policy, staffing and reorganization. This was a period of considerable creativity accommodated by a chief who gave considerable licence and from whom much was learnt: treating members with officious respect, by for example, standing up to address them in formal committee, exceptional financial frugality, and in attending to the detail of management without reference to other departments. Such a background necessarily tempered support and understanding of corporate management, as discussed below, and prompted hostility towards subsequent education reforms that seemed likely to rely excessively upon vast public funding to marginal beneficial effect. Though the relationship was demanding it was nevertheless fulfilling. In giving the address at Ely Cathedral at his memorial the writer was able to refer to his remarkable qualities.

Bluish Political Realities

The political colour of the county was 'bluish' though many members served as independents. Party discipline was relaxed. Overall, there was no enthusiasm for *Circular 10/65*. The excepted district, vindicating its status, with a stronger contingent of Labour members and its university representation, was more sympathetic. *Circular10/65* had been employed in an argument with the establishment committee to recruit professional assistance, in consequence of which the writer's move was made.

For him the village college was the embodiment in one institution of all that which should characterize contemporary education and admission of the full ability range seemed an obvious development, but to his surprise, this ran counter to the prevailing orthodoxy. Necessarily, patience, compromise and guile would be needed to effect change, as the succeeding paragraphs will show. Completing the original network

of colleges had taken its toll. Selection was accepted, grammar schools cherished. Significantly, however, the village colleges enjoyed a high reputation and surely could claim parity of esteem with grammar schools.[35] Though Shire Hall accepted the contemporary wisdom, about the limitations of small schools, the establishment of Burwell and Gamlingay village colleges, to complete the original network, proceeded, notwithstanding their prospective two forms of entry, in the knowledge that they were not intended to serve the full ability range. The other colleges were in the four to seven form entry range.

Making Haste Slowly

Opinion in the institutions was divided. There were entrenched positions and the authority sought to proceed by consensus. Working parties, consisting of officers, heads and representatives of the professional associations, were established for each of the four areas into which the county was partitioned: Wisbech, March, Ely and Cambridge [including the surrounding rural area, wherein with one exception were the village colleges]. Wisbech was relatively self-contained, March more diverse, Ely straddled the border of the former counties but included grammar schools from the two jurisdictions that had operated in tandem providing respectively, for boys and girls. The fourth area was the largest. Officers of the former Isle of Ely played no part and seemed well pleased to be out of it. The excepted district, by contrast, played a vigorous part throughout the protracted period of deliberation. Crucially, grammar school and further education provision was in the excepted district. Officers presumed that the task of devising acceptable solutions would be progressively more elusive from north to south, though each working party was at the starting block at the same time. That prognosis was accurate.

A Gentle Quest for Consensus

Preliminary meetings were amicable: discussion of what might be entailed. Subsequent meetings revealed where dispute might arise, when on the basis of officer reports doing little more than setting out

estimated rolls and building capacities, comments were invited. There were few surprises: grammar schools advocated the *status quo* or, if needs must, a carefully-planned change ensuring concentration of sixth forms in grammar school buildings. Others were less reluctant to embrace change: some subscribing to the principle of comprehensive education. A few feared its destabilizing effects. Village colleges, believing that comprehensive education was at one with the village college, knew that estimates of roll were such that, in the case of most, the change could not be immediate.

It was agreed that officers would produce further papers. Participants, hardly yet combatants, retired to their respective camps. *Circular 10/65* was statutory guidance: not the means by which an authority could be compelled to comply. However, it was within the competence of ministers to authorize borrowing. Since significant building would be needed, for which the county would need to borrow money, compliance was ultimately anticipated. Legislation compelling compliance was possible, but a change of government was also possible! Accordingly, haste was not the principal concern.

Compromise Solutions in the North

Progress was gingerly made. Plans in the two northerly areas, Wisbech and March, were first crafted. The former had two grammar schools and two secondary modern schools; the latter, likewise, two grammar schools but four secondary modern schools. Further and adult education were largely concentrated in the Isle of Ely College of Further Education in Wisbech and a further education centre in March. Location, capacities, consensus that change had to take place, the need to concentrate provision for older pupils and the academically more gifted, as well as ambivalence about comprehensive education, resulted in focusing upon 'guided parental transfer at 13+', one of the circular's formulae offered as a temporary expedient.[36]

The secondary modern schools were recast as institutions for the 11–16 age range, two in Wisbech, and one each in Chatteris, March, and Whittlesey. The 13–18 age range, identified in teacher/parent deliberations, would be accommodated in upper schools based upon the

grammar schools, one in Wisbech and one in March. The proposals were submitted to public meetings, governors, and professional associations, where they encountered no serious opposition. Major conflict had been avoided, and duly, the education committee, council and ministry concurring in the proposals, Shire Hall focused on implementation and the problematic conditions further south.[37]

Braver Plans in the Border Country

The Ely area possessed two grammar schools, three secondary modern schools, and a village college in Soham. The first village college thus now moved into the frame. The process followed the established pattern. The disposition of properties, and, less ambivalence concerning comprehensive education amongst participants in the working party, made it possible to develop more radical proposals (albeit this followed a less radical plan: unacceptable in Whitehall). There was the same commitment to concentrate provision for older pupils but now there would be no temporizing: no 'guided parental choice' at 13+.

There would be four establishments: Littleport, Witchford, Soham [the village college incorporating the grammar school buildings] and Ely [incorporating the secondary modern and grammar schools and adult education and youth centres], which would also accommodate the centralized sixth form centre. There would be two further twists giving the new arrangements a distinctive character: first, the constituent parts would be linked with a single governing body in *The Ely Federation of Village Colleges*, prompted by a concern that the sixth form centre could be handicapped were it not 'owned' by all the institutions, and to guarantee equality of provision between the colleges. The second development was spurred not simply because one of the establishments was already a village college but because the education committee, 'arising from a discussion concerning community provision in the Arbury Estate in Cambridge', decided to give further consideration to the possibility of making more use of school buildings generally.[38]

The first development had been warmly endorsed by the ministry, the second opportunely seized by officers.[39] Other considerations were preyed in aid: under provision of adult further education, the premises'

suitability, the opportunity presented by the then 'basic needs' building programme, and the benefit of enhanced status. What was now planned was generally greeted with greater enthusiasm than that which had occurred further north. [Prompted by similar considerations, the change to village college status was now retrospectively applied to Chatteris and Whittlesey in the March area.] Because new ground was being broken it was agreed that the collaborative arrangements should be spelt out: a common basic curriculum, some joint staffing appointments, a transfer of pupils' policy, a single governing body, and a joint planning board presided over by the Principal of the City of Ely College.[40]

The Village College: A Script Rewritten

This development was at once both a significant endorsement of, and a radical departure from, the original concept of the village college. There were the established notions of unitary governance and management, embracing statutory and voluntary activities, and of placing school functions within the context of a larger whole. However, set aside was the requirement to build premises especially dedicated to the re-defined purpose. Though the period was one of greater prosperity than that of the 1920s and 1930s, when Morris had been so insistent upon the key role of specifically-designed buildings would play, a different attitude now prevailed. Even if not bespoke, accommodation was generous by the standards of an earlier age; neither the county nor government would be willing to sanction expenditure beyond 'basic' need; and there was no willingness to raise capital by public appeal.

Some doubted the need for spaces for the exclusive use of adults. Increasingly, in later post-war years, specialist accommodation, for example, for the separate sciences, physical education, and technical subjects, was being provided as a priority, as was the provision of sixth form centres and youth centres with space for social as well as formal education. Such facilities, unlike the generality of small elementary schools invariably equipped with constricted metalled-framed desks in the interwar years, could be used both by secondary school pupils and adults. The challenge was largely logistical, high-lighted by the fact that

the federation was equipped with three full-sized buses. A further factor was also being vectored into this development. Though Morris, loyally supported by Edwards, loathed 'management', some saw merit in the manager, with clarity of aims and co-operative working.[41]

Changes in the South

Meanwhile, the process in the south was proving more difficult. As noted, the excepted district could seek to settle matters within the city without focusing upon the rural area where its writ did not run. Nevertheless county and city accepted that they should make progress jointly. Initially, matters in the working party proceeded as elsewhere: courteous introductions, the presentation of raw material, requests for clarification, and the judicious exploration of the various positions being taken by participants. At first, no fissures separated the authority from the excepted district: the same reluctance to embrace the comprehensive cause, commitment to the *status quo*, and general tardiness. The range of opinion on the part of staff replicated that of the other areas and in this there was no distinction between the city and county.

Procrastination Could Not Be Sustained

Contention could not be postponed indefinitely. An enquiring public, those firmly committed to the comprehensive cause, and the proposals for the rest of the county, created a momentum. In the delicate footwork needed to respect the rights and dignities of the chief education officer and the city education officer, for each was ever poised to be offended by the other, there was much traffic between the offices. Duly a hybrid scheme was crafted which provided a three-tier scheme in the city and an 11–16 arrangement with centralized sixth form provision for the rural area. The city office was especially attracted by the Plowden Report's advocacy of the three-tier formula and momentarily believed that this would fit the city's accommodation,[42] a compromise solution hardly meeting with general approval.

Apart from the criticism attaching to any proposal upsetting the established order, there was concern that what was now envisaged were separate plans for city and rural area. Be that as it may, it did appear that a three-tier arrangement could work in the city whilst it was obvious that it ill-fitted the village colleges. With grudging assent from those consulted [public meetings, governing bodies and professional associations], the authority, at the city's prompting, duly dispatched the proposals to the secretary of state. It was hardly a surprise that the plan was found wanting in Whitehall. It was now a case of going back to the drawing board.

New Realism: New Ground Rules

There was now a new sense of realism. Possibilities had been tested and more was known of the likely reaction of key players.[43] There was a greater determination to see the task through to implementation: many wishing to be rid of the debilitating effect of uncertainty. The process of drafting, with the two offices co-operating was now much easier: ground rules had been clarified. In substance, there would be a uniform transfer of pupils at 11+, and a concentration of sixth form provision. In the light of the favourable reaction to the development of the community college concept elsewhere it was possible to bring that idea into the frame.

Concentration of Provision for the 16 Plus Population

The question of post 16 provision loomed large. In a context where many of the secondary schools had yet to develop well-resourced courses up to 16, few considered that they could also provide for the post 16 age group. The sixth form college was locally unknown. Such post 16 school provision there was, existed in the well-established grammar schools, and Impington Village College. Under further education dispensations there existed the Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology, increasingly also providing advanced further education, and the Young Street and York Street further education centres in Cambridge, largely providing technical further education.

The notion that the village colleges could be the place where joint pupil and adult provision could be made, thereby mitigating the problem of small uneconomic classes and enriching the learning experience, received little traction. Many would have been daunted by the constitutional and cultural barriers separating school and adult education. Similarly, there was no case made for exploring the feasibility of supplementing provision by distance learning and individual teaching approaches.

The Search for Compromise

As for the future, there were divided views: some believing that the sixth form colleges would prevail, others that sixth forms would develop at institutions cast for the 11–16 age range. The scheme sought to accommodate this division of opinion by providing a mixed economy of two sixth form colleges, two sixth form centres attached to 11–16 establishments, one in the city, Netherhall [incorporating the Grammar School for Boys], and one in the rural area, Impington Village College, and supplementary non A-level provision at 11–16 establishments. Additional sixth form centres attached to the 11–16 establishments could be subsequently considered, namely the eight village colleges and the city's other four secondary schools. As in the case of the Ely area, there was the need to avoid duplication and to ensure equitable arrangements for transfer at 16+. Here the chosen instrument would be a *Collegiate Board* consisting of the heads of establishments providing sixth forms, assisted by an *Administrative Secretary*.[44]

The smallness of the 11+ age group at Burwell and Gamlingay village colleges was such, that reluctantly, they could not be brought into this scheme. Their schools were to be reconstituted as middle schools with pupils transferring subsequently to upper schools respectively maintained by neighbouring authorities, West Suffolk in the former case, and Bedfordshire in the latter. A feature of the new arrangements was that those with form-entries below six were to be eligible for additional staffing, beyond that available by application of a general pupil/teacher ratio, to safeguard a general uniformity of provision.

A Peculiarity in the City Centre

The fate of the Grammar School for Girls necessitated much discussion. Various formulae were advanced each attracting obloquy. A consensus settled for the novel development of its re-establishment as Parkside Community College embracing a four form-entry 11–16 mixed comprehensive school.[45] This was the first time the concept, although substantially recast, had been introduced into the city. As in the north, part of the rationale was that community college status could enhance its position. Set in the middle of the city the community it would serve would be more diverse than that of a village college. In this respect, a defining characteristic, its territorial mission, was set aside.

It was predicted that it would become a popular institution, its adult education and voluntary activities complementing its comprehensive school. The character of this initiative prompted a text detailing the duties of principal with due emphasis upon surveying community needs and aspirations.[46] The village college concept had hitherto been much taken for granted and the critical references tended to refer exclusively to a building, accommodating a range of activities corporately managed. Little had been written as to the means by which these activities were selected or as to any evaluation of their utility.

An Opportunity for Co-Operation Spurned

Contemporaneously, a further reform affecting local government was taking place. The Seebohm Report had advocated a fundamental re-casting of the children's, education welfare, health, and general welfare services.[47] More was involved that a re-grouping of functions: an emphasis upon generic social work. Sectional specialisms would be subordinated to a professional team approach focusing upon clients in their family and living environment.

At one level, apart from its purpose in strengthening the professional competence of local government in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable, it was a further manifestation of a belief in corporate management, of the serious need to promote team working. Though proposed,

there was no willingness to contemplate basing the new generic social worker teams in the village colleges. The same departmental insularity that had existed in Morris's day, when he had sought to include other county council functions in the village college, prevailed. It may be noted, that, ironically, the Cambridgeshire education service had nationally played a key part in Whitehall discussions in opposing successfully the transfer of educational welfare officers to the new social service departments.[48]

Musings as to What Would Happen

On the eve of implementation and another recasting of local government, questions were posed concerning what would happen. Would the village college flourish with the introduction of comprehensive education or would it be seriously compromised? Would the quest to provide comprehensive education, providing for the full ability range be so demanding that the 'wider' community role would fade? Would 16 plus provision develop in further establishments or become increasingly concentrated in exclusively organized colleges for the post 16 age group, and, as a supplementary consideration, would the mechanisms put in place to regulate transfer in the interests of students and equitable provision, be sufficient? Would the de facto general separate class and tuition provision for school pupils and adults remain inviolate in spite of the, then anticipated, advances in technology and teaching methodology? What arrangements would be devised to ensure that the village college responded to the needs of the community it sought to serve and overtly to assess its performance? Time would play its part providing answers to these questions and, indeed, others not even then posed.

More Immediate Tasks

Though reorganization was a principal preoccupation of the writer, other tasks were progressively assumed. Of a piece, when LEAs were still expanding, studies were undertaken of nature reserves, field study centres, and private boarding schools. Increasingly, however, retrenchment

was beginning to take hold but not before it had been possible to establish a 'work preparation unit' for handicapped school leavers, a chain of teachers' centres, and a careers advisory service for older students.[49] Primary school developments embraced open plan classrooms frequently resented by teachers who favouring enclosed seclusion quickly erected protective bookcases. Curriculum development, centred upon the teacher centres, flourished.

The allocation of teaching staff, with its attendant negotiation with the ministry over the authority's 'quota' was a critical task. In retrospect, it is hard to believe that the objective was to obtain the largest possible quota notwithstanding that it would fall to the authority to meet the bill. Neither committee nor other council departments played any part in this exercise. Institutions sought additional staff not simply to accommodate rising rolls but to meet what was claimed to be increasing administrative tasks. Generally, other departments were rarely consulted on any matter, though necessarily, information was exchanged. Nevertheless, other education departments and the Association of Education Committees, in particular, were frequently asked for advice. Needless to say, there was never a question of employing consultants to solve any problem.

A Reorganization of Local Government and a Move to London

Shortly, local government in England and Wales, outside London, was to be reorganized. A move to the London Borough of Ealing, as Deputy Chief Education Officer, witnessed a Labour administration ostensibly in sympathy with the contemporary government. Surprisingly, nevertheless, it had yet to implement *Circular 10/65*. Politics were more overtly in the ascendancy, in for example, the appointment of the chairmanships of governing and managing bodies, in accommodating union opinion in staffing matters, and in the practice of pre-meetings by each political party to determine their subsequent voting in the public meeting. Clearly therein, the political voice challenging officer counsel was becoming stronger, although policy formulation yet mainly remained a matter of sensitive discussion with officers. Neither members nor officers were preoccupied with curriculum matters with the exception of dedicated provision for

the immigrant population and a belated consideration of the Religious Education syllabus. Corporate management barely stirred, though the Town Clerk intervened often in minor departmental matters but not relating to any significant issue of strategy. The advisory service was relatively large: its role supportive of institutions and individual teachers, and primarily subject based. The area was being transformed by migration, generating, on the part of the authority, solicitude, for the provision of language and culture. It was a moment awaiting imminent change.

It might be supposed that a move to London would have offered greater opportunity for creative activity. Such was not to be the case. There were a number of factors: being appointed at the prompting of the Town Clerk [the chief education officer had his own candidate], friction between these two officers, and an ambivalent relationship between the ruling Labour group and the chief education officer. This all required a mental agility and a set of skills that were lacking. Though by inclination, education and training in Cambridgeshire, the writer was adverse to conspiracy and genuinely sought to be a loyal lieutenant. It was all to no avail, notwithstanding vigorous defence of his wishes at meetings attended on his behalf. There were few opportunities to promote new ideas although the suggestion of re-establishing a failing high school as a Church of England foundation was duly successfully implemented. A visit by the Taylor Committee provided an opportunity to submit papers on the governing body in the context of campus arrangement, and the role of governing and managing bodies in a multiracial context. However, a draft paper advocating the establishment of a metropolitan version of the community college fell on deaf ears.

In a period of leave the writer was left in charge and, fortuitously, it fell to him to suppress a rioting high school with pupils out of control whilst staff stayed marooned in the staffroom, the head teacher locking herself in her room. With surprising nerve and a clear voice immobility and silence were demanded of the pupils. Perhaps because the sudden appearance of an unknown figure from another world and ignorance as to what might now happen compliance was immediate. Pupils were dispatched to the playground and the staff were ordered to send a delegation within ten minutes. This they did, reporting a breakdown in communication with the head teacher. Duly the head teacher, her door unlocked, re-appeared, discussions took place, and the parties solemnly

warned that unless business resumed as normal the consequences would be most serious for all. Order was resumed.

In reporting the event it might be supposed that gentle applause might have been in order. There was non committal comment.

Evidence of the tensions subsisting between the chief education officer and the ruling Labour party surfaced when attending a shortlisting meeting for the post of principal of the Ealing College of Higher Education: it was discovered that the former was a candidate at the prompting of the latter. In the course of proceedings however, it was realized that the proposal faced implacable opposition from governors of the college. It fell to an embarrassed officer to report by telephone to his chief that he had been unsuccessful. Stoical silence followed.

Thereafter, after but two years, came Kingston, then a Conservative authority, having resisted *Circular 10/65*, and out of sympathy with the current Labour government. It had, nevertheless, embraced corporate management and was in sympathy with the emergent Conservative notions of maximizing parental choice, challenging teacher control, and moving to a market economy in education. This latter, lacked definition, and when the Thatcher government was duly installed, the writer, Director of Education and Recreation, and, by admission, a Vicar of Bray, lunched with Oliver Letwin, newly-installed adviser on the market economy in education to Keith Joseph, the better to understand the possibilities available and to ensure the best interests of Kingston.

In retrospect, this was a personal watershed. As for corporate management, the ascending orthodoxy, ideas had largely crystallized for the writer. There was persuasive warrant for team playing, the essential genesis of corporate management, where the activities had a common register and focus. Hence there was a powerful case for its more fulsome expression in the daily management of the community college. This argument was fully developed in a 1973 thesis 'Local Government Management and the Community College' and in articles published in 1974 in 'Local Government Studies,' already cited. What was increasingly obvious was that this was an invalid and wasteful approach for the general management of a range of disparate activities having but marginal relationships and which had often been assembled by the accident of history. This thesis was the substance of an article published in 'Education', some years later, and appended to this chapter.

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Thereby hangs a bushy tale

Robert McCloy looks at education management and concludes that the tail wags the dog

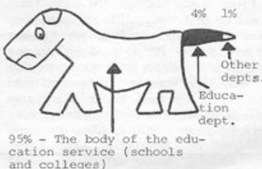
Let me tell my tale. Long, long ago, wise men said it was not a good thing for education officers, with but limited experience of the real world (for they had merely taught), and education committees, with but even less experience of the real world (for they had not even taught) to 'manage' education. 'Manage' was the word. This was a new magical power not known to education officers and education committees. Sadly, all they were capable of practising was an activity called 'administration' and that was poor stuff indeed. New 'management' was exciting, thrusting, economical, democratic, good, non-departmental, and cost-effective. Old 'education administration' was dull, extravagant, insensitive to political will, obsessed with ultimate purpose, and unexcited at the prospect of doing things together like designing a uniform system for ordering things like pencils and polytechnics.

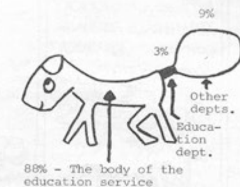
So, it was decided (reasonably, enough, one must agree) to have new exciting management. It would be good for everyone: services (the new management collective noun for schools, pavements, old peoples' homes, electoral registers, etc.) would gain by the contribution of people whose vision had not been blighted by specialised knowledge. Why, even old education administrators, hopefully refurbished at INLOGOV, could now be encouraged to try their hands at managing really big things. They might help the chief executive to design a new global image for the council whereby, say, all items with wheels would be painted the same colour and thus communicate a confident message of thrusting management. And you might say, and why not? Surely, I hear you question indignantly, the benefits of this reform were intoxicating enough to cast aside those doubters who staggered mistakenly into the path of progress? You were right.

And the years passed by . . . new men inspired by new faiths, burdened not by the restrictions of an antique calling, took up commanding positions. To others familiar with the achievements of these years must fall the task of rendering full account. Suffice it here to record a signal latterday achievement. Let us, some divined, practice what CIPFA preaches: let the accounts of each service have assigned to them a proportion of the corporate costs. 'Let each service bear all its costs' is one rendering of the text. Another, and unauthorised version, has it: 'Let each service bear a share of the corporate costs.' Textual criticism is not a general enthusiasm and this may not be the moment to linger long on the nature of the difference between these versions. The basic principle, I hear you saying, is not a bad wheeze: the true cost of teaching 4D in Inlogovia should include the cost of pay and rations, etc. . . . The interests of open government dictate that we reveal all . . . it is only by thus showing the full costs that informed decisions can be taken. . . . These are courageous and proper sentiments.

Now, it was at this point that, to their shame, some confessed that they were far from sure that all would end well. This talk of open government, of revealing all, was all very well, but were they quite ready for it? Did it not smack of exhibitionism? Were they sure that they had the necessary tools? Supposing, the figures should reveal something embarrassing (not that it would, of course, but it was just possible)? These very unhelpful (and in the last instance, unworthy) questions were quite rightly set aside. With evangelical fervour, the course was set. There was much thrashing around in paper and feverish counting of hours spent by officers far and wide on the work they were doing for various services.

And gosh, what did they discover? Why, the old education departments, that foolishly had believed themselves to be the principal management and administrative wing of the education service, were revealed in instances to have but bit pieces in the drama! All sorts and conditions of men and women were in there pitching for the education service. Comparison with the bad old days revealed that in 1965 only about five per cent of the total education budget was attributed to town hall administration. Of this, the education department accounted for about four per cent, while other departments contributed one per cent.





We might represent it by the dog in the diagram. A fitter, leaner dog with a bushier, fluffier tail is his 1983 descendant. You will say, rightly, the 1983 dog is aesthetically more pleasing. It has no unsightly bulbous stomach and its luxuriant tail is a glory to behold. The phenomenon of the bushy tail, however, needs some explanation. I am able to report that two explanations have been offered to account for the mutation. The first explanation, I am reliably advised, is naïve, simplistic and positively unhelpful. In substance, its exponents would have you believe that it is due to the fact that there has been a growth of bureaucracy in the wake of local government reform – a growth that was intrinsically unrelated to service need. Indeed, it occurred as services to the public were being reduced because of the need for economy or because of population decline. This discredited explanation would have you believe that it is something to do with the establishment of interdepartmental working groups, participative ways of working, the elaboration of processes . . . palpably, a foolish explanation.

The second explanation which, rightly, enjoys more authoritative support, I am no less reliably informed, is elegant, subtle and positively constructive. It consists of two inter-related facets. The first is that, in the bad old days, the other departments did participate in the management of the education service on a great scale free, gratis and for nothing and that, quite simply, education administrators (because they were not managers?) did not notice. That is why the current reform is so necessary. The second is that since the bad old days life is much more complicated and, because education administration cannot cope, management by other departments is essential. Besides which the latter is very good value.

Now nature stands not still. With further mutations the dog may yet take on the character of a squirrel, wherein the tail is an even greater effulgence. Squirrels, of course, rely heavily on nuts and hibernation.

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Epilogue and Assessment

This 'witness statement' of the 1944 Act's impact, from its inception to the 1970s, the first phase of this book's historical narrative, offers glances from various angles. As an adolescent in rural Kent, a teenager in urban south Wales, a student in rural mid Wales and Oxford; of a neophyte teacher/administrator, in grammar and bilateral school and community centre, and of committee experience, in Birmingham; and latterly, administrator in Cambridge and London. Private, voluntary and county, boys' and mixed schools, youth council and committee, Whitehall negotiation, and LEA management, independent, Labour and Conservative local administrations had been experienced and is the basis of the following much-qualified indictment. The principal lacuna was attendance and teaching in a college of further education.

Central government was decisive in setting the overall direction of the service in areas determined by statute, exercising detailed management through schemes, loan sanction, teacher quota, ministerial circular and HMI inspections. That its direction could have been more coherent and that the regime contained ambiguities is not to deny that successive ministers had no cause to complain about their relative impotence: Keith Joseph, Margaret Thatcher's secretary of state, confessed as much to the writer. This arose from an unclear demarcation of responsibilities: the absence of a developed doctrine of subsidiarity which should have not only defined the role of the state, but also, and separately, that of the LEA [and churches] and individual institutions. A consequence was that both state government and local government excessively interfered with institutions and the state with local government. Notwithstanding, the relationship between education officers was often closer with ministers and ministry than with other council departments.

LEAs determined implementation of national policies, depending upon political allegiances and professional priorities. Negotiation between ministry and local government was used by each to frustrate the will of the other.

A determined local authority could innovate within the statutory framework or by testing it at its boundaries. Many LEAs adopted an

option of playing safe haunted by the district auditor requiring evidence of statutory sanction. A doctrine of general competence for local government would have been a greater spur to innovation.

Though generally claimed that councillors made policy, practice seemed otherwise. Unambiguous policy formulation by members was not witnessed, though it was gaining ground in the 1970s, as witnessed in Ealing and Kingston. Even in the instance of an authority establishing a committee to concentrate upon 'policy', as in the instance of Cambridgeshire, it invariably did so on the basis of officer reports. Occasional amendment by committee took place. The vote of endorsement was constitutionally crucial, but hardly amounted to the 'making' of policy: more accurately, it was a joint enterprise of member and officer. In many instances, what was happening was akin to members acting as a jury forming a judgment upon a case. This was, nevertheless, a vital role giving the policy public warrant.

Departmentalism remained the dominant culture with positive and negative effects. Of the former, were clarity of purpose, concentration of effort, sense of pride, and a measure of unity amongst disparate parts, reinforced by the effectiveness of the Association of Education Committees and the weekly journal 'Education.' Of the latter, to which the Institute of Local Government gave testimony, it resulted in waste, and a failure to co-operate in the interests of a greater good, whether that be locally or in challenging central government.

The pace of change, spurred by the belief that the results would be beneficial, was destabilizing. Greater institutional and concomitant longevity in employment yielded to a fragile society where it was harder to rely upon tested practice.

With reorganization and a determination to move to higher precision in goals and to correct error, 'administration' increased and drew teachers and head teachers from the classroom.

There was no correlation between outcomes and the quality and location of buildings: effective leadership and a sense of common purpose were more decisive considerations.

A vital part was played by the relationship of officers and institutional heads, embracing counsel, the development of ideas, the progressive identification of common ground, and, for the most part, a

non-threatening accountability. Some relationships were deficient and tenuous.

Whilst advances were made in devolving responsibility upon institutions, local authorities yet carried out major supply tasks, including pupil and staff allocation, in-service training, student awards, sites and buildings management, advisory services, transport, educational welfare, child guidance, school meals, and the clerking of managing and governing bodies. The school health service remained intact for much of the period.

The church/state constitutional settlement remained in place. The church was represented on the education committee but rarely joined in debate on any matter unrelated to its schools.

Further and higher education had blossomed and materially were as substantial as school provision. With the exception of teacher training, shared between church and state, it proved to be a sector within which the church's writ did not run. Complementing the universities, advanced higher education within the maintained sector was progressively taking hold, ostensibly making distinctive provision.

Parity of esteem within the secondary school system was not accomplished and competition between school sixth forms and further education was developing.

A New Dawn Beckoned

The sun, nevertheless, was setting. Much of local government was being recast. The emergent world, the subject of the next chapter, would have a very different feel. It was one where corporate management, wherein individual services were ostensibly subordinated to the greater whole, and party politics assumed a greater ascendancy.

Local government's health service functions had departed and the police service's relationship with the council had become more tenuous. Within the latter the distinction between professional management and strategic supervision was being stressed, as had recently occurred in the passenger transport executives and authorities. For those yet corralled

within local government, and that, for the moment, included much of the education service, this was not a distinction to be honoured, with possibly fatal results.

Notes

1. Hadow Report, *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent*, Chairman, Sir W. H. Hadow, Board of Education, HMSO, London, 1926.
2. Spens Report, *Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education with Special Reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools*, Board of Education, HMSO, London, 1938.
3. Education Bill, HC Deb. January 19, 1944, Vol. 396, cc. 207–322.
4. Ebenezer Howard's Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities had provided practical and successful models for post war integrated communities. Howard, E., *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, Faber and Faber, London, 1945; and Beevers, R., *The Garden City Utopia*, Macmillan Press, 1988.
5. *Educational Reconstruction*, HMSO, 1943.
6. The writer is indebted, for some of the background, to Diana Beamish, 'A History of Eynsford's Elementary and Primary Schools', Farningham and Eynsford Local History Society Publication No. 26, 1998.
7. Anthony Buckeridge was a friend of the writer's father and his work made a major impression.
8. The significance of the community centres was reflected in the establishment by the Swansea County Borough Education Committee of a subcommittee for their supervision, W[est] G[lamorgan] A[rchive] S[ervice] TC3 65, Education Committee, January 8, 1945, minute 135. They were to be provided on a comprehensive scale in every community. TC3 68, Education Committee, February 10, 1948.
9. WGAS, TC3 64, Education Committee, December 11, 1944, minute 93; and TC3 65, October 8, 1945, minute 657. The rationale for the establishment of the posts was echoed in Cambridgeshire whither the writer later moved.
10. TC3 66, Education Committee, June 13, 1946.
11. TC3 65, September 10, 1945, minute 417.

12. TC3 65, April 8, 1945, minute 657, and October 8, 1945, minute 3[a]. The Committee made no provision for church representation but liberal provision was made on the Youth Subcommittee.
13. TC3 65, December 11, 1945, minute 39.
14. TC3 66, July 9, 1946, minute 396.
15. TC3 66, July 9, 1946, minute 440; and September 10, 1946, minute 442.
16. TC3 66, November 27, 1946, minute 12, and TC3 67, March 11, 1947, minute 234.
17. TC3 65, December 11, 1945, minute 61.
18. TC3 67, April 10, 1947, minute 258.
19. TC3 67, Education Committee, September 9, 1947, minute 450.
20. TC3 68, Education Committee, May 11, 1948, minute 307.
21. TC3 67, Education Committee, September 9, 1947, minute 475.
22. Ibid., December 9, 1947, minute 19.
23. Subsequently, the writer was to contend that Morris, see below, had drawn on his own experience of Lampeter in crafting the Cambridgeshire Village College, in *Reappraisals: Essays in the History of Youth and Community Work*, ed. Ruth Gilchrist et al., Russell House Publishing, Lyme Regis, 2013.
24. C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters: Letters from a Senior to a Junior Devil, Screwtape Proposes a Toast*, Harper, 2008, p. 239. In this witty book a senior and retired devil addresses a graduation class of novice devils drawing their attention to the quest for *parity of esteem* and the opportunity it presented for furthering their work!
25. The decisive text was Floud, Halsey and Martin, *Social Class and Educational Opportunity* [1956].
26. As subsequently argued, the Cambridgeshire Village College had its genesis in Saint David's College, Lampeter, Robert McCloy, 'Local Government Corporate Management and the Community College: An Examination of the Relationship of these Concepts in the context of Cambridgeshire 1965–71', Unpublished M.Soc.Sc. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1973.
27. B[irmigham] C[ity] A[rchives], Further Education Subcommittee, Vol. 51, October 4, 1961, pp. 388, 443–447.
28. BCA, LF21–4, Billesley and Yardley Wood Community Association, Report 1957–1958, pp. 4–6.
29. BCA, Further Education Subcommittee, Vol. 49, November 2, 1960, pp. 898–902.
30. Ibid., Vol. 52, April 4, 1962, pp. 1438–1439.

31. Ibid., Vol. 53, June 6, 1962. The local adult education principal, the adult education and youth inspector, and city welfare officer were personally very supportive.
32. Morris, H., The Village College: Being a Memorandum on the Provision of Education and social Facilities for the Countryside, with Special reference to Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire County Council, reprinted in Ree, H. E., Henry Morris—*Educator Extraordinary: The Life and Achievement of Henry Morris*, London, Longmans, 1973. The writer, requested to read Ree's draft, challenged the explanation for the origin of the village college, exciting Ree's ire.
33. An excepted district was a jurisdiction within an authority with limited but substantial powers granted to major towns not large enough to be county boroughs and authorities in their own right.
34. *DES Circular 10/65: The Reorganisation of Secondary Education*, London, HMSO.
35. The wardens and chief education officer, himself a former warden, had strong professional relations.
36. Exploring the formula's feasibility a visit was made to Cardiff where that authority had already introduced such an arrangement.
37. Implementation involved publishing statutory notices about which the writer in those pre-corporate days was forbidden to consult lawyers in the clerk's department. Reliance was to be placed on Beattie and Taylor's 'The New Law of Education', and if this failed, Sir William Alexander, the Secretary of the Association of Education Committees might be consulted.
38. C[ambridgeshire] C[ounty] A[rchives], Cambridge, Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely Education Committee, The Community School, 1970.
39. This is an instance of guile cited above, as was taking advantage of the rather casual committee comment about community facilities on the Arbury Estate.
40. Ibid. The Reorganisation of Schools in the Ely and Soham Area, 1970.
41. The writer's attendance at Birmingham University's Institute for Local Government Studies' course for senior officers had undermined an anti-management attitude.
42. Plowden Report [1967], DES, Children and their Primary Schools, Report to the Central Advisory Committee for Education, No. 1, London, HMSO. Lady Plowden spoke at a well-attended meeting in the city.
43. Throughout there was close officer contact with institutional heads.

44. CCA, The Reorganisation of Schools in the Cambridge Area, 1972.
45. Concern that it would be handicapped by its small size relative to other Cambridge comprehensive schools prompted an arrangement whereby it was linked to Coleridge School pending an eventual full union.
46. CCA, Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely Education Committee, 1973.
47. Seebohm Report, *Report of the Committee on Local Government Personal Social Services*, Cmnd. 3703, London, HMSO.
48. A task discharged by the writer.
49. The work preparation unit had been prompted by an exploratory visit to Portsmouth which had pioneered this attempt to help a vulnerable group. The district auditor questioned whether some of these initiatives had a statutory basis.

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3

The Destruction of the Local Education Authority in England 1974–2016

Donald Naismith

Mr. Butler's Education Act

With the exception of R. A. Butler's 1944 Education Act, education legislation in England and Wales has never shaken off the improvised character of William Forster's inaugural 1870 Education Act. Intended to 'fill up the gaps' in the national system, Forster's Act set the tone for the pattern of fragmentary lawmaking we know so well today through our addiction to almost one new piece of legislation a year, if not more. By contrast, Mr. Butler's Education Act stands uniquely apart, aloof, majestic in its ambitious definition of the nature and purpose of a national education system and in the scale and completeness of the organisation it called into being to fulfil both.

Until the Government of Wales Act 1998 Wales was included in legislation affecting England also.

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Mr. Butler's post-war settlement was to last in all its essentials until replaced by Kenneth Baker's 1988 Great Reform Act, the centrepiece of Margaret Thatcher's education revolution, which transformed Mr. Butler's '*national system, locally administered*' into what might be better called the '*local system, nationally administered*' we have today. Before describing the demolition of Mr. Butler's masterpiece, in particular the destruction of the key role it gave to the local education authorities, I feel I owe the 1944 Act what might be called an 'impact statement' to convey the effect it had on me personally and on so many of my contemporaries.

It is hard to comprehend today that up to 1944 the main requirement of legislation was to lay on parents of children between the ages of 5 and 14 the duty to cause them 'to receive efficient elementary instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic', that the provision of secondary education was a power available to local education authorities and not a duty laid upon them, and that regulations required only 25% of secondary school places to be provided free of charge. Less than 10% of children went on to secondary school. It is not difficult to imagine the waste and injustice caused. The 1944 Education Act changed all that. In future, children would be taught according to their abilities and not according to family circumstances. By the time I reached secondary school age, I, like many other working-class children would be able to go to secondary school without payment, and there be eligible for scholarships to take us to university.

My primary education owed more to Robert Morant than 'Rab' Butler. The infant and junior schools I went to had been among the first to be provided by Bradford's go-ahead school board following the Education Act of 1870–William Forster was one of the city's MPs. Their buildings were substantially the same. So too was much of the teaching offered within; not that this mattered in my case, as I was possessed of a good memory and had 'a way with words'. Accordingly, I was rapidly singled out as grammar school material, which is where Mr. Butler came in.

Had I been born a few years earlier, it is possible that in spite of coming from 'a one-parent family' without money, I would have won a scholarship at one of the city's fee-paying secondary schools. But this is far from certain. Mr. Butler's Act gave us all the assurance

of a secondary education without the stigma of the scholarship boy. Distance, of course, lends enchantment to the view, and it is important not to paint too rosy a picture. The post-war system had its weaknesses, as we shall see, but it also had its strengths. Mr. Butler's free secondary school place gave me and countless others an education and start in life to which we will always be indebted and for which we will always be grateful.

Mrs. Thatcher's Education Revolution… 'To Market, to Market…'

Although this post-war education system was substantially dismantled during Margaret Thatcher's premiership between 1979 and 1990, an unlikely start had been made during the years of the ineffectual Wilson/Callaghan governments between 1974 and 1979. Grappling with yet another 'worst economic crisis since the war', Harold Wilson and James Callaghan presided over a period in which the political consensus established between the main parties after the war based on the welfare state began to come apart. 'The turbulent events of the winter of 1973–1974 saw much more than the demise of one-nation Toryism. They witnessed also the erosion of an ethical system. Conceived in an age of intellectual confidence, institutional strength and instinctive patriotism, it was now withering away in confusion and doubt'.[1]

As far as Mr. Butler's settlement is concerned, the exact date of the beginning of the end can be pinpointed with some accuracy. On 16 October 1976, in a speech delivered to students at Ruskin College, James Callaghan delivered a devastating critique of the national education system, all the more effective coming from the natural friend of education as an arm of the welfare state. In his speech he itemised its failures and shortcomings, in so doing laying down a reform agenda which has lasted to the present day: the questionable aims, methods and competence of teachers; poor standards in literacy and numeracy; the neglect of science and technology; the absence of agreement about what as a minimum should be taught and how it should be assessed; the uncertain role of the inspectorate; the way schools are managed.

But beyond calling for a 'Great Debate' into what should be done, nothing, in fact, was done. Two behind-the-scenes developments, however, were to have an important bearing on the shape of things to come. Bernard Donoughue[2] strengthened the prime minister's policy unit Margaret Thatcher was to use to great effect in by-passing the civil service she so distrusted, and engineered the appointment of an instinctive centralist, James Hamilton, as permanent secretary at the department of education and science who was to predispose it to the more interventionist role she would reluctantly but necessarily come to rely on.

Mrs. Thatcher's antagonism to the education system she inherited stemmed from two faults, as she saw them. First, the key role accorded to local government in the form of the local education authority, in her view, the champion of monopoly, restrictive practices and the closed shop, nowhere more exemplified than in the take-it-or-leave-it comprehensive education usually on offer to the exclusion of anything else. Second, the underlying assumption of the post-war system that efficiency, both in terms of the individual and the operation of the system as a whole, was to be achieved through cooperation and coordination, when, to her mind, the very opposite, competition, was the motor of progress and success.

Reliance on coordination and cooperation had been a central characteristic of the national system introduced through Arthur Balfour's 1902 Education Act which had distributed the responsibility for providing education among its three main constituents, central and local government and the schools themselves as a means of preventing the kind of centralisation then regarded as such an unacceptable feature of continental systems and elsewhere. Coordination and cooperation were widely held to be essential in such a diffused system if efficiency, as much a consideration then as now, was to be achieved and the variety of schools, although '*reacting upon and supplementing the other*', prevented from '*degenerating into competition or elasticity (diversity) into formlessness*',[3] a perceptive warning. Until Kenneth Baker's Great Education Reform Act of 1988, the success or otherwise of the administration of the national system was, therefore, seen to depend on the 'active and constructive partnership between the central and local authorities'.[4] Although not a partnership of equals—local government was and is a

creature of statute—central government was always mindful that the large measure of independence and freedom of action local government enjoyed stemmed from a shared elective, representative, democratic legitimacy. Local education authorities were neither agencies of central government, nor schools the agencies of either.

The education system ushered in by Arthur Balfour's Act, however, had not been a success, and it was one of the purposes of Mr. Butler's Act to put certain things right by extending secondary education to everyone up to the age of 15 and abandoning insistence on differentiated schooling. Although the role of the local authorities was strengthened and streamlined, so too was that of central government. For the first time, the local education authorities were placed under 'the control and direction' of the education secretary, whatever that may mean. As far as Margaret Thatcher was concerned, however, the root cause of continuing failure lay in the fact that the local education authorities, in her view, used their responsibility for all the stages of education in their areas into which education was organised, the 'seamless robe' of commentators, more in the interests of themselves, the providers and their heavily unionised teaching and non-teaching forces than those who depended on them, parents, pupils and employers. Local authorities would have no part to play in the alternative arrangements she had in mind.

At the very beginning of Margaret Thatcher's first administration, Sir Keith Joseph's repeated question 'why can't they (the state schools) be like them (the public schools)?' often delivered despairingly head in hands, expressed her exasperation. It also provided a possible solution. An alternative model to what Keith Joseph characterised as the 'compulsory, co-erced, conscripted' state system lay readily to hand, namely the independent sector itself, whose consumerist features fitted well with those of the time and Mrs. Thatcher's wider reforms exposing the public services generally to the market forces of open tendering and competition. Accordingly a series of measures were set in train, culminating in Kenneth Baker's Great Reform Act of 1988, to create a 'social market', in which schools, free from local control, would be able to develop their own personalities and compete for the attention of parents armed with the means of exercising a reasonable degree of choice. Through

the operation of such market forces, it was argued, schools would gear themselves to meet the wishes of parents and the differing needs of children, underperforming schools and teachers would be eased out—far more effectively than the ability and willingness of Town Halls to do so—standards would rise and national confidence restored.

But there was a price to be paid. In future, all schools, not just those which took advantage of the new opportunity to remove themselves from local control altogether, would be financed directly by the government according to a formula in which the largest single element was the number on roll; the more 'successful' a school, the more money it would get. And, against all her instincts, Margaret Thatcher, in an unprecedented break with English tradition, allowed her education secretary, Kenneth Baker, to nationalise the curriculum; some monopoly, whichever way you look at it. From now on, the government would decide what was to be taught and monitor progress by deciding how the performance of schools and their pupils was to be measured. A constitutional line of the utmost importance had been crossed. For the first time, a direct managerial link between the constituent parts of the national education system, all previous governments had deliberately avoided, was established. Education was to be run as a business, and in a more detailed, interventionist and heavy-handed way than the local authorities had ever exerted in their heyday.

The idea of 'management' Margaret Thatcher regarded as equally applicable to public services and local government generally as to private enterprise had gathered pace during the 1960s and 1970s as a means, perhaps the only one, of bridging the gap, it was now accepted there would always be, between ever-increasing public expectations and the ever-declining, relatively speaking, resources governments had at their disposal. On 1st April 1974, local government outside London had been reorganised, placing it for the first time in almost a hundred years, under new management and providing a framework within which the country's education system would be torn between institutional independence and over-centralisation, and come to be better described as a 'local education service nationally administered'.

'Under New Management'

The reorganisation of local government was intended to create fewer, larger, more efficient councils, better equipped to meet the needs of modern management, planning and service provision. One of its effects was to destroy the historic identity and civic pride of numerous communities which had powered so many educational advances in the past. A significant source of commitment and initiative, today perversely regarded as the exclusive province of private interests, was chalked off and, of course, another stream of badly needed revenue, a consequence central government under present funding arrangements may come to regret. Reorganisation drove a stake through the heart of my adopted city of Bradford where I had grown up and where I had exchanged a career in teaching for one in education administration. All the towns in the West Riding had parts of the surrounding, defunct county tacked onto them, overturning the political balance in many Town Halls, introducing there the new, sharpened political partisanship which was taking hold across the country and which I was about to experience at first hand. In came the conservative-controlled Bradford metropolitan district council, out went the Labour city council and with it the director of education and me. We were not alone. Every chief education officer of the towns and cities in the area of the former West Riding lost his job.

Reorganisation had not solely involved redrawing the country's administrative boundaries; it brought with it an internal administrative revolution. Smuggled into the reforms was a new way of doing things, 'corporate management', which not only swept away the admittedly over-rigid departmentalism into which local government had been organised, but two pillars of the post-war system, the independence of the education committee and the education officer, now subordinated respectively to new generic committees, general purposes, policy, personnel, call them what you will, and to a newly invented chief officer, the chief executive, with overarching, if not yet overriding responsibility, for all his council's activities.

Coordinating the activities of independent departments was one thing, interfering in them was another. The chief executive of

Richmond-upon-Thames where I had become its education officer after my defenestration from Bradford's Town Hall telephoned to say that it had come to his attention that a primary school was keeping chickens. My defence that it was not unusual for schools to keep animals, rabbits, for example, elicited the deathless reply, 'Rabbits is education. Chickens is policy'. My experience was far from unique. Even more serious was the need to beat off attacks on the education service's budget, which came from inside and from outside. Spending almost, if not more, than half a council's total budget, it was inevitable, in times of never-ending financial retrenchment, that the education service, long regarded as a cuckoo in the nest in this respect, could expect its wings to be clipped. Internally, the most potent threat came from a new instrument of corporate management, *virement*, whereby expenditure allocated for one purpose could be transferred to another, across heads of expenditure, not only within but also between departments, a threat made more potent by the government's abandoning its practice of protecting the annual financial allocation it made to local authorities for purely educational purposes by ring-fencing it as a 'block grant'.

Externally, education expenditure came under additional pressure from the newly adopted monetarist policies of Margaret Thatcher's first administration, which meant that the amount allocated to education would no longer be decided by volume—how many children needed to be taught, how many teachers needed to be paid etc.—but by the amount the government considered it could afford. Over twenty years, the degree of financial support local government could expect from central government was systematically reduced. In 1974, the Rate Support Grant stood at 61.5% of total expenditure. By 1994, this had fallen to as little as 20%. In addition, of more significance in the management of the service, new devices to depress and control local expenditure were put in place. Mrs. Thatcher's three administrations passed no fewer than fifty Acts of Parliament altering the basis of local government finance. Heads of expenditure were 'capped', 'over-spending' 'clawed back'. Reliance grew on 'specific grants', whereby money was deducted from an authority's overall entitlement to pay for centrally directed policies or 'initiatives', drastically reducing the scope of

authorities to use their powers to the full and burdening them with additional administrative burdens and complications they could well do without.

The most dramatic of such government initiatives came with the decision in 1983 to extend into schools the work of the Manpower Services Commission, an agency of the Department of Employment set up in the 1970s to tackle youth unemployment. In future, the kind of specialist training courses it provided for adults and school leavers in further education colleges and the work place, geared up to the needs of employers, would be offered to 14–18 year olds still at school. Centrally funded, by-passing both the Department of Education and Science and the local education authorities, and laying down the content of the courses to be followed, this Technical and Vocational Education Initiative, as it was called, gave a taste of what was to come.

The constant pressure on expenditure, which was not significantly relaxed until Tony Blair's first administration, brought with it a damaging preoccupation with economy at the expense of more purely educational priorities. Increased expenditure, however badly needed, had to be paid for by savings elsewhere. There was, however, an unintended consequence. This unremitting financial scrutiny, together with growing teacher militancy and pay rises on a scale traditionally associated with industrial workers, threw a spotlight on teachers' performance and that of the service as a whole. 'Value for money' and 'outputs' became key corporate management considerations at national and at local level.

Although corporate management tightened control over education departments, it did nothing to weaken the much criticised 'you can't fight city hall' control education departments in turn exercised over the education service in their areas, which had been such a characteristic of the post-war system and which in many ways understandably fuelled Mrs. Thatcher's antagonism. It is worth reminding ourselves, however, of the reasons for this mindset, also of its qualities, not least those of transparency and accountability, which seem to be far from secure in our modern system and which need to be restored.

'You Can't Fight City Hall'

In the early years immediately after the war, there were good reasons why such tight, 'you can't fight city hall', control could be justified, whatever its shortcomings. Local councils owned and maintained the buildings and grounds of all municipal schools and colleges and maintained those still belonging to the churches; they employed and paid their own staff and paid those teaching and working in the voluntary sector. Their administration of regulations applying national standards to accommodation and national agreements governing the salaries and conditions of service of their employees re-inforced consistency and fairness. Ensuring effective coordination between all the constituent parts, the *rationale*, as we have seen, of the local authorities' overall responsibility for the system as a whole, and ensuring equality of opportunity, a founding principle of the post-war settlement, were powerful additional reasons for the degree and manner of control exercised.

Unacceptably restrictive by today's standards, and by no means beyond criticism then, local government administration was, nevertheless, in those days, marked by an enviable degree of accountability and transparency, secured by clear departmental line-management, public accessibility and democratic oversight, all in short supply today. Local administration was a relatively straightforward affair. Town Halls had a toy-town simplicity about them. Public services were provided by self-contained, unambiguously named departments, often headed by strong-willed, highly opinionated chief officers. Everybody knew who was ultimately responsible for what. All correspondence went out in the director's name, which was emblazoned outside every educational establishment. Shortcomings and failures could not be blamed on the 'systemic failures' or 'breakdowns in communication', seemingly endemic in corporate management today where excessive time is taken up in 'meetings' intended to cope with the liaising, coordinating and partnering required by over-elaborate and fragmented organisation. Such joining-up in Bradford's pre-reorganisation Town Hall would have been dealt with by a walk down the corridor. Who do you complain to today?

In the post-war system, it seemed unarguable that elected councillors should exercise the greatest degree of control over expenditure. After all, they were answerable to their constituents for the level of local taxation, in which education had the lion's share; money was exceptionally tight and the rates were beginning to exceed rents for the first time. Margaret Thatcher was wrong to tar every local authority with the accusation of waste. In Bradford, as in the other three boroughs I served, spending was monitored to an extent unknown today when there is every indication that, in effect, it is out of control. Every item of expenditure was presented to the education committee each year for approval, the pages of the annual estimates turned by the chairman with varying degrees of speed, pausing to let the news of favourable developments sink in, speeding up to frustrate likely objectors or awkward questioners he knew were lying in wait. 'You will 'ave to be quicker than that, Fred. Your views are well known'. 'Now, Doris, you know we can't go back to page 48. We'd be 'ere all night'. There were only two basic elements in the revenue estimates which mattered, both in sharp contrast to today's opaque procedures; the pupil–teacher ratios and the capitation allowance made in respect of books, materials and equipment. Where we stood in relation to everyone else was easily established by a glance at the comparative tables published by CIPFA.[5]

One of my most fatuous jobs on one of the lowest rungs in Bradford's education department was to initial by way of approval every single item of expenditure submitted by the city's schools before being passed on to the city treasurer for payment. I was particularly charged to be on the lookout for anything which smacked of 'entertainment'. I cannot imagine what would have happened had I sent any invoice back. There was no dissatisfaction of any significance with these arrangements. Headteachers had little appetite for administration. For some, collecting the dinner money was a step too far; they had better things to do with their time. And it was generally accepted in the collectivist spirit hanging over from the war that bulk buying and providing services in common were the most efficient ways of doing things, an approach which may yet challenge the profiteering excesses of the present day and the scandalous waste of Public Finance Initiative[6] expenditure.

Margaret Thatcher was also mistaken in her criticism that such regimes militated against fresh thinking and the adoption of new practices. The first moves to devolve financial and managerial responsibility to schools, which were, in time, to provide the basis of the self-governing school which she seized on, came, in fact, from local education authorities themselves, a powerful illustration of the capacity of local government, in spite of difficulties and discouragement, to change and to innovate, albeit, as events turned out in this case at its own expense.

Local Financial Management Becomes *National* Financial Management

With the onset of 'management' as a guiding principle, devolving financial responsibility as closely as possible to the point of delivery had rapidly become inevitable. In pilot schemes, two local authorities, Cambridgeshire and Solihull allocated lump sums to schools based on their historic pattern of need with the freedom to spend as they thought fit, including changes to staffing. As the chairman of Solihull's education committee put it, 'if you applied the same sort of procedures to running a school as he used in running a small business, there could be some improvement in performance, and that if you are spending your own money, you exercise more care than if you are spending someone else's'.

Kenneth Baker, the education secretary, visiting schools taking part in Cambridgeshire's local financial management scheme, as it was called, was quick to see the contribution it could make in advancing his wish to get rid of local authorities altogether. Two years later, his Education Reform Act of 1988, would transmute local financial management into the Local Management of Schools, which would turn out to be but a stepping stone to the government's direct responsibility for financing schools completely, such an unsatisfactory feature of today's system. In future, local education authorities would be required to delegate the greater part of their overall budget, approaching 90% in some cases, to the schools themselves by means of a formula, determined locally but conforming to government 'guidance' and subject to government control.

The main constituent of the formula, the *per capita* payment made in relation to the raw numbers on roll, was, then as now, clearly intended to sharpen the competitive edge schools were expected to adopt. In a futile attempt to reflect the myriad variations which need to be funded arising from the constantly changing conditions and circumstances of pupils and the schools to which they belong, weighted allowances were attached in relation to children, for example, whether they were in receipt of school meals, had English as a second language or special needs; in relation to teachers and other staff, whether their salaries and wages were subject to regional variation; in relation to school premises, whether they were small or occupied a split site. Such elaboration could be multiplied ad infinitum to the delight of the bean counters and it was.

After ten disputatious years trying to make the Local Management of Schools scheme work, the government in an astonishing admission of failure delivered its verdict. 'The money the government gives to local authorities to fund schools relates not to the needs of pupils but to historical decisions made by previous governments and local authorities. The system results in similar schools and similar areas receiving very different levels of funding. It does not respond well to changing characteristics of pupils and therefore does not help support pupils' needs. The system is extremely difficult to understand. It is extremely difficult to explain why a particular school receives the budget that it does'.[7] Quite.

To move towards a fairer, more transparent, consistent, progressive arrangement, one more closely geared up to the needs of pupils, the government replaced the Local Management of Schools scheme with an even more unrealistic scheme of financial delegation defensively entitled 'Fair Funding' whereby schools were financed in accordance with a national formula, locally administered, the discretion of local education authorities being virtually extinguished, their direct financial responsibilities reduced to the costs of planning future demand, providing transport, administering admissions and statementing children with special educational needs.

In spite of the spectacular and predictable failure of this approach—'It is patently unfair that Knowsley received nearly £750 less per pupil than Wandsworth'[8]—the government continues to launch fresh

attempts to come up with new formulae intended yet again to reduce variations between districts, a chimerical aim, in any case, of doubtful value in itself. A glance at these formulae which claustrophobically seek to represent every element affecting a child's education—far more intrusive than any control previously exercised by local government—quickly reveals the nonsense of attempting to micromanage education in this way. The most recent attempt, a barely disguised smoke-screen to reduce the national education budget, has justifiably attracted widespread opposition and scorn. It is a measure of the patent inadequacies of the present national system of education administration that repeated efforts to fund children's education wherever they live adequately and fairly have consistently failed. The sooner this method of regulating the financial relationship between central and local government is replaced with one grounded in local responsibility and accountability the better.

It will be argued that the previous system of local authority based finance was responsible for the unjustifiably widespread inequalities in pupil expenditure which still persist; little better than a postcode lottery, it is claimed. But as long as each child receives a generous basic entitlement sufficient to meet the performance standards expected, there is surely no reason why local factors such as property, salary, transport costs should not be reflected in local budgetary provision, not forgetting a local area's proper ambitions and aspirations for its youngsters.

Whatever permanent means of financing schools on such a national basis eventually emerge, and however contentious they may be, there is little disagreement today that schools should be largely free-standing, self-governing institutions and left, as far as possible, to get on with the job. No system of financial delegation, worth the name, whether by local or central government, is possible without schools enjoying considerable freedom to use it. Although the self-governing school first appeared as a main ingredient of Margaret Thatcher's education revolution, the seamless robe had already begun to unravel long before.

The Self-Governing School

The breakaway by institutions from local control had started as long ago as the 1960s when the government decided all further education and teacher training colleges should no longer be directly managed by their maintaining authorities but by governing bodies on which local councillors would no longer have a majority, the first move in a process which was to conclude some thirty years later with all further and sixth-form colleges being removed from local authority responsibility altogether. Many such colleges had their roots in their local communities and had flourished as a result of civic encouragement. The University of Bradford had started life as the city's technical college, which in turn had grown out of the town's Mechanics' Institute. The size many of these institutions had reached by the mid-1960s, their cost and the national significance they had attained, were all good enough reasons for their moving out of the ambit of local government, although the other reason advanced at the time, protecting academic freedom, has a somewhat hollow ring today.

The first steps to wean schools away from their local authorities also took place in the 1960s, in this case when the government built on the initiative of a number of authorities, Sheffield among the most prominent, which had abandoned the practice of grouping schools under one governing body in order to seek in its words 'the widest participation in the running of schools by parents, teachers, trade unionists, people from all walks of life'. The idea of real school independence gathered pace a few years later when in a further recognition of dissatisfaction with the national education system, James Callaghan appointed a committee under the chairmanship of the leader of Blackburn council, Tom Taylor, to look into the way schools were run; perhaps the relationship between schools and their local authorities was not all it should be. Among the recommendations of the Taylor Report, prophetically and somewhat ominously titled 'A New Partnership For Our Schools' was the proposal that not only should each school be governed by its own governing body, on which parents, teachers, councillors and the community should be equally represented, but that it should have responsibilities

for expenditure and staffing. The use of the word 'partnership' in any official document should always arouse concern.

The local authorities' associations were quick to see a contradiction in public accountability between those who were responsible for raising revenue and those who spent it and a threat to the wider principle of local democratic control. Herbert Morrison, one-time leader of the country's largest local authority, the London County Council, and champion of municipal socialism, would have none of it, roundly denouncing, as he saw it, the self-interested involvement of public servants in their own management.

At the other end of the political spectrum, Margaret Thatcher took the same view. As she saw it, one of the problems of the state system was precisely because its providers put their interests ahead of those of its users. Whereas James Callaghan's government, characteristically, did nothing to act on the Taylor Report's recommendations, Mrs. Thatcher, enthusiastic about their potential for strengthening a school's identity and sense of purpose, implemented them in full. Two years later, throwing caution to the winds, her government's 1988 Education Reform Act empowered schools to opt out of local authority control altogether to become self-governing 'grant-maintained' schools, financed directly by central government, along the lines of Kenneth Baker's City Technology Colleges, launched earlier, but which had struggled to make the impact hoped for. The self-governing school, aping the public school model, would become a cornerstone of Margaret Thatcher's 'Choice and Diversity'[9] social market policy and that of successive governments.

'The Social Market'

Diversity

The bond between local government and comprehensive education, which so agitated Margaret Thatcher, was not something for which local government was responsible. On the contrary, comprehensivisation had been imposed by the kind of centralising, doctrinaire government she most disliked, but which hers was fated, in turn, to become. The pros

and cons of all-ability schools which had come to dominate education policies and politics nationally and locally, increasingly called into question the constitutional relationship between central and local government and their respective responsibilities. For the first time, local authorities were driven to openly challenge central government. In 1976, Tameside Borough Council had refused to obey a directive issued by the secretary of state to restore a previously approved but abandoned scheme of comprehensive reorganisation and won on appeal. The concordat between local and central government had been irreparably broken.

Local government, however, was no stranger to diversity. Local education authorities had been accustomed to providing and maintaining a range of schools from the very beginning. During the interwar years, it was taken for granted that there should be different schools, grammar, modern and technical, to cater for the varying needs and talents of pupils. In addition, local councils maintained denominational schools provided by the Churches. Differentiation, re-inforced by regulation, was an accepted and established feature of the local education system. Although Mr. Butler's Education Act dramatically and wisely broke with the past in this respect, leaving the pattern of education in their areas to the local authorities, many of the assumptions and features of the tripartite system of the interwar years spilled over into the post-war years, albeit amid growing restiveness over their appropriateness and effectiveness. Concern centred on the methods of selection. The number of grammar school places, the barely concealed priority of the national system, varied widely from area to area. The eleven plus was less an instrument of identifying the best kind of education for a child than an administrative means of allocating places among the varying schools on offer.

Practical attempts to overcome the unfairness and waste of talent embedded in the tripartite system had begun well before the 1944 Act in a number of innovative local authorities through the development of 'multilateral schools', attempts which were continued into the 1950s by both Conservative and Labour councils. This experimental and cautious approach was best exemplified by the attitude of Edward Boyle, the education secretary most in tune with the opportunities of the 1944 Act and most alive to the value of the freedom of local authorities to experiment, an early personal hero I was privileged to know. 'I would like',

he said 'for a good many years to let Southampton, the Isle of Wight and Leicestershire try out their schemes because we need experience before trying to lay down too much uniformity. Public opinion may not like this, *but we just don't know enough for a government to be justified in describing any particular pattern of organisation as the right one*'.[10] There could hardly be a more telling warning against the temptations of over-centralisation. 'There is and has to be some central framework. But I'd hope that governments for the most part can play along with what local authorities want to do, rather than have to impose too many things on them they do not want to do'.[11]

The pragmatic Edward Boyle did not oppose comprehensive education in principle and supported it where it was sought locally. 'He could feel and sympathise with the emotions aroused by both sides of the argument'.[12] No such uncertainties, however, clouded the determination of his opposite number, the ideologically driven Labour education secretary, Anthony Crosland. In the first exercise of the 'control and direction' of the national service given to holders of his office by the 1944 Act, he took steps to require local authorities to 'end selection at eleven plus and to eliminate separatism in secondary education'. In so doing, Anthony Crosland intruded into the first of the two no-go areas Mr. Butler's Education Act had, for good reason, kept out of central government's grip, the way local communities wanted their schools to be organised. The second, what their children should be taught, would be violated later.

Whatever the advantages of the comprehensive school, and there were many—I taught in one of inner London's purpose-built, all-ability schools and my three children went to their local comprehensive—it was a mistake to believe that concentrating on one aspect of designing a school system, its structure, would be sufficient, in itself, to resolve the troublesome problems of the secondary years. The centralist comprehensive experiment failed because although central and local government could determine the outer character of schools, neither had any control over what went on inside; what and how children should be taught. And at the time comprehensive education was launched, teacher power had reached such a point that Bernard Donoghue was driven to the observation that their unions had succeeded in establishing the fact

that ‘no-one except themselves had any right to a say in what went on in a school’.

Secondary schools, no longer protected by the breakwaters of the eleven plus and the distinctive forms of selective education, were swamped by new, contentious teaching theories and practices, flooding in from the primary sector. Out went the ‘essential’ setting Anthony Crosland had taken for granted. In came mixed-ability teaching, sweeping away any chance of pupils being taught according to their ages, abilities and aptitudes, let alone receiving the grammar school education for all promised in equal measure by Harold Wilson and Edward Heath. Mr. Justice Auld’s report[13] in 1975 into the near anarchic conditions at one of the Inner London Education Authority’s primary schools laid bare, not only the impotence and dereliction of the country’s most prestigious education authority, but those of most others which were similarly responsible for the poor standards and indiscipline of so many schools. Mrs. Thatcher was neither alone in her disillusion with local government and the education establishment, nor without good cause.

Whatever the drawbacks of comprehensive schools, and there were many—the school where I taught, later condemned as one of the worst in the country, was bulldozed—their size, their cost, their teaching methods, their attitude to achievement, their results, their admission criteria, whatever, all were compounded by the monopoly position they occupied, providing yet another illustration of the magnifying dangers of uniformity yoked to over-centralisation, if one were needed. The abolition by Kenneth Baker’s 1988 Education Reform Act of the country’s largest and most aggressive proponent of comprehensive education in its most exaggerated form, the Inner London Education Authority, in Margaret Thatcher’s eyes, the embodiment of everything that was worst in the local government-controlled system, and the delegation of its powers and responsibilities to its constituent boroughs, however, provided the opportunity for a fresh albeit illusory start.

The way one of ILEA’s successor boroughs, Wandsworth, whose education officer I became on its creation, made the most of its newly found freedom is worthy of examination, not so much because of its predictable departure from the previous authority’s outlook and policies, but because of its forceful and unexpected departure from Margaret

Thatcher's jaundiced, stereotyped view of local government. Unlike the prime minister, Wandsworth believed in local government as a force for good, and that there was nothing inherently contradictory between the particularly assertive form of local government it represented and the aspirations of the government's social market which it enthusiastically embraced in equal measure.

In defiance of the government's obsession with bringing supply into correspondence with demand through closures and amalgamations, and in spite of the undoubted financial benefits this would bring, Wandsworth set about making the most of the spare capacity it inherited to widen institutional diversity and parental choice. As we have seen, its manifesto 'Diversity and Choice' was to give the government the name of its White Paper, if not the policy itself. Wandsworth's local education system would, unapologetically, be, as far as possible, 'demand-led'. At the heart of the council's policy was the determination to attract pupils back to its failing schools through encouraging schools to use grant-maintained and CTC status to offer specialist courses in which pupils would naturally be interested and would do well. By harnessing pupil motivation in this way within a looser competitive environment, rather than relying on the previously more restrictive 'planned' system, standards, it was argued, would rise. Although specialisation widely regarded as a proxy for selection, appeared on the English scene in the 1980s with explosive force, it had been regarded as an unexceptional feature of the educational landscape of the post-war system and had been viewed with nonchalance by R. A. Butler introducing his Bill in 1944.[14] And a working model of specialist schools was to be found in the 'magnet schools' being pioneered in parts of the United States.

Selection Makes a Comeback

In Wandsworth's view, by recruiting on the basis of talent rather than proximity, such specialist schools would relax the stranglehold of the immediate catchment areas of schools, all too often socially deprived neighbourhoods of the kind which peppered the borough, causing and

re-inforcing problems within the schools which served them. With the indispensable help of Sir Cyril Taylor,[15] a fact-finding party of teachers and principals visited two very different districts in the United States where specialist schools were meeting with some success; Spanish Harlem, New York and Dade County, Miami. Two of the most distinguishing features of the 'magnet' schools visited were their reliance on attraction in their admission policies, rather than direction and allocation, and on motivation within class by 'tracking' pupils' progress through the stages of achievement they had reached not by lazy reference to their ages, both characteristics in sharp contrast to so many of our inbred instincts and traditional practices; freedom indeed. But how far were we really prepared to go?

Not far enough, in my opinion. Nevertheless, within five years, of the eleven maintained schools Wandsworth inherited, only one had decided to retain its neighbourhood comprehensive character, a decision the council applauded; it would be interesting to see how such a school would fare released from its monopoly straight-jacket to make its way in a varied environment. Of the others, three new schools, a CTC, a specialist technical college and a denominational school had replaced schools which had closed. Five had become grant-maintained. Two were offering specialist courses to a selective entry. School enrolment, staying-on rates, standards, all measurably improved. As far as was humanly possible, within the time and resources available, Wandsworth had come closest to realising Margaret Thatcher's vision of a state system organised on independent lines, whilst at the same time challenging her nihilist view of local government. A new form of independent state school Wandsworth wished to sponsor was shot down by the 1993 Education Act. 'A local education authority may not establish a grant-maintained school'.

Diversity or 'Formlessness'?

Margaret Thatcher's successor, John Major and his education secretary, John Patten, moved opting-out and specialisation into the central positions in education policymaking they occupy today. Both

were aggressively pursued during the Blair and Brown administrations and have been so ever since with increasing momentum. There was no going back. The threat was lifted from the charitable status of independent schools and from the continuation of grammar schools, paving the way to their restoration as a major plank of government policy. A multiplicity of faiths moved in to occupy the previously wholly Christian denominational franchise. New kinds of schools, some short-lived, tumbled out of Whitehall with, it seemed each time, a touch of desperation to find some previously unexplored formula; 'free', studio, specialist, advanced specialist, beacon, university technical schools, academies, each category armed with varying degrees of freedom, over the curriculum, organisation and management, finance, staffing and admissions, with no explanation still less justification why one and not the other. Perversely, adherence to the national curriculum is regarded as a means of high standards in some schools but its abandonment promoted for the same reason in others.

In addition, greater diversity was and continues to be pursued through seemingly every other avenue: expanding specialisation into new areas until it is hard to see what activities or interests cannot be excluded. Centrally financed and promoted 'initiatives', venture into areas previously closed to government interference; teaching methods—setting and those concerned with literacy and numeracy, for example. The involvement of outside agencies, universities, charities, parents, special interest and faith groups, private philantropists, businesses in the establishment and management of schools is aggressively encouraged. Cooperative schemes whereby well performing schools are able to help with the problems facing those in difficulties are torturously promoted. And so on.

All these are, in themselves, no doubt admirable and reflect an openness to badly needed fresh thinking. But they are all inexorably tied to the control of central government through regulations, codes and contracts, in turn, policed by 'arm's-length' agencies, dealing with the observance of curricular, examination and assessment requirements, admission arrangements, financial probity. None of these agencies, many of which are partly privatised and contracted out, inevitably leading to conflicts of interest which multiply by the day and downright fraud, is subject, except in the most token sense, to democratic scrutiny.

Unsurprisingly, the 1988 Education Reform Act, in taking no fewer than 415 powers to the centre, the most centralising measure of modern times, cunningly relieved the education secretary of the duty of reporting to parliament on the performance of the national education service, for which he was assuming a greater responsibility than ever before. The labyrinthine protocols aimed at ensuring the independence of top public officials, whose impartiality is considered vital, leads us in each case, as inevitably as Ariadne to the Minotaur, to the education secretary, responsible for recommending the appointment of the chief inspector of schools, for approving the appointment of the head of the organisation which supervises the examination system, and for the appointment of the admissions adjudicator. Interestingly, the work of the most 'value-free', technical regulator, the audit commission, was broken up and its duties and powers devolved.

The pursuit of greater diversity has created a system of bewildering complexity beneath which it is difficult to detect any unifying principle other than 'whatever is thought or seen to work'. This understandable, even laudable aim, however, is at risk from, among other things, the unprecedented and counterproductive level of bureaucracy the new system involves, which, as far as the individual school is concerned, far exceeds the heavily criticised degree of supervision and control once exercised by the local authority. Nothing of any significance can be undertaken without the say-so of Whitehall. Schools are daily assailed by a barrage of policy papers with varying degrees of insistence. Commendable though ministers' claims that they continue to cut thousands of papers of 'guidance' are, there is nothing, as things stand, to prevent a hyperactive education secretary or department from putting them back.

The danger of attempting to micromanage every aspect of the service is not so much that it gets in the way of efficiency, or that it makes a mockery of the self-governing school, but that when harnessed to an unyielding social market agenda, it irrevocably changes the nature of education itself within the public service. More 'machine' than 'inspiration' as Tawney would have put it.

An important measure of the success of such a diverse, market approach is the degree to which the customers, the parents, are offered places for their children at the schools of their first choice. The day on

which each year local authorities simultaneously publish these results to provide an overall national picture, National Offer Day, has become one of the most important in the education calendar, rivalling the publication of that other set of performance indicators, the country's examination results.

Choice

R. A. Butler's 1944 Education Act made no mention of parental choice. It did not then belong to any politician's repertoire. Rationing was still in force. In the austere aftermath of the war, the rampant consumerism of the 1980s was unimaginable. School places were either 'won' by children 'passing' their eleven plus or allocated by the Town Hall, usually on the basis of the distance between home and school, 'as the crow flies', in the experience of administrators a most unreliable bird. During the education debates of the 1970s, parental pressure groups on the left sought a greater involvement in the emerging comprehensivisation programme to moderate its monopolistic effects, those on the right saw parental choice as a consumer entitlement already preferentially embedded in the independent sector.

In spite of Margaret Thatcher's obsession with parental choice as a means of driving up standards, the fact of the matter was that only the well-off had the means to exercise realistic choice through their ability to buy an education. It was pointless Keith Joseph, intellectually dallying with the voucher, the single most effective means of bringing all parents closer to each other in their ability to secure their chosen education, whilst at the same time demanding the elimination of the very places left by a receding population which alone could make possible the wider diversity and choice the government wanted to see—an operation, pointedly, not to be left to the invisible hand of the market, but to be sorted out by a dose of good old-fashioned planning.

Such, however, was the contradictory attachment of Margaret Thatcher's government to bringing supply into correspondence with

demand that, in addition to insisting on widespread closures and amalgamations, it required local authorities to artificially regulate admissions to schools where there was spare capacity even if this meant refusing parental preferences for schools which were 'administratively full'. Although today, the introduction of the voucher as a means of financing the education system, at least partially, is now only a matter of time, Keith Joseph's abandonment of the idea meant, however, that, in the absence of money, all Margaret Thatcher's government could do to strengthen parental choice was to relax admission arrangements through 'open enrolment' to allow schools to admit to their maximum capacity, a measure which cost nothing.

Of more significance was the government's realisation that if parents were to make a good choice, they needed and deserved to know more about the schools available, and indeed more about the abilities and potential of their own children. Choice, in itself, was not enough. What was needed was an 'informed' choice. Central to the debate about comprehensive education had been the question of standards. Were they going up or down? What, indeed, were they? How should they be measured? Could they, in fact, be measured?

It was little use looking to school inspectors who might be expected to supply some of the answers. They reported on what and how teachers taught, not on what children learnt. Such verdicts from HM Chief Inspector of Schools as 'the quality of education in the Inner London Education Authority is neither wholly very good nor very bad. Primary education is reasonable, if not often exciting. The main weakness lies in secondary education where there are causes for serious concern about standards in some schools and some subjects'[16] would no longer do. Parents asked themselves four questions: how well are our children doing in relation to themselves and their peers; how well suited to our children are the schools on offer, and how well do schools perform in relation to each other? They were questions which had been traditionally ignored. A start, however, had been made to tackle them, and it was to local government in the shape of Croydon and Richmond-upon-Thames, that Margaret Thatcher turned.

An 'Informed' Choice

One of the most enthusiastic supporters of Margaret Thatcher's privatisation policies, Croydon had already extended the idea of outcomes and performance indicators, on which the success of these policies depended, to the wholly new territory of education. Taking advantage of the confusion surrounding responsibility for the curriculum and an ill-judged invitation to local authorities to set out their policies towards it,[17] the council introduced standardised tests in English Language, mathematics and science, attempting assessments, based on the best evidence, of the level of attainment in each subject, pupils of average ability could be expected to reach at ages 7, 11 and 14, such assessments linked to prescribed programmes of learning within a broader curriculum. In so doing, Croydon provided a pivotal point in the government's agonised and reluctant examination of the idea of a national curriculum.

Until then, if there were one area where central government had refused to tread, it was the curriculum. Churchill, in response to R. A. Butler's hint that, in the post-war legislation he was being invited to prepare, he would 'like to influence what was taught in schools, but that this was always frowned upon', pointedly commented 'not by instruction or order, but by suggestion'.[18] In his first major speech as education secretary, Kenneth Baker told the House of Commons, 'We operate through a decentralised school system and I believe in such devolution of power. It is right to devolve responsibility even in a national service like education. I have been frequently asked whether I favour adopting the French centralised system. I want to make it clear that I do not'. Only eight months later, he was arguing for the adoption of a national curriculum, in which he was later to insist that children should learn to recite poetry by heart.

This *volte face* is not easy to explain. Neither Kenneth Baker's nor Margaret Thatcher's autobiographies shed any light on their damascene conversion. The right-wing marketeers who were holding their feet to the fire over so many educational issues were no supporters of intrusive government involvement in the education system. They wanted to

roll back the state; they certainly did not want the state to come rolling back, particularly in matters affecting the curriculum where an education secretary, not necessarily of their political stripe, could determine what was to be taught in schools.

The deciding factor, in my view, was the refusal of the government to countenance any strengthening of local government, particularly in this way. Tory Croydon and others like it could perhaps be trusted, but what would councils on the 'looney left', some of which were already being pencilled in as successor authorities to the Inner London Education Authority, do with their new powers? For two years, the government toyed with the idea of giving the determination and control of the secular curriculum to the headteacher before deciding, to be on the safe side, there was only one thing for it; it would have to assume responsibility for the curriculum and assessment itself. The mess the government made and continues to make of both is an object lesson in the dangers of over-centralisation and needs no recital here. To her credit, Margaret Thatcher had wanted a light touch approach; 'a list of topics and sources to be covered', 'pencil and paper' tests. Instead, a 'thoroughly exasperated' Mrs. Thatcher and the country got unworkable, over-intellectualised, intrusive systems, inimical to the best teaching practice, the 'straight-jacket' she specifically wanted to avoid.

Breaking the accompanying cultural barrier of making academic performance indicators public had already been achieved thirteen years previously by Richmond-upon-Thames, which had published the GCE and CSE results of its secondary schools in tabular form enabling at-a-glance comparisons to be made, the first local authority to do so. But in very different circumstances. Then, schools unwilling to let the council have this information readily, had the support of the Callaghan government which believed, incredibly, that results should be seen against 'the school's definition of what it expects children will learn and be able to do'and which was quick to issue a rebuke 'League tables based on examination or standardised tests in isolation can be very misleading', notwithstanding which the authority prevailed.

'A Thing of the Past'

In spite of her unwilling and unacknowledged debt to local government in shaping and advancing her social market strategy, through pioneering the Local Management of Schools, specialisation, the systematic assessment of pupils and schools, the publication of results, and the national curriculum which made institutional variety possible, Mrs. Thatcher's antagonism was undimmed. Discussing the role of local education authorities with Kenneth Baker in the run-up to his Education Bill, Margaret Thatcher wanted to quicken the pace of their abolition to 'within a matter of months', an aim which was, in effect, to be attempted five years later by John Major's education secretary, John Patten, whose 1993 Education Act, the largest piece of legislation in our education system's history, was unapologetically intended 'to mark…the end of the long standing local education monopoly of state school provision', and left local education authorities with little more than in John Patten's own words 'those functions for which an LEA is best fitted; for example, assessing and statementing pupils with special educational needs and enforcing school attendance'.

For good measure, the statutory duty to maintain an education committee was removed; the similar requirement to have an education officer had already gone. It was time for me to go, too. I left behind an education service totally transformed from the one I had entered over thirty years before, that of my adopted city of Bradford of all places, which had given the country universal education, sold off, lock, stock and barrel, to an 'out-sourcing' company. Although repealed by Tony Blair's incoming administration in 1997, the main thrust of John Patten's Act and that of Margaret Thatcher's education revolution remained basically untouched. If anything, successive governments would dance even more frenetically to their tune, witness the government's latest White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' (March 2016), which sought to impose academy status on every school, consigning local authorities, in David Cameron's words 'a thing of the past', to the dustbin, their residual duties of planning, looking after vulnerable children and 'championing' parents, whatever that may mean,

similar to the dismal litany in John Patten's abortive Act. The prime minister was getting ahead of himself. It would be left to his successor, Mrs. May to abandon the academisation programme, not on any grounds of merit, but because the new style education department was overloaded and could not cope!

Clinging to the Wreckage: What Next?

Kenneth Baker's 1988 Education Act was a brave and necessary reform. It sought to tackle problems which had arisen since the 1944 Act by addressing issues Mr. Butler had failed to address but which could be ignored no longer. What should children learn and who should decide what they should be taught? What, in fact, were the standards everyone talked about as slipping but which few were able to define? How could progress be measured, and, if so, how should results be best made known? In particular, Mr. Baker's Act brought about a new distribution of constitutional and managerial responsibilities between central and local government and the schools themselves, which has been the focus of this chapter.

At the time, there was general agreement that reform was needed in each of the areas Kenneth Baker's Act identified as candidates for change. In practice, however, none of its measures has achieved widespread support and confidence, nor brought about the large-scale improvements in efficiency and standards promised. Taken together, they contribute to the philosophical and managerial incoherence which characterises the education service today.

To put these failures and shortcomings right and to meet the challenges on the horizon—the pressures of the digital revolution and the 'entitlement' culture among them—two measures need to be taken. First, a new *omnibus gatherum* Education Act in the ambitious spirit of Mr. Butler's Act, building on the undoubted good ideas of Kenneth Baker's—if after another 'Great Debate' so be it. Second, the restoration of local government—obviously in penitential form—as a mediating level of responsibility between central government and the schools themselves.

The case for the latter is far greater than it was in 1944. Now, management at national level is impractically top-heavy: failure to cope with a major government initiative such as the academisation programme may be excusable, but the education department is not able even to guarantee a sufficiency of places in each area, the most basic of duties. The spread of educational institutions at every level is fragmented to an equally deleterious extent: our rates of literacy and numeracy continue to languish by international comparison. The cooperation and coordination only local government can provide was never more needed.

Today's wide-ranging debate about devolution, from which education is scandalously omitted, together with the Labour Party's newly found commitment to 'municipal socialism' provides unmissable opportunities for the case to be made for the renewed contribution local government can make to the better education for our children all of us want to see. They should be taken.

Notes

1. Kenneth O. Morgan's 'Britain Since 1945. The People's Peace'.
2. Most influential of James Callaghan's advisors and author of his 'Ruskin College' speech.
3. Bernard M. Allen's 'Sir Robert Morant'.
4. Sir Lewis Amherst Selby-Bigge, Secretary of the Board of Education 1911–1925.
5. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy which published consumer-friendly comparative statistics of local government expenditure.
6. A controversial method of financing public works and projects by private companies operating for profit on terms widely regarded as disadvantageous to the public interest.
7. Lord Hill of Oareford, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Schools, 2010–2013, announcing consultation on a new, 'fairer' method of school funding, April 2012.
8. George Osborne's 2015 Autumn Statement.
9. Although this slogan sums up Margaret Thatcher's social market policy, it was first used as the title of John Major's government's White

Paper outlining its intentions towards greater institutional diversity and parental choice, a mirror image of Wandsworth's policy document 'Diversity and Choice' sent to the Department of Education and Science for comment earlier in the year.
10. Quoted in Maurice Kogan's 'The Politics of Educational Change.'
11. Ibid.
12. From Christopher Chataway's contribution to Ann Gold's 'Edward Boyle: His Life by his Friends.'
13. Prominent among the reasons for the collapse of standards and discipline Mr. Justice Auld's Report found the ineffectiveness at all levels of the diffused system of management responsibility. Three months later, Mr. Callaghan made his Ruskin College speech.
14. '…I would say that…if it appeared to the authority that a certain school was particularly good in the higher ranges of scientific or mathematical study, they might agree…for that school to specialise in that direction, whilst other schools might specialise in different directions.'
15. Entrepreneurial champion of the self-governing school; spearheaded and rescued Kenneth Baker's CTC initiative; later promoted to great effect the cause of specialisation in schools.
16. Astonishingly included in a report submitted to the Secretary of State by the Inner London Education Authority as evidence for its retention.
17. DES Circulars 6/81 and 8/83, in particular, opened the way.
18. R. A. Butler's Memoir 'The Art of the Possible'.

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4

Church Schools and Local Government: Partnerships and Accountabilities

Priscilla Chadwick

My experience in relation to both local and central government education policy is reflected throughout this chapter, since for many years I served as a head and governor of various church schools. This perspective provides evidence of both the effectiveness of local authorities in supporting church schools which were well established before the state became involved, but also evidence where the bureaucratic systems of local government failed to take into account the more complex trusts and legal foundations on which most church schools were created. Looking from a twenty-first century perspective on the development of church schools throughout the past two hundred years, it seems remarkable that Anglican and Roman Catholic schools not only survived the political vicissitudes of the various governments' education policies but even flourished and expanded, enhancing their position as major contributors to the nation's well-being and academic success. How did this come about?

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Nineteenth-century sectarianism and twentieth century secularisation have played a significant role in church school education policy. Church schools have always been a contentious issue. The Church of England aimed to offer an ecclesiastical via *media* between Roman Catholics who looked to Rome for authority and the Puritan Dissenters who eschewed the Establishment, relying on the Bible to guide the individual conscience. So too in its education policy, the Anglican Establishment looked both ways, seeing its schools first and foremost to be educating the nation but also educating children in the doctrines of the Anglican Church. By contrast, the Roman Catholics primarily created schools to protect their interests as a minority discriminated against in a society that distrusted its loyalty to the Crown; and the Dissenters or Nonconformists opposed any kind of denominational teaching in schools funded by the nation's rates, relying on their Sunday schools to nurture their children in Protestant teaching. Such diversity was bound to complicate both partnerships and accountabilities.

The Anglicans' commitment to the education of the nation paved the way for the 'dual system' whereby the church would work with the state, in partnership with both central and local government, to provide education for the nation's children (the majority of whom could be described as Anglicans). This was to be a partnership which would experience significant upheaval and strain as British society evolved and government policy changed through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The Nineteenth-Century Background

Following the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII and thereby the destruction of much of the education system, Christian charitable benefactors stepped in to create what we might now call independent school foundations, mainly offered to upper and later middle-class boys.[1] By contrast, the work of the British and Foreign School Society from 1807 and the Church of England's National Society

founded by Joshua Watson in 1811, alongside other charitable bodies such as the earlier Sunday School movement, had pioneered education for the poor. With the extension of the popular franchise following the 1832 Reform Act, the state offered the first building grant of £11,000 for the National Society's 690 schools in 1833; but further financial support was only accepted after a 'concordat' in 1840 allowed the church right of veto over government inspector appointments. In 1847, the National Society was divided on the issue of allowing laymen to sit on school boards, the majority being reassured in that the parish incumbent remained as chairman, yet the Tractarians were concerned about 'creeping erastianism' as the State's influence on church schools increased.[2]

Even though it had expanding influence, it was not until the 1870s that the state finally accepted its responsibility to run schools. The Forster Education Act, concerned to ensure a better-educated workforce to create 'industrial prosperity', recognised that church schools and non-denominational state schools could work alongside each other in a 'dual system', thereby papering over the cracks of a society divided by sectarianism and religious protectionism. The Act set up *board* schools where needed and by 1884 the Church of England had willingly transferred control of over 600 of its elementary schools to local school boards. Meanwhile the Cowper-Temple clause had guaranteed that 'in schools hereafter established by means of local rates, no catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught'. In effect this limited religious education to Bible stories in state-funded schools, but the acrimonious debates in Parliament (one lasting for four consecutive nights) eventually contributed to the Liberal government's election defeat in 1874.

In spite of these nineteenth-century tensions, Anglicans embarked on the twentieth century confident that their contribution to the nation's education was valued, yet increasingly dependent on government financial support for its schools and wary of government interference in its policies. We could argue that nothing much has changed over the past more than one hundred years, since such issues continue to resonate into the third millennium. This inference however would be misleading

because during the twentieth century the social context and political ideologies shifted significantly, altering the relationships between church schools and their partners in the national educational enterprise.

Balfour and Birrell

Controversy arose early on, as the gulf between state and voluntary provision widened and it became clear that more state aid was essential if the voluntary sector were to survive, let alone flourish in the twentieth century. However, as this sector represented 71% of all schools, it would be a considerable burden on the rate-payer. Balfour's 1902 Education Act, offering state aid to church schools in return for allowing government inspection of standards and local authority representation on management boards, gave the new local education authorities a direct say for the first time in the organisation of the voluntary sector. This might have been seen as paving the way for the eventual abolition of the dual system, as advocated by the Non-conformists. However, the latter were entrenched in their opposition to state funding for denominational schools, their rallying cry being 'Rome on the rates'. When the 1902 Act was finally passed after 57 days of debate, many Non-conformists refused to pay their rates, 38,000 summonses were issued and 80 protestors were jailed.

Therefore Augustine Birrell, President of the Board of Education in the new Liberal government of 1906, proposed a Bill to abolish the divisive dual system, encouraged by atheists and secularists as well as the Non-conformists to bring all schools under full state control. Such a proposal, however, then rallied the churches to the cause, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, arguing persuasively in the House of Lords the injustice inherent in confiscating 14,000 schools and demolishing their trusts by radical secularisation. The fall of the 1906 Birrell Bill, which educationalist Cruickshank later regarded as 'unquestionably the great missed opportunity of the twentieth century' (1963, 103), was followed by several further unsuccessful attempts in 1908 and 1918 to resolve the problems of the dual system. As pressure

grew with the expansion of schools and the raising of the school leaving age, the churches' position became even less secure. Nevertheless, the Bishop of Durham, Herbert Hensley Henson, commented perceptively in 1939:

> The Dual System, as it now exists, obstructs the complete triumph of the secularising tendency. It affirms an educational ideal which is larger in range, more intelligently sympathetic in temper, more congruous with human nature, than that which secularism embodies'. (1939, 204)

Butler's Post-War Compromise

The virulent debates around the 1906 Birrell Bill certainly made Winston Churchill reluctant[3] to bring forward legislation during the Second World War. However, the proposals leading up to Butler's 1944 Education Act were underpinned by the realisation that the democratic values, for which so many had sacrificed their lives fighting Nazism, were largely based on England's Christian heritage. As *The Times Leader* (17 February 1940) noted: 'More than ever before, it has become clear that the healthy life of the nation must be based on spiritual principles…Education with religion omitted is not really education at all.' William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, went further: 'We must take steps to ensure that the corporate life of the schools is Christian' (Temple 1942, 93).

However, the Church of England's school buildings were in a parlous state, 399 of the 700 condemned by government being Anglican foundations. Temple acknowledged later: 'I was doing a rather elaborate egg-dance, and some of the eggs were such as it be most important not to break, because the smell would be awful' (Iremonger 1948, 572). The government recognised the churches' financial difficulties, offering 50% grants to bring voluntary school buildings up to standard and the creation of *voluntary-controlled* status for schools willing to be managed by local educational authorities (LEAs) which would assume responsibility for all buildings maintenance. Some Anglicans wanted to retain

control of all their denominational schools, as did the Roman Catholics who demanded at least 70% capital grants for their schools.[4] Non-conformists meanwhile stood by their convictions on state schools for all, with the Cowper-Temple clause guaranteeing non-denominational religious education.

Following the 1943 White Paper, William Temple took the wider view:

> Let us not give the impression that our concern as church people is only with the adjustment of the dual system: we ought as Christians to be concerned about the whole of the educational process. I am quite sure that the raising of the school leaving age will of itself do more to make permanent the religious influence of the school than anything that can be done with directly denominational purpose. (ibid., 1948, 573)

Such a view reflected Anglicans' confidence in their position as the Established Church of a nation determined to reconstruct its post-war education system. The mutual respect between Temple and Butler undoubtedly facilitated the final compromises needed to pass the 1944 Education Act, which included the continuation of the dual system modified by offering a choice for voluntary schools of *controlled* or *aided* status. The government would provide all the running costs; local authorities would manage *controlled* schools with some church representation and offer denominational instruction if requested by parents; and the churches would retain their control of *aided* schools supported by 50% state capital grants. The government (Butler 1971, 101) correctly predicted that the majority of Anglican schools could only afford to opt for *controlled* status even if, as Temple's successor Archbishop Fisher thought, *aided* status was preferable (Carpenter 1991, 431). However, the Roman Catholics were adamant that all their schools had to be designated *aided* to ensure episcopal control was retained (as required by Canon Law), even if still funded by the state: in the post-war period, they prioritised the building of schools for their children at considerable cost to their parishes. Although Butler had to compromise his ambition for a single national system in 1944, he felt that at least one publicly-funded system was a step in the right direction.

Religious Education

The 1944 Act had also included new provision for the development of Religious Education or RE (as it became called). Although the Cowper Temple clause remained in place requiring RE to be non-denominational, the local authorities were required by law to establish Standing Advisory Councils on RE (SACREs) reflecting the local communities they served. The councils were responsible for ensuring the creation of locally agreed RE syllabuses which laid down what should be taught in its local schools which included most *controlled* schools. *Aided* schools, both Anglican and Roman Catholic, continued however to follow their own diocesan RE syllabuses.

The changes in post-war Britain, overshadowed by the nuclear threat and with classroom pupils less respectful of authority than previous generations, meant that the SACREs also had to adapt from instruction through Bible stories to a more relevant engagement with issues of interest and concern to contemporary society, where young people expected their own views to be taken seriously. New pedagogical trends increasingly advocated more participatory active learning in RE lessons, encouraging the discussion of moral values and Christian ethics (e.g. war and pacifism, abortion and euthanasia) alongside Bible teaching.

Another significant change in post-war Britain was the arrival of Commonwealth immigrants, many of whom were Christian while others were from Muslim, Hindu or Sikh backgrounds. It became increasingly important for social cohesion and mutual understanding that the pupils' RE curriculum included the study of world religions. These changes were generally incorporated into the LEAs' agreed syllabuses. Many LEAs produced imaginative syllabuses in tune with contemporary ideas: some were rather ahead of their constituencies (e.g. Birmingham advocated the teaching Marxism and Humanism in 1975, until this was legally challenged); others were well behind (e.g. multicultural Ealing in the early 1980s had not yet updated the 1948 Middlesex syllabus which still described Muslims as 'infidels'!).

Reflecting on these changes, the Church of England Board of Education and the National Society decided in 1967 to establish a commission to re-examine both RE and the place of church schools

in contemporary society, aiming to 'inaugurate changes no less significant than those which have characterised the whole century since Mr Forster's Elementary Education Act' (xiii). The Durham Report's analysis (*The Fourth R* 1970) still resonates almost fifty years on. It was confident that church schools still had an important role to play, even with a more open approach to teaching and learning: 'It is where the shared assumptions of the members of the school's staff coincide with the assumptions of the parents of the pupils that the educational potential of a church school can be most fully realised' (228). Even if the percentage of Anglican schools had declined from the almost 50% of all schools in 1944 as the post-war state system had expanded, it argued that the Church should retain its stake in the national system, giving 'full opportunity for expressing its beliefs about education' with authority derived from its direct experience of involvement in schools.

> The Church of England sees in the Dual System an important opportunity to express in direct service its concern for the general education of the young people of the nation. It also recognises the importance of a continuing opportunity for community-building…focused on the local church. (252)

Clearly *voluntary-aided* schools with their close links with the local Anglican Church were in a strong position to respond to the latter task; but the Report felt that *controlled* schools also made a valuable contribution particularly to the former task, where school governors could oversee good quality RE (not just denominational teaching) and the parish incumbent develop a general pastoral role in the school; and, if the local community desired a stronger partnership with the church, the school might even seek to transfer to *aided* status.

In all these areas, the Durham Report argued, diocesan education authorities had a critical role to play, notwithstanding the need for the churches to work with the LEAs and parish communities. The haphazard nature of planning for contraction in the number of church schools nationally, let alone the financial constraints for capital projects, led the Commission to recommend greater strategic direction from the dioceses and the Church of England as a whole. Diocesan advisers, especially for

RE, were encouraged to offer their services to the local authority, as well as their church schools, emphasising that RE's purpose was non-denominational, 'to explore the place and significance of religion in human life and so make a distinctive contribution to each pupil's search for a faith by which to live'.

The Fourth R had much to say about the Anglican contribution to the nation's education and the future role of church schools. The 'blueprint' laid down in 1970 was to influence Anglican policy for many years to follow and still reflects contemporary debates in the twenty-first century.[5] Nevertheless, in the increasingly secular society of the twentieth century, various attempts by pressure groups to abolish church schools, RE and especially collective school worship, despite triggering public cries of protest (e.g. *The Times Leader*, 31 October 1984), led to apprehension that the delicate compromises of 1944 might be undone. Perhaps only a brave or foolhardy government would dare to risk that.

The LEAs and the Churches

Church schools generally valued their relationship with local authorities, since they saw themselves embedded within and accountable to their local communities. While Parliament wrestled with the legislative compromises necessary for improvements in the nation's education system and the appropriate involvement of the churches' legacy, the many elementary schools, integrated into their parish communities continued to flourish and local authorities were often effective facilitators in helping the churches negotiate their changing roles in the nation's educational provision.

Nevertheless, the Churches' partnership with the local authorities was placed under considerable strain in the post-war period. The pressures of 'comprehensivisation', falling pupil rolls, 16+ reorganisation, admissions procedures, staff redeployment and buildings maintenance all complicated the relationships. The dependence of church schools on the LEAs was considerable, especially in the Anglican sector where, out of its 21.3% stake in maintained schools, 12.5% were *controlled*, while only 8.8% were *aided*. Roman Catholic schools, on the other hand,

were entirely *aided* and constituted 9.8% of the whole system; *special agreement*[6] schools counted as *aided*.

In these *voluntary controlled* (VC) schools, the Anglican foundation governors were in a minority and depended to some degree on the goodwill of the LEA governors—which was not always forthcoming, despite the legal but obsolescent safeguards of withdrawal classes and reserved teachers—to maintain the association with the Anglican parish community. Specific denominational teaching within the school's general RE programme and compulsory Anglican denominational collective worship were prohibited by the 1944 legislation. There was therefore a real incentive on the part of both LEA and Church to encourage an atmosphere of mutual trust and partnership.

> There is often a generosity of spirit on governing bodies which deliberately seeks to make sense, in informal ways, of the historical link with the Church of England. There is a corresponding degree of trust that the Church will not overstep the bounds of informal relationships and begin to manufacture 'right' out of any well-developed and long-standing practices that have developed informally. (*A Future in Partnership*, 1984, 98)

Voluntary aided (VA) schools, on the other hand, had far greater autonomy and were free to establish their own syllabus for RE advised by diocesan officers, and to engage in denominational church services. In return for their 15% liability for capital costs, the governors had the right to develop their own policies and priorities, which might differ from those of the LEA. Specific examples included *aided* governors retaining their Sixth Form provision when the LEA decided to reorganise its secondary schools as 11–16 institutions feeding into Sixth Form colleges (e.g. Surrey in 1975); *aided* schools considering religious affiliation to be a high priority in staff recruitment, although the LEA specifically excluded this criterion in the 'equal opportunities' policy (e.g. Ealing in 1986); *aided* governors being reluctant to reduce their pupil intake if the school was heavily oversubscribed, when the LEA wanted all local schools to reduce pupil rolls to help prevent school closures (e.g. ILEA in 1980s). In addition, VA schools could admit pupils from outside their LA boundaries, leaving the LEA to recoup the costs from the pupils' 'home' authority.[7]

Managing an education service which included voluntary schools was not easy for an LEA preoccupied with its own concerns, and with its professional officers battling to manage educational policy in an increasingly party-political arena and cope with the pressures brought about by corporate management interests. Nevertheless, insensitivity could also be indicative of reluctance on the part of the LEA to accept the churches as full partners in the enterprise of education, despite the involvement of diocesan representatives on local education committees. For example, there was an outcry in Sheffield in February 1991 when the LEA, without consultation, announced reorganisation plans to close five Anglican schools and merge another with a county school; no Catholic schools were included in the review. One CEO in Hillingdon issued all his headteachers with a formal job description which took no account of the additional accountabilities that the church school heads had to their diocesan authorities.

Reservations were publicly expressed by left-wing educationalists about the divisive nature of church schools in a community if governors encouraged 'hidden selection' of pupils through social, racial or ability bias (c.f. The Socialist Education Association Conference, March 1990), although the Durham Report had warned church schools against 'ghetto-like huddles' (47). By contrast, right-wing councils might tacitly condone those voluntary schools which exercised pupil selection according to ability if it coincided with their own implicit policy to retain selection against local opposition. As the Church of England's National Society noted,

> It is increasingly difficult to separate political expediency from educational viability, for the clamour of the former too often drowns out the quieter deliberative voice of the latter. (*A Future in Partnership*, 76)

Discretionary school transport to denominational schools was often jeopardised by LEA spending cuts (recommended on 'economic grounds' by the Audit Commission in 1991). Local Authorities were required to provide free transport if a child's nearest school was beyond walking distance (taken as three miles) and the siting of church secondary schools had often been agreed on the assumption of free pupil transport. Even in 1944, R. A. Butler had been concerned that this

issue might threaten the settlement with the churches. Since then, most LEAs had offered discretionary bus-passes to children wishing to attend denominational schools and in 1980 Roman Catholic peers helped to defeat a proposal to remove that obligation. Because of the effect particularly on the larger number of Roman Catholic secondary schools (the majority of Anglican schools being neighbourhood primary schools), Cardinal Hume found himself in the High Court in 1992 in a test case against Hertfordshire's attempt to cease the arrangement. When, in 1995, Conservative-controlled Brent indicated that it would not pay for a Catholic child to travel past an LEA school with spare places, the national Catholic Education Service was confident that the DFE would 'have no choice but to direct Brent to abolish this tendentious policy' (*TES*, 24th March 1995): however the government refused to intervene in a matter it pragmatically considered to be LEA responsibility. Again denominational considerations took second place to economic priorities.[8]

Some might have argued at this point that the faster church schools disentangled themselves from local authority interference the better. By the 1990s, the possibility of opting out of the local authority altogether was gaining in popularity through the introduction of grant-maintained status (GMS) following the 1988 Great Education Reform Act under Kenneth Baker. However this 'nuclear option' assumed that there was no real advantage to the churches in building up an effective working relationship with the LEA. Many church schools acknowledged their reliance on local authorities to ensure satisfactory educational provision for their own children, setting aside for a moment any responsibility for the community as a whole. LEA officers usually provided support in a number of ways related to staffing, buildings and the curriculum. Local authorities paid the salaries of staff appointed by the governors and provided the professional advice necessary in the event of redeployment or dismissal proceedings, acting as an independent arbiter where there was conflict within the staff of a school. Too often school governors faced crises related to buildings, such as asbestos, fire or vandalism, when LEA support was critical in effecting repairs[9] or replacement or even providing alternative temporary accommodation. In addition, the LEA professional curriculum advisers offered in-service training and guidance

in implementing new curricular policies initiated by central or local government. One officer described LEAs as a 'mediating breakwater': a good CEO was 'not bothered if a school was a church school or not as long as it provided good education'.

Another area for effective collaboration was through local authority (LA) education committees, a 'crucible of debate' (abolished in 1993), where, if running local schools, the churches were entitled to elect representatives: politically these would abstain if not affected by decisions, but they could hold the balance of power in a 'hung' council. One LA officer recalled that in his local authority the Anglicans tended to be liberal thinkers but also pragmatists who would support the *status quo* if in doubt. The Roman Catholics on the other hand could be far more defensive and independent, resisting help from the council: 'They would rather be martyred than sup with the devil!' he added.

Because they had such a high proportion of VC schools with LEA majority interest, Anglican diocesan authorities tended to be rather keener advocates of the partnership with LEAs than the Roman Catholics. One local authority with a three-tier structure of first, middle and high schools even decided to collaborate with the London diocese in 1980 to create a new Anglican voluntary-aided secondary high school into which the pupils from its Anglican middle schools could transfer at 12+; the CEO's incentive may have been to prevent the loss of income from pupils travelling out of the borough to other church schools but, although controversial at the time,[10] it established an important precedent which has since been followed by others.

Reflecting on the tensions in the political environment in the 1980s, the General Secretary of the National Society noted that

> one end of the political spectrum still seemed hypnotised by a sort of sanctified dull conformity under the guise of equality of opportunity and continued to view any kind of power-sharing with the gravest suspicion as a denigration of due democratic process…The other end of the spectrum threatens to spoil an admirable insistence on diversity in schools and on the exercise of parental preference by suggestions that market forces can be allowed to operate within the educational partnership. (1984, 19)

The Board of Education's report to General Synod in 1985 emphasised 'the importance of working even more closely with local authority partners, particularly in the areas of admission policies and staffing for Church schools'. The Revd. Bob Kenway wrote in the *Church Times*,

> While many governors might be strongly critical of their LEAs, I am sure that there are many like me who do not want to see them withering on the vine and are fearful of the consequences if they do. Equally I know many governors are concerned by the parallel trend in which diocesan boards are increasingly seeing themselves as substitutes for LEAs. (23rd July 1993)

It is interesting to read these prophetic words and to note, in the second decade of the new millennium, the significant development of diocesan multi-academy trusts (MATs) in both Anglican and Roman Catholic dioceses, set up to oversee their church school academies independent of their local authorities.

Perhaps the most politically controversial intervention by the church in this period was that of the Bishop of London, Graham Leonard, in 1985. Because the Conservative government was determined to abolish both the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) and the Greater London Council,[11] he was concerned that the break-up of the ILEA would leave fragmented and weakened support for London's large network of diocesan schools. As a Privy Councillor, he rallied support in the House of Lords and defeated the government's proposals: however, Thatcher's determination to destroy the ILEA and the power of local government meant that the reprieve was only temporary. The ILEA was finally abolished under Kenneth Baker's 1988 legislation, which Graham Lane described as 'one of the more damaging educational acts' (2013, 131). One diocesan director, nevertheless, unsympathetic to the teachers' union influence on LEAs and later to sponsor a new Anglican City Technology College,[12] felt that the abolition of the ILEA was

> the most significant milestone; in a hundred years' time, that will be more important than the National Curriculum reforms. The ILEA was only one of the issues on which the Church has seemed confused and ambivalent since 1870.

As the debate about the Great Education Reform Bill 1987 became more heated, some Roman Catholic headteachers and diocesan officers defended the partnership with their LEAs. One head commented that, although it had been difficult dealing with the

> complex and seemingly cumbersome bureaucracies, which seem to have been designed to ensure equity, uniformity and rectitude in the use of public money,…all schools rely heavily on their LEAs for administrative support, resources and advice. (*Tablet*, 20th February 1988)

Reflecting on the possibility of opting out of the LEA by adopting GMS, he went on to suggest that the opportunities afforded by financial delegation should be sufficient to overcome such difficulties without having to opt out and dissolve a partnership 'which, in the main, has served many voluntary schools well in the past.'

Many Roman Catholic schools served socially deprived areas and dioceses were concerned that the isolation inherent in independence from local authorities could also undermine the efforts of diocesan planners 'to serve the best interests of all the Catholic pupils of an area' (Cardinal Hume, *Times*, 13th January 1988). One Catholic diocese, where only 3 out of 218 schools had opted out by 1995, replied to the government's proposals,

> In the main there is a very good working relationship between the voluntary sector in this diocese and the various maintaining local authorities… The sign of partnership afforded by the presence of local authority representative governors is something we value.

Concerned that opting out of the local authority would have isolated church schools from others in the maintained sector, the Director of the Catholic Education Service noted,

> The LEA associations have emphasised the value of our partnership with increasing warmth as their own powers have diminished. (*Tablet*, 18th May 1996)

This was exemplified in the attitude of Graham Lane of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities who previously had regarded church

schools disparagingly as 'independent schools on the rates'. After the introduction of GMS, Lane was notably more supportive, impressed by the professionalism of church educationists throughout the post-1988 period. Even Sir Malcolm Thornton, the Conservative chairman of the House of Commons Select Committee on Education, speaking in 1996, regretted having voted for many of the 1980s reforms that stripped LEAs of their powers of planning and coordination (*Education*, 8th March 1996). Eliza Filby reflected in 2015 that the Labour party's 'self-inflicted paralysis' during Thatcher's rule meant that the Church of England stepped up as the unofficial opposition to defend what clergy considered to be Britain's Christian social democratic values (*God and Mrs Thatcher: The Battle for Britain's Soul*, 2015).

By the end of the twentieth century, the relationship between church schools and their local authorities looked very different to that of 1944. The Education (no. 2) Act 1986 significantly minimised the differences between county and voluntary schools, in particular with regard to the power of governors and the school's LEA accountability, thereby to some extent signposting the phasing out of the dual system. The government's wish to offer county schools similar freedoms to those enjoyed by voluntary schools, encouraging greater autonomy from local authorities, also reduced considerably the distinctiveness of voluntary status. The requirement of the 1988 Education Reform Act ensured that LEAs handed over much of their budgetary control to individual school governing bodies under 'Local Management of Schools', thereby reducing that distinctiveness still further.[13] Finally the financial inducements and encouragement to church schools in 1995 to be 'fast-tracked' into GMS without the need for a parental ballot, made the churches more likely to question their loyalty to the local authority on which they had been grateful to rely in the past.

Opting Out of the LEA into GMS

The 1988 Education Act introduced this important legislation which, over the following decades under both Conservative and Labour governments, was seriously to curtail the influence of LEAs. 'Grant-Maintained Status' was Margaret Thatcher's policy to encourage greater

autonomy for school heads and governors. Once they had control over their own budgets, they could manage their own schools without LEA oversight or interference. GM schools were able to become 'trail-blazers' or 'guinea pigs' for other government initiatives such as bank-borrowing, raising capital from private industry through the Private Funding Initiative (PFI) and recreating grammar schools by increasing pupil selection by ability (cf. DFEE 1996).

While financial delegation to schools accelerated, it was also ironic that the school curriculum, having previously been where teacher autonomy was greatest and creative programmes of learning had flourished,[14] after 1988 became the area of greatest central government regulation through the imposition of the National Curriculum. The Secretary of State, having previously had only responsibility for teacher training, the opening or closure of schools and the removal of air-raid shelters, accrued 175 powers to himself in 1988 and a further 50 in the 1993 Education Act. As Bishop Konstant warned in an address to the Salford diocese in 1993,

> The Secretary of State has very considerable powers over a GM school. He can open, close, enlarge, reduce, move and inspect it; he can change its character (not religious), its teachers, its governors, and its curriculum.

This was of particular significance for Roman Catholic schools which, under Canon Law, are required to be under the control of the bishop, to ensure they retained their distinctive Catholic curriculum and ethos. All that the then Secretary of State would concede in 1992 was that he would take into account the trustees' views when a Catholic school sought GM status. Kenneth Baker recalled in his memoirs,

> I was conscious that I was not dealing merely with a local authority, or merely a trade union, or even the British cabinet, but with one of the great and enduring institutions of Western civilisation…I found the Cardinal the most formidable of my opponents, since he reflected the settled authority of centuries. (1993, 217–208)

Many Anglicans too regretted the reduction in community engagement and local accountability since, despite the rhetoric of self-governance,

power became more centralised and GM schools more focused on their own interests. The Blackburn diocese advised its schools:

> For Christians, there are not only political and pragmatic considerations but also an ethical dimension to the decision to apply for GM school status that cannot be ignored. For example, the preferential funding which GM schools receive, in the form of transitional grant and more favourable capital allocations, can be seen as being at the expense of neighbouring schools, and of other schools generally who share the national cake. (February 1994)

The issue of capital investment in school buildings was high on the agenda of *aided* church schools, which were particularly dependent on central government for capital funding: even with parents or the dioceses offering 15% of the funding needed, it could take more than a decade to reach the top of the DES queue. Back in May1987, the Anglican Diocese of London and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster, had jointly written to the government:

> It is disturbing to find the general level of capital expenditure on county schools appears to be considerably ahead of that on voluntary aided. LEAs have more than one source of funds, whereas voluntary aided schools…are entirely dependent upon central government grant. We hope that it will be possible for the imbalance to be addressed.[15]

It was therefore not surprising that the 100% capital funding offered to GM schools was a powerful incentive for church aided schools to 'opt out' of their local authorities.

However, the Conservative government was equally determined to curtail the power of diocesan authorities as that of LEAs, seeing them as interfering with the freedom of schools that GMS offered. Such criticism was highlighted in a private seminar on education held at the Carlton Club on 31st March 1991, resulting in a confidential paper reflecting the views of influential right-wing policymakers. Yet the Schools Minister, Baroness Blatch, asserted in 1993 that

> The Government places the highest importance on the preservation of a flourishing body of church schools. The Church has been, and remains, a major provider and stakeholder in the education system of the country… Self-governing schools do not leave your flock. (*Church Times*, 30th July)

Frank Field, a Labour MP of strong Anglican allegiance, perhaps surprisingly argued in favour of GMS, insisting that, far from undermining the Christian ethos of a school, GMS was a vital chance to safeguard or even restore the role of Christianity in a predominantly secular society. Critical of William Temple's capitulation to the State in 1944, Field thought that Christian GM schools could become a strong federation and significant force in English education, less vulnerable to political pressures of central or local government (an anti-Erastian view consistent with his Anglo-Catholic tradition). One priest and governor of a GM church school agreed: 'The truth is that our 'churchness' has been strengthened by opting out' (*TES*, 8th May 1992).

Yet the churches were frustrated by the lack of clarification of government policy in relation to the future of LEAs. Under the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, sixth form colleges, a number of which were Anglican or Roman Catholic, were removed from LEA control and incorporated into the planning remit of the Further Education Funding Council, on which the churches had no statutory role although some representation. This legislation also removed the distinction between polytechnics and universities, leaving church colleges of higher education 'out on a limb', needing to reassess their position in relation to the new university sector and the accreditation of their degree courses. Many aimed to retain their independence by extending their range of courses and, although some merged into other HE institutions (e.g. Bishop Lonsdale College into Derby University), others (e.g. Roehampton, Chester or Liverpool Hope Universities) successfully established themselves in the expanding HE market, creating a strong association of Anglican and Catholic universities in the 'Cathedrals Group'.

Meanwhile, under the 1993 Education Act, school governors were required formally to discuss GMS each year and report their decision

to parents; yet it still allowed no return from GM to LEA status, even if parents wished it.[16] The government had thought church schools would leap at the chance of greater independence: they had always been predicated on the principle of parental choice; their parents and foundation sponsors made considerable contributions to the capital development and improvement of school buildings; they already worked independently (if still in partnership) with their LEAs; *aided* schools had always been 'self-governing' in appointing their own staff and admitting their own pupils; and they placed a high premium on moral and spiritual values in the ethos of their schools.

When the Conservatives' expectations proved to be too optimistic, only 8% of Catholic and 4% of Anglican schools having opted out by 1994, the government decided to promote 'Going GM' conferences targeted directly at church school heads and governors. The DfEE organised 37 such regional conferences that year, attracting representatives from 12% of schools at a cost to the government of £114 per delegate, but only 12 church schools opted out. One Anglican headteacher privately likened these conferences to 'evangelical meetings where people seem to need to convince themselves they are right or alternatively preaching at a 6.30 pm evensong for the already converted!' Another thought the predominantly male middle-class atmosphere was reminiscent of 'the Tory Party at prayer'.

Many church schools felt they might have more to lose than to gain by throwing in their lot with unaccountable central government 'quangos' such as the Funding Agency for Schools (FAS).[17] Perhaps the most revealing comment from the DfEE civil servants of the time was their response to enquiries as to how many of the GM schools came from a religious foundation (i.e. Anglican or Roman Catholic): the government was only required to retrieve this data when forced by an MP's parliamentary question on 11th May 1994. The Director of the Grant Maintained Schools Trust insisted 'We wouldn't differentiate at all between aided, controlled or county once they're GM': his view was endorsed by the Chief Executive of the FAS in November 1996, suggesting that the distinctive status of church schools was being deliberately subsumed into an alternative secular institutional category.

This concern was further exacerbated by a report (*Church Times*, 29th April 1994) that a future Labour government would not return *aided* schools that had 'opted out' to their previous status, but only allow them to become *controlled*, thus tying them even more closely to the very local authorities they had attempted to escape from by 'going GM'. However, after Tony Blair, the newly elected Labour leader, revealed that his son would be attending the London Oratory School (one of the most advantaged GM Catholic schools run by trustees who would not tolerate any dependence on the LEA or even the Cardinal), this policy was dropped. In October 1995, David Blunkett as Shadow Secretary of State published his *Diversity and Excellence* policy paper, recommending three future categories of school: *foundation, aided* and *community.*

Interestingly, while a few other faith traditions had previously established voluntary-aided schools where parental demand existed (e.g. the Sikhs in Ealing) or created independent schools (c.f. Yusef Islam's primary school in Brent), other religious groups took advantage of the legislation to create 'faith' schools for different religious traditions, creating further complexity in the state education system. The Secretary of State, Gillian Shepherd, was hesitant to permit state-funded Muslim schools in 1995, fearing ethnic ghettos and gender discrimination, but it was difficult to block their establishment in response to parental demand. Despite the apparent safeguards of the National Curriculum requirements, 'Pandora's box' had been opened, as the Coalition government was later to discover in Birmingham in 2014.

The 1993 Act also rescinded the obligation on LEAs to retain an education committee on which Anglicans and Catholics with denominational schools in the area had representation. The churches were reluctant to see a two-tier system with their LEA partners 'withering on the vine' or church schools 'floating away' from their dioceses. The Anglican Schools Officer David Lankshear noted by 1996 that the concept of partnership

> presents some problems at regional level, not least at times of local authority reorganisation when it may be unclear with whom and how the church is in partnership. Further with some schools relating directly to a

> national agency rather than a local authority, partnership becomes potentially more complicated for dioceses.

There is no doubt that the ‘dual system’ of Church and State involvement as partners in education, strengthened by Butler in 1944, looked radically different by the end of the twentieth century.

The Blair Era

The election of a Labour government in 1997 heralded an era which aspired to less confrontation and more collaboration across society. Thatcher’s abrasive style of ideological leadership[18] gradually faded in the memory and Tony Blair ensured that trades union power was kept under reasonable control to avoid the damaging strikes of the 1970s which had contributed to the rise of her right-wing Conservatism. Blair saw education as paving the way to a more inclusive society. He began by focusing his personal attention on the NHS, the Home Office and Education, in particular the literacy and numeracy strategy in primary schools led by Michael Barber. Blair also shared his Secretary of State David’s Blunkett’s agenda to raise standards and, as his biographer noted,

> Education was the major success story among the public services in the first term…including a tough line on standards, school failure and a deep scepticism about the role of education authorities. (Seldon 2005, 433)

More interested in standards than structures, Blair endorsed the idea of freeing up secondary schools and attracting the best school leaders to improve results. He supported the initiative on *Excellence in Cities*, the expansion of specialist schools and the introduction of new ‘city academies’ especially in deprived areas.

Unpicking the privatisation of previously public companies was not high on New Labour’s agenda and the education system was no exception. Although Blair prioritised ‘education, education, education’ (a phrase first used in his 1995 party conference speech), the schools were

clearly weary of government initiatives and most felt that their delegated funding gave them the autonomy they needed to fulfil their obligations, without being forced back under the control of local authorities. Local government retained the duty to promote higher educational standards in all publicly-funded schools but, by then, the majority of schools were already confident in going out to tender for catering services, maintenance or human resources advice and heads had become used to their greater managerial freedoms. Blunkett as Secretary of State and later his Schools Minister, Andrew Adonis, shared their leader's understanding that schools should retain considerable autonomy: it was decided that grammar schools should be left as they were and the government only required legislation that ensured all GM schools became *foundation* schools. Under the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, three types of schools were thus created: *foundation, aided* and *community* schools. Church schools therefore felt more secure in their position in the diverse educational firmament, and Blair's personal Christian commitment reassured them that government policy was likely to be more sympathetic to their cause.

After the 2001 election, the Labour government's focus moved onto secondary schools. In a 2002 paper, Blair thought 'a notion of a specialist school system replacing the comprehensive system just about gets there' and noted that Adonis 'had dreams of a radical agenda'; his main concern (like Thatcher's[19]) was that the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, the new term for the DES) was ill-equipped and too timid to take through major policy change (Seldon, op.cit. 635). In his determination to raise the quality of education and pupil achievement for children in deprived areas, Adonis devised plans to create new 'state independent schools',[20] i.e. academies, which would build on the Conservative government's earlier ideas of City Technology Colleges: he was convinced that newly built secondary schools in areas of deprivation, self-governing and sponsored by committed philanthropists and business people, would drive up educational standards. He also continued the expansion of specialist schools, widening the possible types of specific subject specialisms available for schools to adopt, such as the *built environment, languages, music* and *mathematics*, believing that schools should be encouraged to adopt any strategies which would improve pupil achievement.

This led on to the *Building Schools for the Future* (BSF) programme, a major financial investment in school buildings which had been seriously neglected by previous governments.[21] With the three-year public spending settlement of July 2000, funding for school capital projects rose from £700 m in 1997 to nearly £8 bn, before it was axed in 2010 by Michael Gove under the new Coalition government. Adonis was keen to expand the academy programme and, although accused of 'blackmail', used capital funding to persuade local authorities to support the development of academies in their areas: 'I had no compunction in being so blunt…I saw it as the state living up to its fundamental responsibility to ensure a decent standard of education nationwide' (2012, 80).

Some campaigners used judicial review to obstruct the creation of academies: in Islington in 2001, local people requested a new church secondary school as they did not have one in the area and, despite the partnership of the London diocese and the local authority, anti-academy campaigners took their case all the way to the High Court in 2006 before the new Anglican all-age academy was approved. Adonis had skilfully adapted the legal framework already in place from the City Technology Colleges legislation to include leasing and transfer of land and therefore minimised political controversy: this also included more flexible teachers' terms and conditions of employment, allowing more after-school activities and longer teaching hours. Adonis' intention was to create 500 such academies: the first 3 opened in 2002 and by the 2010 general election there were 267.

However concern was still expressed about the lack of democratic accountability as academies were handed over to sponsors. Graham Lane considered Adonis' 'passion for Academy Schools is not based on reliable evidence' (Lane 2013, 8). Adonis' critics felt that without the tutelage of the local authority, 'you are left with, on the one hand, a kind of widespread anarchy, where anyone with special determination, good contacts and influence or a particular plan can push ahead, and, on the other, a series of mini fiefdoms, controlled by powerful interests, who are permitted to run schools as they see fit' (Adonis 2012, 135). Adonis was unapologetic for encouraging successful businessmen

to take on academies,[22] especially as the schools were commissioned by a democratically elected government, funded by the state, inspected by Ofsted, and their results were in the public domain. By 2012 there were more than 150 sponsors, although only 7 academy chains owned more than 10 academies, still far fewer schools than most local authorities. One Christian trust, the Woodard Foundation which governed a group of independent schools, decided to take on responsibility for turning around several failing comprehensive schools, a task it found more difficult than its resources allowed. The larger academy chains (e.g. United Learning, Harris) created central governing boards, which appointed or dismissed headteachers, controlled budgets tightly and scrutinised closely standards of pupil attainment. The local school governing bodies of these academy chains were beholden to these central boards, thus with less autonomy than they would have had as a *community* school under a local authority.

The demand for school places was increasing with rising pupil numbers and more new schools were needed. Some Anglican diocesan officers saw the opportunity to expand their provision, especially where their own secondary schools were often heavily oversubscribed: in the London diocese, for example, Adonis approved the opening of a new Anglican academy in 2008 which became oversubscribed within two years. Although he had ideally preferred 'no faith tests', pupil admissions for some church academies were regulated as 50% foundation (i.e. Christian criteria) places and 50% local children, in order to facilitate greater social community cohesion. Others (e.g. Burlington Danes CE Academy in Hammersmith) had entirely open admissions: this was welcomed by many Anglicans, who still viewed their role as serving the whole community. Like *aided* schools, church academies' governing bodies also included a representative from the local authority, although they retained a majority of foundation governors.

By contrast, the Roman Catholics were again concerned that, by supporting academies, they would lose control of pupil admissions (as noted before, a key requirement for a Catholic school) and be forced to admit non-Catholics at the expense of Catholic families, so the Catholic Education Service was wary of this government initiative. Nevertheless,

a Catholic academy was allowed to open in south London giving preference to Catholic pupils. More public controversy arose when some church schools used parental interviews and a family's commitment to the school's ethos for selecting pupils, leading to accusations of middle-class bias: these practices were subsequently banned under a revised admission code prior to the 2006 Education and Inspections Act. In 2015, formally censured by the School Adjudicator for such practices, Cardinal Vaughan RC School in west London won a judicial review.

Voluntary aided schools had real financial incentives to adopt academy status, even after the initial generous government funding had ceased: if retaining *aided* status, they were still required to contribute 10% of any capital building costs and also were liable for VAT, which was a considerable financial burden as school budgets tightened. When VC schools opted for academy status, they were allowed to adopt the same framework as *aided* schools, thereby establishing a closer relationship with their dioceses than most would have had as *controlled* schools. Also, as Ofsted inspected pupils' spiritual and moral development in schools, they found this requirement easier to fulfil by articulating their Christian foundations.

One issue which was to affect Anglican *controlled* schools was RE, though not *aided* schools as they followed diocesan syllabuses. The government's legislation relating to self-governing academies was so focused on ensuring freedom from local authorities that ministers apparently failed to remember that RE was required to follow the local agreed syllabus as decided by the SACRE. A rather unsatisfactory compromise was belatedly written into the Funding Agreement, allowing academies to follow any agreed syllabus belonging to any local authority in the country, although there appeared to be no incentive to implement this satisfactorily.[23]

When Gordon Brown eventually succeeded Tony Blair in 2007, their disagreements on public service reform included the policy on academies, but Adonis was relieved that Brown agreed to accompany him to visit an academy, after which the policy was allowed to continue. Nevertheless, in 2008 Adonis was moved to a ministerial post in transport, 'a sign of his leader's recognition of the limits of his waning power on public service reform' (Benn 2011, 81).

The centralisation of power within the DCSF accelerated with the expansion of the academy programme, as the local authorities' responsibility for schools diminished.

> In their different ways, the governments of Thatcher, Major, Blair and Brown all advocated versions of parental choice and greater school freedom while tightening the control of the daily life of schools from the centre. (ibid., 67)

However, this centralising process was to increase even further under the Coalition government.

The Coalition Years 2010–2015

Despite the Conservatives need for a coalition partnership with the Liberal Democrats after the General Election in May 2010, there was little sign that Michael Gove as the new Secretary of State wished to take time for consultation on his education policy. Seizing on the success of academies in raising standards in deprived areas, he decided to extend without delay the offer of greater freedom from local authorities to all 'outstanding' schools. Impressed by the Charter schools in the USA and the Swedish system, he also created a new model of *free* schools similar to academies, which could be set up by parents or teachers, 'to bust open the state monopoly on education and allow new schools to be established'.

By January 2011, seven out of ten *free* school applications were from faith-based groups. Parents in north London, supported by the Anglican diocese, set up a *free* school nursery and primary school in a local church. Some evangelical churches, e.g. in Tyneside and Nottingham, saw these freedoms as opportunities to create Christian schools in tune with their 'creationist' beliefs. Some dioceses or Christian groups welcomed the freedom to create new partnerships: in Hull for example, the Archbishop Sentamu Academy linked with the specialist facilities of Aspire Academy in 2014 to cater for vulnerable pupils and those at risk of exclusion.[24] The increase in faith-based

schools was significant: in one local authority, proposed *free* schools included two from evangelical Christians, two Islamic schools attached to mosques, a Roman Catholic one and another set up by science teachers (ibid., 167). However, like with GMS, many dioceses remained cautious or even sceptical that *free* schools would be seen as part of the diocesan family.

As with previous government policies, additional funding for *free* schools was an inducement, but such generosity was short-lived as Coalition cuts began to bite. In January 2011, local authorities' general grant was top-sliced to help the academies programme, irrespective of how many academies existed in the area. Yet Gove was spending far more than the £50 m earmarked for the first year of *free* schools: in 2014, one new sixth form college in Westminster, supported by the Harris academy chain, alone cost the taxpayer £48 m. In response to the rising birth rate, more school places were urgently needed, but local authorities were still not permitted to establish new *community* schools: the Department For Education (DFE) would only approve new *free* schools. Thus central government was able to ensure that local authorities' powers were minimised to retaining responsibility for special needs provision and offering their advice to schools through service agreements.

Financial cuts were inevitable and in May 2011 the abrupt cancellation of the BSF programme left many schools seriously demoralised, as their future plans were shelved indefinitely: 719 schemes were axed, including many for church schools.[25] Gove was also determined that teacher training should become predominantly school-based, which threatened successful university education courses, many of which were run by church colleges. The speed of cuts to government quangos, to the funding for poorer post-16 students to stay on at school and sports partnerships, meant that the implications were not fully considered and Gove had partly to reinstate the latter two.

In the 2011 Education Act, the government gave itself powers to purchase land from local authorities to give to new academies and *free* schools as they were encouraged to expand. This was however resisted by dioceses which held in trust the land on which church schools were built. In 2015, as the government rushed to approve more

academies before the general election, the Church of England sensed the DFE was less careful in following the model agreements which ensured a diocese retained its responsibility for its school as a church academy. Government appeared frustrated that, as the churches' trusts owned the land, the freedom of church academies was somewhat curtailed.

The curriculum reforms were of particular concern to church schools. Although schools had more freedoms in relation to the National Curriculum, Gove introduced a more rigid requirement for assessment. The English Baccalaureate,[26] the results of which were published in national league tables, included specific GCSE subjects like history and geography, but excluded RE which most church schools taught as a core GCSE for all pupils. The churches, along with advocates of other excluded arts subjects, lobbied for change but Gove was adamant, championing traditional teaching methods and subject knowledge. He later introduced a 'Progress 8' assessment, which allowed for some more flexibility in the choice of GCSE subjects, but his prioritisation of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects still appeared to marginalise the humanities and the arts. At a meeting with the Anglican archbishops and bishops at Lambeth Palace on 3rd July 2013, Gove acknowledged his policies had damaged RE, but subsequently did nothing to address the churches' concerns: in fact, the DFE even removed bursaries for RE teacher training in 2014 which, after recruitment collapsed, had to be reinstated by his successor as Secretary of State, Nicky Morgan, in 2015.

Anglican church leaders were determined to rise to the challenges of the Coalition's radical agenda. Back in 2001, Lord Dearing had chaired their report, *The Way Ahead*, advocating a significant increase in the provision of Anglican secondary schools, more clergy training on education and enhanced teacher recruitment for church schools. In 2012 the Church of England followed it up with *The Church School of the Future* Report (chaired by this author) which reiterated those recommendations, but crucially recognised that the demise of local authorities offered an important opportunity for the dioceses to work with new partnerships and step into the vacuum by offering professional services

to support their schools.[27] By 2015, many dioceses had increased their resources for education, cooperating across diocesan boundaries where appropriate to improve effectiveness, and had established MATs to support both their church schools and even community schools which felt sufficient synergy with their Christian ethos to come in under their framework.[28] By 2015, 60% of Anglican secondary schools had become academies and the Bishop of Ely, Stephen Conway, paid tribute to

> the diocesan boards of education, head teachers and school staff who have made dramatic and impactful efforts in improving these schools for the sake of their pupils. (*Hansard*, 29th January 2015)

Where LAs had cut back on advisers for RE, diocesan advisers were also able to assist community schools alongside church schools. As the dioceses became more confident in creating MATs, they were able to offer an alternative to the expanding academy chains such as Harris, United Learning, ARK[29] or E-ACT.[30]

Yet the government was determined not to recreate local authorities in a different guise. As Nick Gibb, Minister of State for Schools, said, 'We are not being prescriptive about the size of chains, but we do not envisage them replicating local authorities' (letter, May 2011). Melissa Benn expressed concern about the increasing lack of local accountability:

> Without an active, well-resourced and democratically accountable state, particularly at local level, we are in danger of throwing away the tools we need to ensure both the high quality and equality in education; in a nation as economically and socially divided as ours, it is vital that we pursue both. (2011, xx)

She also noted the danger that the fast pace of technology and the temptation for private providers to cut costs would increase standardised, centralised learning methods and reduce teachers' creative freedom. The pressure on academies and *free* schools to improve standards was leading to 'draconian management, soulless pedagogy and concentration on profit' (ibid., 178).

The government's creation of eight Regional School Commissioners (RSCs)[31] in 2014 as a middle tier between the DFE and schools aimed to provide more effective oversight of education planning, 'a pragmatic approach to managing the growing task of overseeing academies' (Education Select Committee, January 2016). Despite the RSCs being advised by headteacher boards, however, the Select Committee also noted that 'the landscape of oversight, intervention, inspection and accountability is now complex and difficult for many of those involved in education, not least parents, to navigate'. Some diocesan authorities found themselves struggling to engage with RSCs who were not sympathetic to or did not understand the legal structures of church schools. The large regional areas were not co-terminous with LAs or dioceses, one diocese having to relate to three different RSCs, and the lack of transparency or accountability was of serious concern to the Select Committee. In response, in February 2016 the government appointed Sir David Carter as the National Schools Commissioner to oversee the work of the eight RSCs.

Following the Conservatives general election victory in 2015, the commitment to wholesale 'academisation' of schools by 2022 was reiterated in the White Paper '*Educational Excellence Everywhere*' (March 2016) and the Secretary of State retained the power to approve new *free* schools through the RSCs. On 16th March 2016, surprisingly as part of the Chancellor's budget announcements rather than from the Secretary of State for Education, George Osborne declared that the government would even force all schools to become academies by 2022. On the BBC's *Newsnight* programme (17th March), Nick Gibb faced hostile questioning: if the first academies under Adonis were for those which *needed* to improve their pupils' life-chances, and the 'converter' academies under Gove were for those which *wanted* that status, why was the government now forcing academy status on very successful schools which felt they already had the autonomy they wanted while still in partnership with their LA? Paradoxically Gibb's only reply was that he wanted the collaboration of outstanding heads to help less good schools improve, failing to appreciate the irony that such collaboration was unlikely to come willingly from conscripted school leaders. It was undoubtedly a high-risk strategy and, like previously ill-considered policies, was soon dropped.

It seemed ironic that a government which advocated more freedoms for school leaders should be recommending 'forced conversions' to academy status if, under the Education and Adoption Act, a school was deemed 'inadequate' or 'coasting'. Baroness Estelle Morris, a previous Education Secretary, regretted that the voice of parents and communities was marginalised by the MATs and the RSCs, with schools no longer taking collective responsibility for all children in a community: 'Who will rein in the enormous power given to the Regional Schools Commissioners and their expanding teams?' (*Church Times*, 10th June 2016). The DfE consolidated accounts 2016–2017 even noted that local governing bodies of academies were insufficiently influential to be counted as 'related parties'.

In many ways, Anglican church schools remained embedded in their local communities, particularly at primary level where the parish school is often the local school with open access admissions policies.[32] Unlike most Roman Catholic or Muslim schools, Anglicans had traditionally eschewed the concept of 'faith schools', since they saw themselves as primarily serving the nation rather than the church, a critical distinction often missed by the media and government officials. Bishop Stephen Conway, Chairman of the National Society Council, said:

> Our schools are not faith schools, they are church schools, run for all. They are not exclusive but inclusive. We are not interested in producing schools to reinforce our identity, but our schools succeed where there is a distinctive Christian ethos. (*Church Times*, 22th May 2015)

To underpin its initiatives for church school development and expansion, in May 2016 the Church of England Education Office published a new '*Vision for Education*' both 'Deeply Christian' and 'Serving the Community', focusing on wisdom, hope and aspiration, community and the dignity of the human person.

> There is a unique opportunity for the Church of England to renew and enhance its contribution to the education of our nation's children, especially through the expansion of the Church of England Free schools. (p. 23)

Recognising the need for Christian leaders in MATs, the Foundation for Educational Leadership was also created to train and resource school leaders, networking with dioceses and universities. *Free* schools offered opportunities for parents and religious groups to create new schools in response to local interests and priorities which, subject to Ofsted requirements, were able to offer more choice to communities. Bishop Stephen, noted that, although it was too early to judge the success of *free* schools,

> Good relationships with a number of Regional School Commissioners have enabled us to use free schools to bring to whole new communities our distinctive, quality education based on a strong Christian ethos. (*Hansard*, 29th January 2015)

The Roman Catholics however felt their policy of creating Catholic schools for Catholic families was being undermined by the government's insistence that academies or *free* schools could only admit 50% of their pupils from a faith background. Despite the expansion of national *free* school provision, the Catholic Education Service had advised dioceses to reject this requirement, concerned that Catholic parents could be thereby excluded from Catholic schools by non-Catholics (*Tablet*, 12th September 2015). After the change of Prime Minister in July 2016, Theresa May proposed that Catholics might be able to create new *free* schools with priority given to Catholic admissions as long as the schools ensured that pupils had effective multi-faith and multicultural education experiences.[33] This proposal was eventually dropped and the 50% retained.

The government seemed again not to have fully worked out the implication of its ideology: 'politics is bedevilled by the law of unintended consequences', noted Nick Spencer (*Church Times*, 17th April 2015). Offering communities greater freedoms also requires greater accountability, not just in educational standards but also in governance and oversight. The tension between allowing schools freedom and yet requiring compliance continued with debates on the anti-terrorist 'Prevent' strategy imposed on schools and universities in 2015; school girls' wearing of the Muslim niqab led to Ofsted threatening to downgrade schools which permitted this in 2016.[34] The *Trojan Horse* scandal

in the Birmingham *community* schools in 2014, where Sunni Muslim governors took control of the curriculum to advocate a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam contrary to what the Prime Minister called 'British values' of tolerance and openness, demonstrated ineffective accountability both by the LA and Ofsted. Similar concerns were raised in 2017 when schools with predominantly Pakistani heritage pupils in Oldham were drawn to national attention on the front page of the *Sunday Times* (19th February). The policy that governors or parents could be trusted without proper safeguards not to abuse their freedom proved to be very naïve on the part of both central and local government.[35] By 2018, the recently appointed Ofsted Chief Inspector took a tougher line, criticising the abusers of the primary headteacher of St Stephen's School in Newham who had decided that pre-pubescent girls should not wear the hijab to school:

> Under the pretext of religious belief, they use education institutions, legal and illegal, to narrow young people's horizons, to isolate and segregate, and in the worst cases to indoctrinate impressionable minds with extremist ideology. (*Evening Standard*, 1st February 2018)

The 2014 crisis in Birmingham *community* schools had risked tainting other religious communities: Ofsted downgraded a number of Christian and Jewish schools for failing to teach tolerance towards other faiths and homosexuals.[36] For the secular humanists long opposed to any kind of religious schools, this was naturally 'fuel to the fire'. Oliver Kamm (*Times*, 30th May 2015) criticised faith schools for drilling children in sectarian doctrines, presenting values at odds with the values of tolerance and education, and he asserted that 'the ethos of faith is by definition hostile to learning'. Letters published in reply (1st June) wondered why, if this was the case, so many parents wanted to send their children there, seeking strong communities 'where everyone is valued and where high standards of teaching and learning are promoted'. The 'vexatious complaints' to the Schools Adjudicator by groups opposed to faith schools[37] were eventually curtailed by restricting complaints to only local parents and councils (*Tablet*, 30th January 2016). The then head of Ofsted, himself a Catholic, noted,

> It is perfectly legitimate for individuals and faith groups to hold firm to a set of values and beliefs, which may run counter to existing social norms. What is not legitimate is to use these beliefs to condone or even encourage intolerance and discrimination. (*Church Times*, 5th February 2016)

It was important that church leaders were given the freedom to offer a vision for their schools and not viewed by government as interfering diocesan authorities. Bishop Stephen Conway insisted in the House of Lords' debate on education,

> The Church continues to want to be involved in the reform and improvement of education across the board, not just in church schools but across primary schools, community schools, secondary schools and the university sector. (*Hansard*, 29th January 2015)

The churches, with such a significant stake in the nation's education system, were in danger of being seen as an obstacle to, rather than a partner in, raising standards. Lack of confidence in governmental advisers' and some RSCs' understanding of trust issues related to church schools, and scepticism about the ministers' willingness to consult diocesan boards of education, left church educationalists anxious about the future. If forcibly swept up into secular MATs, church schools could lose their Christian character; yet the government only offered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on choice of sponsor, rather than legislative safeguards. The sustainability of many small rural parish schools jeopardised by financial cuts was of similar concern, but the government looked to the church to find answers.[38] Acknowledging that rural schools play a key role in sustaining communities, the government also seemed determined to relate funding to pupil numbers rather than community need: small village church schools, often a vital focus of community identity, were therefore likely to face closure if opposed to linking under a secular MAT, federation or an executive head. As one diocesan director warned, the government should

> recognise the need to ensure that church governance arrangements in academies and free schools are not subject to the vagaries of chance and

> that we do not end up with secularisation by neglect or stealth, because the church character of academies is not securely articulated in the governance and voting arrangements of multi-academy trusts. (*Church Times*, 5th June 2015)

Even the ecclesiastical lawyers were concerned that the partnership model of church and state was threatened: 'The Churches are your partners, not a set of delivery agencies under your control' (Howard Dellar, ibid.). However the final MoU, alongside Lord Nash's explicit record in *Hansard* (1st and 16th December 2015) stated the principle that 'the religious character of a faith school will be protected when any interventions are necessary'; diocesan boards of education would be fully involved in consultation with the RSCs and ideally would retain their church schools within a diocesan MAT. The MoU was a pivotal moment when government recognised the need to work with dioceses in developing a strategic approach to academisation in dioceses: senior DfE officials thought that the MoU was a highly significant step which they would never have anticipated three years previously. How far this could be relied upon, only time would tell.

The Future of Partnership?

When in May 2015 the new Conservative majority government quickly targeted 'coasting' as well as 'failing' schools to be taken over as academies, the wholesale privatisation of school education seemed a step nearer. The Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, asserted that the government was 'liberating teachers from the dead-hand of the local authorities' (*Times*, 6th June 2015). It was however evident that the pool of possible sponsors to take over academies was dwindling and a number of academies were failing Ofsted inspections.[39] Research published by the Sutton Trust in 2016 regretted

> very slow growth in the number of those chains which are succeeding in the original aims of the sponsor academies programme. The Government, and its new infrastructure of Regional Schools Commissioners, needs to

> act radically and rapidly to ensure that the promise of the policy programme is realised in improving the educational experiences and outcomes for disadvantaged children. (*Chain Effects*, by Merryn Hutchings, Becky Francis and Philip Kirby)

The school population was expected to increase by 900,000 over the following decade, yet in 2015 only 19% of *free* school secondary places were in areas that needed them.[40] In 2018 the government even proposed expanding the number of *voluntary aided* schools as well as grammar schools. Despite the admirable motive to raise standards for all children, the government's strategies were unlikely to provide a quick fix.

Political inconsistencies also did not make for an easy relationship with providers. There was an interesting dilemma for a government which wished to liberate schools to improve standards and devise their own curricula, yet simultaneously expected the inclusion of all EBacc subjects at Key Stage 4 and performance to Ofsted 'floor targets' regardless of pupils' starting levels.[41,42] Parental choice of school was a consistent *mantra* as families sought to ensure their own values were not undermined, but parents, governors and schools had to comply with government mandates for teaching 'British values'. The removal of the requirement in 2016 to have elected parent governors reinforced the sense that accountability to parents was less important than the power of the head. Highly qualified classroom teachers were needed, but government prioritised more *School Direct* placements where the emphasis was primarily on classroom skills rather than a deeper understanding of teaching subjects offered through university courses. Greater freedom in academies to pay staff salaries as required by the 'market' was likely to increase the pressure on shrinking school budgets.[43] Local authorities retained the responsibility for the provision of sufficient school places, yet were not permitted to open a new *community* school to meet local needs: only free schools were approved. Local democratic accountability was ostensibly valued but then superseded by DfE intervention and the higher, less accountable regional authority of the RSC. A serious shortage of headteachers in 2016–2017 prompted *The Times Leader* to reflect

> One unintended and unwelcome consequence of the demise of local education authorities has been that Whitehall's control has seemed closer and

> more frequent. While rigorous inspection is part of the regime that has seen schools improve, the endless diet of government guidelines could now stop. (31st December 2016)

One experienced head responded to the article, having resigned from her post, 'The constant intervention and changes that the government heaped upon schools were overwhelming.'

The effective partnerships in the twentieth century were those which took the time to establish trust between the players to ensure that support was negotiated. Through the Thatcher era, New Labour and Cameron governments, the drive to free schools from the constraints of local authority control, although not infrequently party political, was primarily driven by concern that standards were not improving sufficiently and that children were being let down by inadequate education provision. The reduction in local democratic accountability was deemed a necessary price to pay. However, the impact on the other partners in the enterprise such as the churches seemed to be of lesser consideration, leading to anxiety, confusion and sometimes confrontation. As Bishop Graham Leonard had noted back in 1985,

> The concept of partnership in education is more than just a cliché or bureaucratic device…The Christian vision of education…sees human beings as partners with God in the work of creation…For the Church to be able to exercise its important responsibility in education, we may have to disturb and invigorate the present ecclesiastical and educational structures and expectations. (General Synod, 3rd July 1985)

The historic commitment of the churches to the education of this country, as explored in this chapter, offers a legacy of service to the community and the nation which is central to British culture and values and, crucially, is provided in response to the expectations of parents who want the best for their children's education. While Anglican and Roman Catholic education leaders may have sometimes differing views on the purpose of church schools, their long-standing commitment to the nation's education system and its children is unquestionable. Both central and local governments of all political persuasions need

to understand that distinctive contribution and appreciate that legacy. This understanding takes time, not always a ready commodity in political life, but the rewards of engaging fully with such experienced partners remain significant in enhancing the educational provision in this country.

> We provide a Catholic curriculum, which is broad and balanced, recognising that every pupil is unique...We incorporate democratic principles, value the rule of law, support individual liberty and foster a community in which different faiths and beliefs are respected. (*Catholic Values and 'British Values*, Catholic Education Service 2015)
>
> Our vision for education offers a framework for education which promotes wisdom, hope, community and dignity—it offers rigour and academic excellence whilst providing an environment where young people know that they are not valued for the results they get but for the people they become. It is a compelling vision for life in all its fullness and we believe it is the right vision for such a time as this and so will enable us to play a key role in shaping the culture in which our children will grow to maturity'. (*Vision for Education*, Church of England 2016)

Glossary

DES	Department for Education and Science
DFEE	Department for Education and Enterprise
DCSF	Department for Children Schools and Families
DfE, DFE	Department for Education
LEA, LA	Local Education Authority
MAT	Multi-Academy Trust
RSC	Regional School Commissioner
SACRE	Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education

Notes

1. For example, Berkhamsted was founded by the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral with £20 from Henry V111 in 1541; and Nathanial

Woodard's schools were created for middle class boys in the nineteenth-century.

2. Archdeacon Denison of Taunton thought the clergy mistaken in transferring 'the charge of the teaching of the children of the Church from themselves to a department of Government—a Government that has no creed.' (*Notes of My Life*, 1878, 151f.)
3. R. A. Butler noted that Winston Churchill was 'horrified to see that an educational dispute charged with religious issues could so split the nation that the Conservative Party lost the next election' (*The Art of Memory*, 148).
4. Butler realised that such concessions would alienate the Protestant Non-conformists and risk Parliamentary defeat.
5. *A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools*, 2015, Clarke, C., and Woodhead, L. Westminster Faith Debates.
6. *Special agreement* schools were those controlled by the LA but with agreed protection for RE and *reserved* teachers (1944 Education Act, Third Schedule, p. 93).
7. The right to recruit pupils across LA boundaries was reiterated in the 1952 legislation. As a VA head in 1987, I was also able to ignore the LEAs *diktat* that all ice-cream vans should be removed from the school premises: as I could not prevent the van parking legally outside the school gate, it was easier to control it within the school grounds. The Head of Thatcher's Policy Unit later complimented me: 'That is the sort of freedom we want to give all schools'.
8. In selective LEAs such as Kent, free transport was offered for grammar school pupils but not those wanting church schools. Even in 2015, after the majority of LAs in England has ceased to offer the latter, the Roman Catholic diocese of Menevia in Wales successfully took Swansea LA to judicial review on this issue.
9. For *aided* schools, it was important to ascertain whether the football which broke the classroom window was kicked from the inside or the outside of the building: if the former, the LEA paid, if the latter the diocese had to pay.
10. The national press was critical of the Church of England being allowed to take over a non-denominational county school in a multicultural area of West London in 1980. Interestingly, the school quickly attracted Christian pupils from Afro-Caribbean families in neighbouring Brent, thus making the school more fully multicultural than it had ever been as a county school.

11. The GLC was then led by Ken Livingstone, a left-wing Labour politician, who infuriated Margaret Thatcher by parading the unemployment figures on a banner across the front of County Hall directly opposite the Houses of Parliament.
12. The 1988 Education Act created City Technology Colleges, newly built schools funded by government in deprived inner-city areas but independent of LEA control.
13. In Hillingdon, when the LEA was finally required in 1990 to publish the budget allocation to each school, the list revealed that the Anglican church secondary school (in spite of being on a split-site) had 50% less funding per pupil than its neighbouring county schools. A Catholic school in Lambeth discovered its pupil-teacher ratio was a third worse than its county school neighbours.
14. Cf. The School Council publications.
15. The author was headteacher in a split-site Anglican *aided* comprehensive in wholly inadequate buildings (high alumina cement had caused the hall ceiling to collapse; asbestos contamination was serious; science equipment was wheeled on trolleys between normal classrooms): capital funding bids had been rejected by the DES for over 10 years until the Under Parliamentary Secretary of State, Michael Fallon, visited the school in 1991, after which it became a top category emergency rebuild.
16. At the Bennett Memorial School, an Anglican secondary school in Kent, the governors decided to go GM in 1994, but found the DFEE required them to alter their admissions policy, at which point they tried unsuccessfully to retreat from opting out.
17. To ensure they were ‘sound’ in relation to education policy, both the National Curriculum Council and the School Assessment Authority were chaired by Conservative part-time businessmen who happened to belong to the same Anglican church in London. The FAS was chaired by the chairman of the Sun Alliance Group. Sir Geoffrey Holland, who resigned as Permanent Secretary at the DFEE under John Patten, considered quangos led to ‘fudging and avoiding accountability’. (*Alas Sir Humphrey, I knew him well*, RSA lecture, 3rd May 1995). Similar concern was reiterated in 2016 in relation to the power of academy chains.
18. C.f. Hennessy, P. *A Tigress Surrounded by Hamsters*, Gresham Lecture, 20th February 1996.
19. *The Path to Power*, 1995, 11, 165–166.

20. This greatly annoyed the traditional independent sector whose distinctive freedoms in financial independence and pupil admissions were definitely not part of Adonis' agenda.
21. When John Patten as Secretary of State moved the DES into new buildings in Westminster, the water feature in the atrium prompted ironic comments from teachers that at last he will understand what it is like to have water pouring down the *inside* of the walls.
22. Although an enthusiast for new school buildings, Adonis noted that the Bexley Academy in Thamesmead designed by Norman Foster 'with doorless classrooms and malfunctioning designer Italian toilets began my disillusion with celebrity architects' (2012, 96). The correlation between academy sponsors and political honours was sufficient to require a police investigation which, although later dropped, 'left a lingering impression of inappropriate collusion' (Benn 2011, 80).
23. A concern noted by the All Parliamentary Policy Group on RE, 19th January 2016. A national RE Commission was set up in 2016 to pressurise government into addressing this legal anomaly.
24. The Head Andrew Chubb commented, 'Through combining our expertise, I believe we have a winning combination that gives all our young people the chance to flourish.'
25. A number of local authorities took the government to the High Court for failing to consult on the BSF cancellations. The Court found Gove's actions 'so unfair as to amount to an abuse of power'.
26. The EBacc was defined by Gove as English, mathematics, science, a modern foreign language, history and geography.
27. 'The diocese, not simply the local authority as in the past, is now held accountable for the quality of education that takes place within the church school in a way that was not apparent before 2010.' *The Diocesan Board of the Future*, 2012.
28. The Diocese of Oxford was the first to insert into its Articles of Association that community schools were welcome to join its multi-academy trust.
29. Ofsted criticised one ARK academy because the children were too tightly governed and given implausible targets.
30. In 2011 E-ACT aimed to have 250 primary and secondary schools (larger than any LA) but by 2012 had lost half of its DFE approved sponsorship because standards had not improved sufficiently. In January 2016, Ofsted criticised Academies Enterprise Trust, the largest

academy sponsor hitherto, for academies where pupil attendance and school leadership were deemed poor, while 31% of primary and 41% of its secondary schools remained less than *good.*

31. C.f. Robert Hill's 2012 report to RSA: 'The missing *middle*: the case for school commissioners'.
32. *The Sunday Times* (21st February 2017) reported that in 30 Church of England schools Muslim families outnumbered Christian families, including one in Oldham with no Christian pupils. 'They choose our schools precisely because we take faith seriously', commented Nigel Genders.
33. *Schools that work for everyone*, DES, 2016, 30–34.
34. A *Matt* cartoon showed fully veiled girls lining up for their school photographs (*Telegraph*, 17th September 2013).
35. The government-commissioned Report (Clarke 2014) was highly critical both of Birmingham City Council for not intervening after headteachers were hounded out of their jobs and of Ofsted for not monitoring seriously discriminatory practices. The Department of Education was also warned to scrutinise academy sponsors more carefully.
36. A small independent Christian school in Reading was downgraded from *good* to *inadequate* in 2014 because it did not invite speakers from other faiths to lead assemblies: this was later overturned on appeal.
37. E.g. *Fair Admissions Campaign*, backed by the British Humanist Association.
38. Church of England National Education Office (2014) *Working Together: The Future of Rural Church of England Schools*, October 2014. Meetings with the government Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (Defra) in 2016 could only suggest local solutions through federations, but partnerships between villages on opposite sides in the Civil War could be fraught with difficulty! The Schools Commissioner, Sir David Carter, looked to the church to take a lead on this problem.
39. During the academic year 2014–2015, 62 schools had had to change sponsor. In London 6 out of 21 failing schools were academies. In 2016 the main three successful sponsors were centred in or around London, exacerbating the problem of finding sponsors elsewhere. In March 2017 the DfE confirmed that the Education Fellowship Trust which ran 12 academies with 6500 pupils would be dissolved because of poor

performance and financial vulnerability. Anglican dioceses varied in their capacity to improve standards: Sutton Trust Research published in 2016 revealed that London was above average, Oxford had improved its position and Salisbury lagged behind (*Chain Effects*, by Merryn Hutchings, Becky Francis and Philip Kirby).

40. Mary Bousted, letter to the *Times*, 30th April 2015.
41. Peter Mortimore (2014) worried that 'pupils are tested rather than educated, teachers are bullied rather than trusted, and parents are cast as winners and losers in a gamble for school places.'
42. Similar findings were reported in Christy Kulz's 2017 research, *Factories for Learning* (Manchester University Press).
43. Publicity in November 2017 over excessive pay awards for academy heads led the DfE to defend that 'it is essential that we have the best people to lead our schools if we are to raise standards'. However the Education Select Committee chair Robert Halfon called on the DfE to 'strengthen its financial oversight of academy schools and MATs, which in the past has not been proactive enough' (*TES*, 17th November 2017).

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5

Wales Since Devolution: Too Many Cooks in the Kitchen

Robert McCloy

The Chapter's Scope

The chapter seeks to treat primarily, with what happened to the education service in Wales following devolution.[1] Hitherto, its trajectory had followed that of England. The text is by the author of Chapters 1 and 2 who now lives in Swansea, having also done so shortly after the enactment of the 1944 legislation, having previously been evacuated to Monmouthshire. In terms of the overall historical narrative of this book, it accordingly focuses mainly on the third phase although special attention is given to the church's stake in Higher Education and the field of community development, principal, and on-going interests of the author, which necessarily also relates to the two earlier defined phases, and, as it transpires, are crucial themes of the publication and its quest for reform.

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Unlike other chapters based upon direct experience in local employment, this account is tempered by gratefully received reviews by local experts relating to post-devolution events to whom no blame must attach for error in fact or interpretation. That company, each commenting in a private capacity, includes, Chris Sivers, Director of People, and Susan Rees, Community Development Manager, with the City of Swansea, Canon Edwin Counsell, formerly Director of Education with the Diocese of Llandaff, David Egan, formerly Education Advisor to the Welsh Assembly Government, Steffan Ap-Dafydd, NUT official, and Jeff Griffiths, formerly of the NFER. Special indebtedness is owed to Jane Davidson, the first Education Minister under devolution and now Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Of particular importance is Jane Davidson's reference to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act[2] *which addresses some of the underlying concerns of this chapter. Unable to cite employment in local government in Wales, the writer, nevertheless, draws on experience, of being a pupil in three schools, an LEA primary school in Abertysswg in Monmouthshire as an evacuee, a private school and LEA grammar school in Swansea; of serving on Swansea Youth Council; attending Saint David's College, Lampeter [the oldest degree-awarding institution in England and Wales after Oxford and Cambridge]; serving for many years on the governing bodies of that institution and of Trinity College, Carmarthen [which institutions are now part of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David]; and playing a part in their merger; of undertaking a Ph.D at Swansea University; and contributing proposals for the current organization of local government in Wales.*

Distinguishing Characteristics

Notwithstanding the increasing acceleration of divergence from England that was to take place following devolution, differences anteceded this change. There had hitherto existed the Welsh Joint Education Committee, responsible for the schools' public examinations, duly a Secretary of State with a capacity to temper legislation to accommodate

Welsh interests,[3] a population, probably, broadly less socially stratified and at ease with an increasingly ubiquitous comprehensive school system, and, relatively, fewer church and independent schools.[4]

There was also a difference in political chemistry. Here was a country with a preponderance of Labour councillors participating in the day-to-day management and fully committed to the welfare state in the populous former industrial urban areas. This was initially witnessed at close quarters whilst serving on Swansea's youth council. There I was given to understand that such was the county borough council's antipathy towards the church and Saint David's College there could be no question of obtaining a county grant for attendance. As it turned out, this was a blessing: making do with other sources for a first degree, the author was able subsequently to obtain a full grant from the LCC [administered by officers, unlike the Swansea arrangements that would have involved councillor interrogation and scope for anti-church judgement], since parents had moved to London, for the more expensive costs associated with Oxford.

Illustrative of a Welsh authority's enthusiasm for the comprehensive cause, as well as demonstrating the active engagement of its members, is the occasion when the whole of Swansea's education committee met the Secretary of State for Education in pressing the case for its comprehensive school scheme, on the contested grounds that it would recast culture as well as education.[5] Hitherto, Swansea had enthusiastically supported the 1944 Act's tripartite system which, unlike the generality of Welsh authorities, included a technical school.

Central Advisory Councils

Scotland, which was to prove to be an inspiration for much post-devolution reform in Wales, had an assured self-belief in its distinctive pre-devolution educational inheritance. In Wales there was greater ambiguity: for some it could have focused upon the grammar schools, accommodating proportionately a higher percentage of pupils than in England, and which had done so much to promote social mobility, had it not been for the comprehensive school's appeal as an integral

part of the welfare state. The trajectory followed in Scotland, as outlined by Humes,[6] anticipated much that was to unfold in Wales. As it was, distinctiveness was to be found in the nurturing of the Welsh language. The 1944 Act had specifically provided for a Central Advisory Council (CAC) for Wales, which was to demonstrate a commitment to the teaching of Welsh. In response to parental pressure, the first Welsh-speaking maintained schools duly opened.[7] It is claimed that support for these schools also drew strength from those fearing the effects of modernism borne along by Anglicisation.[8] The first state-funded Welsh-medium primary school opened in 1947.[9]

The Plowden Report, named after the CAC's chairman in England, had offered a penetrating and positive prescription and endorsed aims for education which did not derive primarily from economic concerns, a phenomenon of later years.[10] Both Plowden and Gittins, its Welsh counterpart, can now be seen in retrospect, as the last confident affirmations of a liberal progressive education prior to the ascendancy of a more consumer-sympathetic approach. Nevertheless, their liberalism now seems muted in some respects. Both offered a limited world view. There was little about the transformative consequences of mass migration and the general loss of community caused by mobility and their consequences on culture. The CACs seemed to be addressing populations overwhelmingly more insular and circumscribed in their needs.

Initial Harmony

The chief initial characteristic informing the new arrangements under devolution was an attitude of harmony between the principal actors: Assembly Government, local government, parents, and teachers. The cooperative principles were spelt out by Jane Davidson, its first education minister:

> …it is right that we put local authorities, local communities and locally-determined needs and priorities at the centre of the agenda for schools, for example. Our communities want excellent comprehensive schools for

> all their children. Partnership on that front is at the heart of the way we do things in Wales…[11]

Further, the government intended to put all schools into good physical shape by 2010, provide nursery education for all from the age of three, reduce to 30 or fewer all primary classes, develop a policy for rural and small schools, an all age basic skills plan, a Welsh Baccalaureate for breadth of experience linked to Learning Pathways. In all this 'the judgement of teachers, lecturers, trainers must be celebrated without prejudice to public accountability.'[12] Jane Davidson confirmed to the author that her overarching vision in 'The Learning Country' was led by Finland and Scotland and she wanted to see an education system that educated the whole child, hence, the introduction of the Foundation Phase with its emphasis on building curious learners:

> As a teacher myself, I wanted to build the opportunities for building teachers' professionalism, to place schools in the heart of their communities and to enable further and higher education to deliver in as many places as possible. I am a strong supporter of Adult Continuing Learning and actively maintained budgets for lifelong learning that were cut in England.

An early creative initiative had been the appointment in 2001 of a Children's Commissioner, responsible for protecting children's rights as set out in the Convention of the Rights of the Child.[13] Davidson observed:

> I think the new Assembly was rightly ambitious and there was a lot to do when we came in, in 1999. Teacher morale was low, school buildings were in an awful state, there was huge parental concern about the Standard Attainment Tests (SATs), nursery provision was very patchy and class sizes were in some cases very large. There were increasing worries from schools and employers that the GCSE/A levels were not giving the pupils the skills they needed and the drop out rate was high. Hence the focus I put on the areas identified in our then manifesto and particularly on the Foundation Phase and the Baccalaureate.

Public accountability is very important, and what we aimed for at the time was accountability that was proportionate and useful. We wanted data to be available at school level, capable of interrogation at local authority and national levels [but with a focus on formative rather than the then current summative assessment systems hence the work done by Professor Richard Daugherty on Assessment for Learning] and benchmarked internationally—hence I took us into PISA.

The SATs system devised by the UK Government for England—where children do not go to their local secondary school, and often not even to a local primary school—had perverse outcomes in Wales' catchment based system, particularly in deprived areas condemning whole neighbourhoods. Schools must never be allowed to use deprivation as an excuse for poor performance, but also need to be supported in raising standards which is why we introduced new financial support mechanisms and sought to find better ways to assess schools' success in a value-added way.

It is worth noting that

– decisions in the very early years of the Assembly were hindered by the lack of data and particularly disaggregated data related to Wales or at lower levels.
– The powers of intervention were very limited in the first two Assemblies till the Education Act of 2002 gave some additional powers to Wales and the Government of Wales Act 2006 consolidated powers to Wales.
– Teachers pay and conditions remain to be devolved.

The league tables of institutional performance and the highly competitive regime and increasing institutional variety being developed in England, with their consequent friction between the participants, would have no place in Wales, or so it initially seemed. A study by the University of Bristol was to claim later that their abolition 'markedly reduced school effectiveness.'[14] The minister was confident that subsequent to the introduction of SATs there was now within schools sufficient data and the skills to assess pupils' performance.[15] Davidson has clarified that the timetable for the abolition of the SATs over a period of years was to ensure that this was in place:

> There was an eighteen-month review to look at the impact of the testing regimes at the ages of 7, 11, and 14. There was unanimous agreement to remove SATs for 7-year-olds and the introduction of the Foundation Phase was explicitly designed to prepare children better for formal education and to level the playing field. That is still in place.
>
> For 11-year-olds, new transitional arrangements were put in place between primary and secondary schools to tackle the then lack of positive relationships between them to inform agreed assessments for the future. Cluster arrangements are still in force now.
>
> Professor Richard Daugherty's work was very important with the intention to move away from assessments 'of' 'learning, i.e. SATs that were used as a tool of blame towards assessments 'for' learning' to assist in learning development.

In place of league tables and SATs, and with the sympathetic support of the teachers' unions, reliance would be placed on assessment of the performance of pupils. It was evidence of trust in professional judgment but needed to be delivered in a considered, moderated way in order to ensure the raising of standards. Duly, in a subsequent review, it was realized that the assessments were heavily dependent upon subjective judgment, difficult to coordinate, and excessively time-consuming. In the interests of ensuring a measure of comparability across the system, moderation of standards would be introduced at regional consortium and local authority levels. Davidson comments:

> … a deliberate collaborative approach to develop the assessment arrangements needed to be led by the Welsh Government. I saw this as the most important priority at that time, had I stayed in the Education portfolio. However, I moved into a new portfolio in 2007, shortly after which our very talented, internationally recognised Director of Education, Steve Marshall, who had turned the school education system round in South Australia prior to coming to Wales, also left to lead the education system in Ontario. In retrospect, this created a hiatus. Education systems aren't built in a day and although we had tremendous support for 'The Learning Country' agenda, each new minister brings their own agenda and style. Post 2007, three different politicians held the Education Minister portfolio.

Despite some substantial changes in policy direction, a review undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Assessment in 2013, highlighted a continuing lack of confidence in the reliability of the assessment arrangements introduced post-2007.[16] Change had hurtled along in the early years of the Assembly: with commitment to a uniform comprehensive system, the School Effectiveness Framework, the Twenty-first-Century School Capital Programme, the Children and Young People's Plan, the Foundation Phase, the 14–19 Learning Pathways and the Welsh Baccalaureate. Davidson comments:

> Timing wise these were all part of The Learning Country agenda and laid out in the manifesto for 2003. The Baccalaureate had no parallels in England at the time we started. It grew out of work led by the Institute of Welsh Affairs for a unique Welsh qualification, supported by the Liberal Democrats in their manifesto [they were in coalition] and my separately looking to integrate the breadth of the International Baccalaureate into the Welsh education system to create a qualifications system to better prepare students both for university and the world of work.

They had all been duly announced and broadly welcomed, albeit with a growing restlessness about the time and energy entailed in implementation. In the case of the Baccalaureate, whilst it was to have parallels in England, where a need for a more comprehensive curriculum for older pupils, owing something to the successful Duke of Edinburgh Scheme and in emulation of continental practice, was sometimes the spur. Here, there was the added appeal of patriotism, a qualification designed for the country and chiming well with a tradition of self-education.

The Prompt to Change

Thus initial harmony yielded, arguably, to a devolved government considerably more interventionist than Westminster. Hanging in the air is the thought that increasingly there was not sufficient space in a relatively small country for there to be vibrant local authorities and an Assembly Government each determined on education's detailed supervision.

A powerful encouragement for change was the publication of international tables of comparison showing Wales' underperformance relative to others. Davidson observes that the Welsh government 'actively took Wales into PISA in 2006 for international comparisons in order to ensure Welsh schools understood their performance against others.' Of 67 countries in the OECD listing in the PISA results of 2006, Wales was 38th in reading, 40th in mathematics, and 30th in science. Estyn's [the Welsh HMI] report for the six-year period up to 2008/2009 since devolution, bleakly noted that improvement had been slow, one-third of schools underperformed, the performance gap between England and Wales had grown, the systems to monitor the progress of learners were not good enough, and literacy and numeracy were not being fully developed. Reacting to the poor PISA performance of 2006, the Government produced its School Effectiveness Framework involving schools, local authorities and the government.

At the next PISA examination [December 2010] the crucial scores of the key subjects were actually lower, provoking the current education minister, Leighton Andrews, to launch a twenty point, five-year plan which would include school grading, fewer initiatives, better implementation, an obligation on governing bodies to deliberate upon results and resolve on action, teacher training overhaul, an annual in-service training day, and the establishment of a schools standards unit. A particular feature of his approach was to focus upon administrative costs, calculated by PWC, to be approximately 32%. A 2% shift would produce £83 million. Notwithstanding this comprehensive response, the PISA results for December 2013 remained grim: Wales was 43rd in mathematics, 36th in science, and 41st in reading.

Destabilizing Factors

The notion that a collapse in standards was essentially provoked by actions taken in the wake of devolution merits qualification. Prior to devolution there had been much to destabilize Wales' institutional fabric, all witnessed by the writer: major de-industrialization, the economic depression, the progressive decline of religion, especially nonconformity,

which had hitherto provided a vigorous community ethic, schools' reorganization, the decline of the Liberal party, the reconstitution and de-constitution of the federal University of Wales, and two reorganizations of local government. In the interwar years of depression, many able former grammar school students became teachers, one of few accessible professions available, not only strengthening local schools but also aiding those in England where they were famed for their competence, as observed in Kent by the writer. The grammar schools of Wales were to achieve much by their academic energy and their capacity to propel upward mobility and social cohesion. That they were to yield, in a sincere belief, to the comprehensive school in the interests of a more egalitarian world, is not to detract from the vitality of the role they had played. Wales' geography and history were also powerful determinants: the former's mountains and isolated communities, the latter's metropolitan and cultural pull of London.

How much each ultimately contributed in time to a faltering in a zeal for study or distracted key players is a matter for speculation, but their cumulative effect is hardly to be doubted. As for local government, the reorganization in 1972 created a two-tier system of counties and districts. The upper tier counties, amalgamations and fractioning of jurisdictions dating from the Norman and Plantagenet conquests and Tudor reforms, inherited the already shrinking 'upper tier' portfolios of education, strategic planning, highways, and the expanding function of social services. The lower tier districts, largely based upon ancient charter towns and nineteenth-century creations, were to be responsible, essentially, for the functions of housing, local planning, and environmental health. In this process, the significant county boroughs [vigorous county and borough combinations from the 1880s] of Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport, and Swansea, lost their 'upper tier' roles to the new counties. Only two decades later, a further reorganization occurred, a unitary system based upon the earlier counties and county boroughs.[17] For Davidson, this reorganization occurring:

> …in 1996, only three years before the National Assembly was established in 1999 was a huge destabilizing factor. Eight counties became 22 unitary authorities which meant that every individual in first and second tier

> posts in the old counties became the new directors and still there weren't enough. Whereas the previous county directors were experts, some of the new unitary directors had very little experience of the level of senior management into which they were catapulted. They also left management structures in disarray underneath them. Since local authorities are the largest providers of school education in Wales, this was highly problematic and took years to work through. When you add to this a new Assembly and a lack of clarity of roles between the Assembly and the local authorities and a lack of clarity about where powers/authority should be exercised, you have a major structural problem.
>
> I think the rapid change of local government teams from eight very stable LEAs to 22 new LEAs had an enormous effect which is inadequately documented not least in needing 22 new directors, deputy directors etc on day 1. Well established education teams were decimated; many experienced people took [attractive] early retirement packages and those who were left scrambled for sufficient staff, not just senior staff. Effectively, a three tier management system was reintroduced in each new unitary area requiring an additional 42 staff as the old system of 24 senior managers in Wales [8 times 3 Director/Deputy/Assistant] was broadly replicated by the new one with 66 managers [22 times 3]. I am not aware this has been fully evaluated.

Fortuitously, the writer played a small part in promoting the very structure that Davidson castigates. The chairman of the education committee for much of the period he was director of education in Kingston, duly became parliamentary private secretary to the Secretary of State for Wales. They spoke often of affairs in Wales, and when prompted, a paper was produced: local government should be reorganized on the basis of a unitary system: a two-tier system was confusing, compromised accountability, ignored sensitivities about loyalties to cherished jurisdictions, many reaching back to Plantagent and Tudor times, and, in particular, reorganization must address the outrage of Wales' major towns having second-tier status. There would have been other submissions. Duly, reorganization occurred, and reflected in essence the above suggestions, albeit it was less generous in not assigning the title 'city' to each urban authority.

Other changes were afoot. Much of further education was divorced from local government[18] and 'sport and recreation' ceased to be an

integral part of the education service.[19] These latter changes were tearing apart the 'seamless robe of education,' a central feature of the 1944 Act. Herein the relatively familiar was yielding to a more ephemeral world.

Whilst some of these changes had parallels elsewhere in the UK, their concentration in Wales, a relatively small country, arguably had a more decisive effect than in areas of greater stability and prosperity, such as south-east England. It is hardly to be doubted, too, that a consequence of the depression was the migration of many from the country, amongst whom would have been high achievers thereby affecting the remaining population. In the aftermath of the Second World War and the relative security of the welfare state, again, it is arguable, that many might have recoiled from the mental strife of competitiveness to find contentment in a less aggressive world.

Education and the Community

A developing theme of this book has been a progressive marginalization of the 'original' purposes of education, the inculcation of civilization, however inadequately defined, and the positioning in its place, of a consumer-driven framework of focusing upon skills ostensibly intended to make the country more competitive and potentially capable of objective measurement. The thesis has been that this process was not cynical but rather mistaken. Attempts to anchor education in the *summum bonum* of the community had earlier found expression in the community college, which had its genesis, so it is contended, in Saint David's College, Lampeter, at the outbreak of the first war; and, separately, in the community centre, imaginatively promoted by Swansea County Borough, amongst other authorities, on the enactment of the 1944 legislation. These phenomena merit closer attention.

Chapter 2, in making reference to the development of community centres in Swansea, noted that their purpose, as then defined, was ambitious as an essential adjunct to education. Not merely accommodation for recreation, they were to be centres of democratic life and a means by which individuals and the community could develop. In this they anticipated the community development agenda.[20] Whilst, as discussed in Chapter 2,

both the community centre and the more ambitious community college, often fell short of this wider purpose, the intrinsic superiority of the wider mission is not to be doubted. There is nevertheless, a sense in which 'community development' is not primarily rooted in education, being preoccupied in a quest to liberate the community, however defined, to express its values and aspirations. As defined, this is at variance with the 1920s model of the village college which had at its heart the notion of a civilizing institution, the village college, not simply the means by which the local community could find expression, but more importantly by which it could be inspired by education, by its localized philosopher king, the warden. Consonant with this concept is the promotion of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David as a 'Community University' which goes beyond the notion of an institution seeking to provide programmes on request, to one resolved to work within the values of the local community. The university's inclusion of two further education colleges, thereby restoring at least in part education's 'seamless robe,' is in this tradition.

In the context of Wales, the cause of community development has been vigorously promoted by Community Development Cymru and endorsed by the Welsh Assembly Government.[21] Analysis of practice, prescription, and evaluation have been forthcoming which indicate that much still remains to be done to translate the dream into reality.[22] In particular, the Framework for the Future recommends:

> learning from good and bad practice, considering the application of community development principles and practices to all government policies, making community development more widely understood, local government officers and members, in particular, understanding and supporting the concept, increasing funding [much short-term funding is actually harmful], promoting national occupation standards for community development workers, developing a training strategy, and sharing best practice.

The cause of 'community development,' for the present, is seen generally as being inadequately championed notwithstanding renewed government determination. Encouragingly, nevertheless, it is in the nature of on-going business for an emergent city region,[23] and is implicit in the Wellbeing of Future Generations legislation.

The wider compass of community education, central to the Government's quest for health and wellbeing, so it is contended, became more marginalized as the focus of attention turned to more narrowly defined and measurable educational outcomes. The community centre, one such instrument in that wider quest, has received limited attention by government, whether centralized or devolved. Interestingly, the nurturing of Swansea's contemporary thirty-one council-owned community centres is the responsibility of a directorate of *place* rather than *people*, within which is placed much that still remains of the education service, their purposes now for the individual are no less ambitious than as originally conceived:

> establishing new relationships, transforming the local community, facilitating family activities, exploring career possibilities, improving health, developing people skills, having fun, being challenged, developing communication skills, providing evidence of experience, building self-esteem and self-confidence, facilitating team work and the sharing of skills and knowledge.[24]

Safeguarding, developing, and relating this vital sphere to the rest of education, would be consonant with the Assembly Government's renewed commitment to 'health and well-being.' Notwithstanding the enthusiastic language, the task is immeasurably larger than can be imagined and whether other demanding priorities will permit, space and resources must be questionable. Hopefully, responses to the Wellbeing of Future Generations will offer creative structures that combine not only a sensitivity to identify the community's cultural values, [community development] but also the institutional resources to enrich the community [community education].

Higher Education

As in England, higher education institutions were being corralled, in this instance at the prompting of the Assembly Government, into fewer and larger units, to produce greater efficiency. This process was

essentially limited to the smaller establishments and those that had been within the local government sector. Saint David's College, Lampeter, duly merged with Trinity College, Carmarthen, institutions of Anglican origin, albeit with distinctive constitutions, under the title of University of Wales Trinity Saint David.[25] In the late 70s, coinciding with devolution, the writer resumed attendance at the Lampeter Society reunions. They were enjoyable occasions though there was evidence enough about Lampeter's increasing secularization. Understandably, much turned on recounting the old days with nostalgic embellishment. In one sense however, the college was thriving, but its leadership seemed ill at ease with the entrepreneurial spirit of the times. As an Oxbridge college, in Oxbridge, this might not have mattered: physically isolated its position seemed at greater risk. Asked to join the governing body the writer took the responsibility with due seriousness. Attendance would invariably involve a long car journey at night from Kingston, often at the conclusion of a demanding council meeting, to a Lampeter yet to stir in the early hours. Nevertheless, the papers for the meeting would have been read, the writer eagerly looking for reports of action sometimes prompted by interventions at the previous meeting. For the most part, there was disappointment: little evidence of dynamic action. However the occasions were invariably congenial and friendly, fellow governors were engaged in conversations which touched upon the apparent lack of progress. For the most part, the concern was not shared. Senior churchmen present [and they were still well represented] were sanguine and expressed great tolerance at the passing scene. Moments after the appointed hour to commence proceedings, the current principal [later ennobled by Margaret Thatcher] arrived, greeted all in avuncular fashion, gave a brisk and entertaining address, apologizing for the fact that he had to rush to London [he was a trustee of the National Portrait Gallery]. The Meeting would proceed: information about matters previously considered would be sought, any attempt to provoke decisive action skillfully avoided by the chair, the maintenance of peace being a priority. Proceedings would end amiably with a well-served lunch. For the writer, the contrast between an angst-full council chamber of Kingston, where the demand for instant action was ever present, and the gentle gatherings in Lampeter was disturbing and startling.

So matters proceeded, as the years passed the property's condition worsened: the Old Hall, long a cherished feature with its fine portraits, became an unkempt common room. Attempts at reform were indeed made but they lacked energy. A meeting to explore possible marketing initiatives took place. The author submitted a paper outlining a programme 'selling' Lampeter to a particular target group. In his work as deputy chief education officer of Ealing he had learned that much of the new population in Southall, who had migrated from the Indian subcontinent, had a strong commitment to formal and structured education systems, were often ill at ease with the prevailing liberal structures and might well find attractive a higher education institution for their aspiring children that had earlier existed at Lampeter. The college should play to its past strengths: emulation of large secular campuses was palpably not working. It was anticipated that it would be possible to establish a friendly base in Southall to promote such an initiative. The suggestion came to nothing.

Somewhat later than becoming a Lampeter governor, the writer was asked by the Church of England's Church House in Westminster, to become one of their nominated governors at Trinity College, Carmarthen. The Trinity College encountered was also facing pressures to amalgamate and reorder its affairs. Apart from its constitutional difference from that of Lampeter [it relied upon standard articles and instruments of government rather than a royal charter], its stake in research-driven higher education was more limited though some of its staff were making major advances, and proportionately more of its students were locally based. This affected the character of the two campuses, the former more cosmopolitan than the latter, with a more vigorous campus student life, aided by the fact that once there, in a relatively isolated area there was impulse enough to make conditions work. In Carmarthen's case, home was nearer to hand and the pressure to promote campus activity less. Not unrelated was the fact that the latter was more Welsh in its character and aspirations. Senior staff and governors, it seemed, reflected these differences: Lampeter, in its quest, to recruit drew its net widely and appointed as senior staff those with experience elsewhere in the UK and Ireland, and, as governors, business people with UK-wide experience, albeit with strong Welsh connections. Their Carmarthen counterparts, it seemed, were, for the most part, recruited more locally.

Notwithstanding such differences, there were common characteristics. Neither exemplified a comfortable relationship with aggressive management approaches, both sought progress by gradual reform and placed a premium upon consensus within their own communities. Nevertheless, as pressure to reform mounted, as with the bishop, as chairman, and principal, the author could testify when they met the chairman of the Higher Education Funding Council [Hefcu], attempts to reform would provoke resistance and disunity. The author duly prepared a discussion paper for the Carmarthen governors. In essence, it advocated merger with Lampeter, both institutions were at serious risk of take-overs by larger neighbouring institutions, the more so to safeguard a distinctive 'church –inspired' but tolerant higher education programme, which was not on offer in Wales' secular institutions. The united institution should embrace the title 'Trinity Saint David.' Reaction in Carmarthen was generally favourable: welcoming Trinity's priority in the title, though one governor doubted its capacity to be translated into Welsh! Duly colleague governors indicated support for the proposals but would their Welsh culture and language programme commitment be embraced? We concurred that it should.

In Lampeter, where the same cause for amalgamation had been pressed over the years, there was greater hostility: some supposed disloyalty. The then principal, a gifted academic who took a kindly and positive interest in the author's own academic research, reminded him of the Gospel assertion that no one could serve two masters. However, the new institution needed a leadership with a managerial stamp without which the merger would fail. Lampeter moved into a position of accepting merger, but, on the eve of a decisive vote by Carmarthen, sent by motorbike a message to Bishop's House that Lampeter's assent would be conditional upon Lampeter's hegemony. This ultimatum was turned down and a further period of stand-off occurred.

The pressure on the two institutions did not abate though the duration of the procrastination seemed surprising. The absence of an immediate accountable political body, as, for example, in Kingston, and the constitutional independence accorded Lampeter by its royal charter, for the moment, facilitated survival. The Lampeter principal duly retired and the quest for a successor conformed to earlier practice, a pro

vice-chancellor of Buckingham University [the then successful expression of a private university] being appointed. The author had played no part in this development but was well pleased by the person shortly met. Here was fresh blood of proven expertise, who could surely effect the necessary change. It was not to be: the new principal's tact was not sufficient to bring order and discipline to the enterprise. An increasingly impatient Hefcu instituted an examination of affairs and produced a damning report. An honourable principal fell on his sword. By consent, a caretaker principal was installed with the brief to take Lampeter into the earlier proposed union.

As for Carmarthen, there were concerns about its future leadership. There was broad agreement that the college had to focus upon its teaching competence and not be deflected by the pursuit of academic research. Whilst rejecting Lampeter's quest to lead, it could not look to any more immediate alternatives. Its own principal was also to retire. Duly, attention focused upon a former member of staff now on the staff of Cardiff University College. Fellow governors spoke well of him. When the author met him he too was impressed. There was a decisiveness rarely encountered. In due time, he became principal. Carmarthen was now fully committed to union with Lampeter. Quite smoothly this now took place, Carmarthen's principal becoming for a time also principal of Lampeter. Under the new regime, which immediately effected radical change, the pace of reform was quick, compliance general, and accepted, though for some it was too much and resignations quickly followed. Extra funding was successfully negotiated and materially the new institution with support from the devolved government, showed signs of increasing prosperity. Its vice-chancellor [the new nomenclature had spread quickly] ensued that each decision made by the governing bodies was zealously executed, even in those few instances, where there were actually differences of view.

In due time, the writer resigned. The united institution prospered, property improvements were very impressive and Websites and literature conveyed confidence. The process of development seemed relentless: shortly, a merger was promoted with Swansea Metropolitan University. The writer wondered at its desirability, fearing that it would dilute the new institution's character but was advised that there was

no option: it was a requirement of the Welsh government. This was accepted and the writer did what he could [which was little enough] to promote positive relationships and as part thereof opened discussions with the parish of Swansea to see what could be done to foster church links. He was heartened to learn in discussions with the vice-chancellor, as late as December 2017, that the institution's wider agenda, cited above, was very much of current concern, more relevant now than ever.

The *federal* University of Wales, however, as in London, in a contrary process, was fracturing as its principal members expanded and sought independence. There was an irony in the developing narrative: Lampeter which had been excluded from membership of the federal university, duly uniting, on the basis of its royal charter, with Trinity College, Carmarthen, Swansea Metropolitan University, and fostering links with the residual elements of the University of Wales, now found itself *de jure* one of its surviving members.

In parenthesis, it may be noted that the foundation of Saint David's College and the University of Wales' first college, both in Cardiganshire, had given the opportunity of reaching full-time university education for a middle-class boy living in that county which was 'roughly 160 times as great as that for a working class girl living in West Ham.'[26]

The Quest for Accountability

The Cabinet Member arrangement for managing local authorities introduced in England was also adopted in Wales in an attempt to establish greater accountability and efficiency. Indeed, in the education system at large both in Wales and England, there was increasingly a commitment to recognizing greater effectiveness in strong institutional leadership. Such a view possibly propelled the creation of larger institutions with the benefit of economy of scale. Thus all-age schools in an earlier age abandoned, for lack of specialist focus, were being reintroduced to capture the advantages of scale and to take advantage of a perceived scarcity of leadership. Similarly in further and higher education, mergers were effected between institutions distantly apart with dissimilar original purposes.

Complementing this emphasis upon individual accountability was an emphasis on a duty of scrutiny upon councillors and governors at large.

Devolved Budgets

Devolving budgets and much decision-making to individual educational institutions, common practice in England, was implemented in Wales, though there were instances when attempts were made by local councils to curb this in the interests of economy and equity. Most significantly, the further steps taken in England of enabling schools to become independent of local government or to promote free schools were not taken. The local education authority yet remained, but it was a shadow of its former self by the time Leighton Andrews, despairing of current arrangements in 2013, contemplated another re-ordering of local government.[27]

Compulsory Curriculum

A Compulsory Curriculum had been introduced and no attempt was made to pull back from the invasion of this once 'secret garden,' provoking comparable concern, as in Scotland and England by the teaching profession, relating to definition, ultimate relevance, and distraction.[28] The Assembly Government had accepted the status quo then existing in England and Wales and maintained its role in fixing the curriculum's content. School curriculum and assessment were now to be determined by Welsh government ministers with advice from a Qualifications, Curriculum, and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) whose members were appointed by the minister.

Davidson notes that curriculum reform constituted the primary opportunity from 2000–2007 with Assembly Committees making recommendations for reform in early years and post 16 in particular, hence, the focus on Foundation Phase [bridging nursery and Key Stage 1] and the Baccalaureate [KS4/5]. 'Initially ACCAC was a NDPB (non-departmental public body), until the decision by Rhodri Morgan to take it in house as the new QCAA.'

The Teaching of Welsh

In one important respect, Welsh practice departed materially from England's. It made compulsory in Key Stages 3 and 4 the teaching of Welsh in all schools. English was not compulsory at Key Stage 1 in Welsh-speaking schools. History, geography, music, and art had separate content in England and Wales.[29] The crucial instrument in prompting these reforms was the Gittins Report which had argued, in the case of primary school pupils, that their experience should be of a particular community with distinctive traditions, language, history, institutions, literature, and music.[30]

Historic Weakness

Neglect of the majority of pupils had been striking in the 1970s, according to K. Jones.[31] Sixth forms in the comprehensive schools in the 1960s had remained open only to those academically successful. By 1996 only 17% of seventeen-year-old pupils were in school though this had risen to 21.7% by 1977.[32] In 1980, there were very high levels of failure: 'Over a quarter of its pupils with no tangible benefit of five years of secondary schooling.'[33] As observed, there seemed to have been a preoccupation with a restricted though patriotic agenda in the Gittins Report. Nevertheless, by the late 1980s, it was claimed there was a broader appreciation of future needs. The Curriculum Council for Wales noted that the curriculum will need to reflect the varied nature of Welsh identity.[34]

'Globalization'

Common to the other parts of the United Kingdom, there was a general commitment to the 'globalization' agenda at the dawn of devolution. Much discussion focused upon the need to improve education to the end that Wales could compete successfully internationally. 'Wales must be at the forefront of new ideas and new technologies if it is to

transform into a prosperous economy for the future.'[35] The emphasis did not seem to be concerned with sharing cultures, promoting common values, widening perspectives or helping peoples less fortunate. Davidson comments:

> I think in the early years of the Assembly the sharing cultures/ promoting common values agenda was virtually taken as read with the establishment of the Assembly as guardian of those values. However, there was a new emphasis on widening perspectives—the role that Wales plays in the world/ opening up to international best practice which was an explicit part of the new agenda as was helping people who are less fortunate that remains probably the strongest Labour party tenet in particular.

The Assembly Government's Response

Though Wales' relatively poor performance had been increasingly recognized, the Assembly Government did not attribute this to teachers, as would occur in England.[36]

Subsequent to the poor PISA results of 2009, Andrews uncompromisingly attributed it to a failure of leadership throughout the system, too much learner choice, complacency, a search for alibis rather than learning from best practice, a lack of focus and weak policy implementation, the fragmentation of local authorities, a lack of robust teacher assessment, and a lack of accountability on the part of governing bodies.[37]

In identifying 'a failure of leadership,' it most certainly included local government and itself. The indictment for the former was their general failure in managing school improvement though they were responsible for 'outcomes' in the schools. How far this was an entirely fair position to adopt is questionable. The reality is that institutional autonomy had become well established and had been reinforced by measures taken both by Whitehall, and the devolved administration. The latter would sometimes support the institution when the local authority attempted to exercise control. An issue of contention was the extent to which local authorities delegated expenditure to institutions. Local authorities in

seeking to discharge their responsibilities, could allocate resources to reflect priorities and were at liberty to spend the block grant unless it was statutorily assigned. In 2010, approximately 75% was delegated by local authorities to schools. The minister sought to increase it by 5% within two years and by 10% within four years.[38]

Local government had been obliged to reduce expenditure by the central government which was now critical of the former's capacity to carry out its duties. In any case, striking the right balance between 'challenge' and 'support,' palpably desirable, is often easier said than done. Nevertheless, there was a view that local government lacked the capacity to discharge its responsibilities, exemplified in the case of Merthyr Tydfil, one of the worst performing local authorities.[39] Though the shaping of local government had been within the competence of the Welsh Secretary of State, dissatisfaction with the current arrangements has remained a constant cause of friction and local government was to fight fiercely the Assembly Government's intention to reduce still further the number of units.

Public and Commercial Sector Collaboration

There was no predilection initially to enlist, as in England, the private sector in the search for a remedy.[40] Latterly, however, in the context of further and higher education and the development of city regions [for Cardiff and Swansea Bay], there has been a wholehearted endorsement of partnership with private enterprise. Here in the latter, there is in effect, a recasting of local government with an emphasis upon collaborating local councils working with the business and university sectors. In the instance of Swansea Bay the emphasis is very much upon an urgent need for improving productivity and wealth.[41] The Swansea City Region's bid seeks to address significant weaknesses in training and education:

> …we have too few businesses that are not growing our business base quickly enough; there are not enough people with high level qualifications and too many with none at all…

The 'deal' with the government, accepted on March 20, 2017, by Prime Minister May, identifies Internet initiatives relating to energy, health and wellbeing, and economic acceleration, and the creation of an 'Internet Coast,' in emulation of Silicon Valley.

Significantly, initiatives to stimulate entrepreneurial attitudes were recognized when the Swansea Bay Region was awarded the status of UNESCO Learning City at the Mexico City conference in October, 2015, the only city within the UK. Special features were a programme of school competitions and the development of an academy to support young people in starting their own businesses.

Consortia and Renewed Focus

To effect general improvement in the school sector the response had focused upon the creation of 'consortia,' the linking of adjacent authorities, to share resources coordinated by officials appointed by the Assembly Government. Though the policy stresses the importance of partnership between the Assembly Government, local government, the institutions and others, and emphasizes the need for clear lines of accountability, and reiterates that the responsibilities of local government remain unaffected, the detailed mechanisms seem to presage otherwise. The intention was that the new arrangements would offer schools challenge and support. Criticism remains that the latter has been lacking.[42]

Evans, commentating, notes:

> Regional consortia had been developed tentatively prior to Andrew's assumption of office but by then were not seen as the answer. Council leaders had been given ample time to separate wheat from chaff and desperate times called for desperate measures. That said, establishing a national framework for regional working would have at least established consistency across the piece and allowing local authorities to develop their own bespoke consortia was something the minister would later regret.[43]

Andrews had commissioned a review which offered a comprehensive overhaul including the removal of some education functions, including

responsibility for school improvement, from local authorities, and transferring them to Wales' four regional consortia, that for the South-East being generally commended for the progress having already been made. The region embracing Swansea would now include six local authorities in south-west and mid-Wales, and came into being in April 2014 following the release of the National Model for School Improvement by the Welsh Government in February 2014. The consortium's purpose was to deliver a single consistent and integrated professional school improvement service for children and young people in a range of settings within the six local authorities. The minister, nevertheless, considered that the number of local authorities should be reduced by a third.[44] Estyn, too, shared the view but that, in the absence of a major reorganization, faith should be placed in the consortia: '…there was more power in the engine room [the new regional consortia] have an energy and focus.'[45] Others, including a former government education advisor, were less sanguine about the consortia.[46]

Beyond such structural mechanisms, the Assembly Government has insisted that there be a focus upon literacy and numeracy on the part of the taught and teachers, including teachers in training, and pupil attendance. Governing bodies would be required to discuss performance and all schools would be set targets and be awarded annual grades. [Criticism of governing bodies has included inadequate training and, and in some instances, appointment of individual governors by head teachers.][47] Overall, however, as merciful relief for many, there would now be fewer initiatives.

The Role of Head Teachers

As in England, the task of being a head teacher had surely became more onerous. Whilst general delegation of budget responsibility from the local authority occurred, independence from the local authority, with academy status, and the creation of free schools was not to take place. In another very important respect, the burden in Wales was possibly even greater. In the new supervisory structure, much of the very detailed monitoring of performance, with its attendant paperwork and

meetings fell to the head teacher. In England, with academy status and free schools, a greater sense of the head's independence was in evidence, at least for some, albeit by 2001 in a single year it was claimed rather startlingly that, 3840 instructions had been sent to a single maintained school, one head teacher reporting 525 separate school targets.[48] In Wales, the head was more obviously a participant in a collective, possibly making it an even less attractive occupation. Notwithstanding, criticism of primary school head teachers, declining to return to a classroom on a timetable as staffing cuts have necessitated larger classes, has been voiced.[49]

Intervention and Indictment

The Assembly Government's education policies had convincingly demonstrated that it would be highly interventionist, for whilst it sought to cooperate with teachers, local government, and others, there can be no mistaking its determination to take the lead. In a series of policy statements it had offered not only detailed analysis but a highly prescriptive recipe to correct perceived deficiencies. In the instance of Early Years and Childcare, its analysis of its crucial role is comprehensive and incontrovertible. However, the plan, apart from the merger of agencies, placed a heavy burden on all who had any part in the actual caring to share understandings to cooperate. The texts are largely silent as to the content of the cultural values communicated to the very young and how these may be best articulated, encouraged or indeed qualified.

Less there be doubt as to the Assembly Government's approach, the Learning and Skills [Wales] Measure, 2009, made the position clear, offering a confident message notwithstanding continuing worries about performance. Its summary stated:

> The 14–19 Learning Pathways policy has transformed curricula provision and support for learners, helping to raise achievement and attainment, prepare young people for high skilled employment or higher education and enable Wales to compete in Europe in the twenty-first century…The Measure places a duty on local authorities in Wales to form local curricula

> for learners in Key Stage 4, also provides Welsh ministers with regulation making powers to stipulate the minimum number of courses of study…

Illustrative of a zeal to effect change without an understanding of its impact was the promotion of the Child Development Assessment Profile, introduced in September 2011, which required teachers to record up to 114 types of behaviour within the first six weeks of a pupil attending school. Here was an exercise described as 'endlessly draining' by a reviewer commissioned by the government prior to its abandonment.[50]

Occasioning greater success, was an initiative taken in 2014 emulating projects in England. In this instance, the focus was on a provision in an area of deprivation with an injection of £20 million, the assignment of independent 'Challenge Advisors' to identify need and broker support.

Offering a general indictment, but at the government's invitation, following the example of Scotland, in seeking the organization's advice, OECD observed:

> Wales has started a reform journey and the profession and the public share the sense of urgency to take action and the reform directions set out by the Government. However, it appears that the many reform initiatives pursued in the last few years have left the profession with a growing sense of feeling overwhelmed by a continuous flow of changes and a lack of clear direction beyond 2015.

Concern was also expressed about the inadequate support given to schools and the inconsistencies in services provided by local authorities and consortia.

The Anglican Church

The Anglican Church's stake in education provision in Wales was proportionately smaller than in England.[51] Nevertheless, twenty-five thousand pupils attended the Church in Wales' 172 primary and secondary

schools with over five thousand teachers and support staff. It was thus larger than some local authority systems. Its schools were often the most popular amongst parents. Of course, in some rural communities, they were the only schools, some existing from a period prior to the creation of board schools and local authority provision. In the secondary sector, there were but three Anglican schools, the Bishop of Llandaff School in Cardiff being a very popular institution with exemplary academic results. Illustrative of effectiveness in providing a large secondary school serving an area with much social deprivation whilst offering a distinctive religious character is Cardiff's second Anglican secondary school, Saint Teilo's. In an imaginative scheme, a rota of clergy provides a daily hour's pastoral visit offering students the opportunity to discuss moral issues and obtain private counsel.[52]

A major interest of the writer had been the fate of Saint David's College, Lampeter and Trinity College Carmarthen. This had first formerly registered in 1956, when as President of the JCR [Students Union], he had argued that the two colleges should unite: both were vulnerable to absorption by much larger secular neighbours, Aberystwyth University College and Swansea University College. Even then was recognized Trinity's role in teacher training, the colleges' distinctive constitutions and the general disdain Lampeter had for Trinity's inferior status in teacher training. In the context of contemporary Wales, teacher training was regarded as being inferior to attendance at a University of Wales College, a status denied Lampeter, which was facing a serious financial crisis in that it was not then recognized for state funding. This coincided with a crucial visit of the University Grants Committee. Not unsurprisingly, the president of the JCR was not invited to meet the committee. Duly, a successful formula was devised: Lampeter would 'shelter' under a special status belonging to the University College of Cardiff. As part of the new arrangements, which now crucially enabled a flow of public money to Lampeter, certain constitutional arrangements were made, for example, the Lampeter degrees would be temporarily suspended in favour of those of the University of Wales, its principal would no longer have to be an Anglican cleric, and the bishop of Saint Davids would cease to be the chairman of the governing body. Some considered the price as being too high and feared for the change in character that would

take place. As the years passed, the collegiate character, described with approbation in Chapter 2, did indeed fundamentally change: the chapel ceased to be so obviously the institution's hub, informality in dress and dining took on a new orthodoxy. Lampeter ceased to be an Oxbridge 'colony'. It did however, blossom, in a new age of prosperity and staff enthusiastically embraced secular academe. In emulation of the secular universities, a premium was placed upon recruiting research-active staff, little concern now focusing upon those with special pastoral gifts. The writer ceased for a period to have an immediate relationship with the college albeit remaining a member of the Lampeter Society but not attending its reunions.

Whilst, accordingly, in the higher education sector Saint David's College, Lampeter and Trinity College, Carmarthen, were notable evidence of the Anglican Church's historic role, the Roman Catholic Church was also represented in overall education provision, though on a smaller scale but with a greater presence, proportionately, in the secondary sector than the Anglicans, with three schools. In Wrexham, there was a joint Anglican and Roman Catholic secondary school.

Just as the focus of education administration was to move from the local authority to a Wales-wide setting, a similar process, though at a later stage, has occurred in the Church in Wales. An ambitious review, completed in 2009, offered a thoughtful analysis of what the Church in Wales should now do to reflect current needs. In addressing three audiences, education, the church and the politicians, it sought to review the Church in Wales' contribution to the nation and make proposals.[53] It would go beyond school provision and include structures of pastoral care, support, and nurture of further and higher education. Evidence from the community to inform deliberation was requested though the response from teachers in church schools was negligible.

The review embraced an account of the historical role of the church in the provision of education, in particular, noting the hostility of the community at large to the Balfour reforms which were seen to support the then established church's dominance. As for prescription, the review argued for a concentration of resources for supervision and guidance at the provincial level, with the formation of a Provincial Strategy Group, a more effective coordination of resources

in each diocese, the sharing of information on a more liberal basis, a fulsome articulation in documentation for parents of both admission policies and of the distinctive character that they should find in church schools, and the fostering of links by schools with the Anglican church overseas. It urged the use of the generic title 'schools with a religious character' rather than 'faith schools' and state recognition, as in England, of the role of diocesan boards of education [and their officers]. Significantly, the Review, in supporting spiritual and moral development in church schools, pointedly noted that it 'should not be left to custom and practice.' As for further and higher education, it warmly commended best practice, including that found in England, with its emphasis upon ecumenism, experimentation, informality, and pragmatism.

Overall, a reading of the text of the Review gives the impression that its principal concerns are not the rise of consumerism, global warming, migration and mobility, social inequality, and the decline of religion; and what, if anything, should be taught or even discussed in schools, colleges and universities, about these matters. Generally, the impression gained is that the focus is more highly restricted though concern for these issues is possibly implicit. Duly, the Assembly Government presented an overview in its report Faith in Education incorporating insights from the Church in Wales and the Roman Catholic Church.[54] Its tone is all-embracing and sympathetic to the maintenance of the relationships, structures, and arrangements confirmed in the 1944 legislation.

Conclusion and Assessment

Even before devolution there was much that was distinctive about the education service in Wales. Most notably, political participation in the management of provision provided by local education authorities was generally more pronounced than in England. In the immediate wake of the 1944 Act's implementation, the fulsome and energetic involvement of councillors in the detailed management of the service was recognizably more intense than in much of England, though even there, there were instances where practice followed the Wales model. In the years

following devolution, the involvement by politicians in the daily management of education has intensified. This has occurred both locally and nationally. In the former case, this drew its warrant in part from the institution of cabinet member legislation inherited from Westminster; in the latter, by the disposition of ministers, drawing critical comment, as noted, by both Donaldson, see below, and the OECD, in their reviews. In this regard, Wales and Scotland, also criticized by the OECD, share a common characteristic.

A second determining characteristic *has been the cooperation sought and initially reciprocated between ministers and unions* with the latter's officials enjoying easy access to ministers. Shared political commitments would possibly be a factor. As experienced by the writer in England, common political outlooks shared by politicians and unions can compromise the service's management, as it did in Ealing.

The dominant characteristic of the impulses driving the 1944 Act was about partnership and trust. This might sometimes have been misjudged but it placed a premium upon each partner to act in good faith and to be allowed to discharge responsibility without excessive interference. As noted in the 1960s this was initially compromised by a Labour government intent upon abolishing grammar schools, and subsequently, more comprehensively, in the 1980s, by a Conservative government determined to take total charge of the curriculum. Whilst there was then good intent, there is surely now a case for a restoration of a higher level of trust, allowing partners in the enterprise to act more freely and without interference. That this will produce from time to time, serious error need not be doubted. But, by the same token, it is likely to be the spur to more exemplary performance at lower cost.

What will possibly turn out to be a decisive contribution to the developing situation, at one with the above assessment, are the Assembly Government's commissioned reports on the training of teachers, and curriculum and assessment arrangements.[55] 'Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers' has offered a critical analysis of current provision, which it claims, compares unfavorably internationally and elsewhere in the UK, is scattered in too many places, is poorly rooted in academic research, fails to provide career-long support, recruits poorly, offers outdated qualifications, and ill equips for the demands placed upon teachers by the

new curriculum. That report, endorsed the critical analysis of the curriculum and assessment arrangements by Donaldson who had argued:

> The high degree of prescription in detail in the national curriculum, allied to the increasingly powerful accountability mechanisms, has tended to create a culture within which the creative role of the school has become diminished and the professional contribution of the workforce undeveloped.[56]

This is in marked contrast to the ambition of 'The Learning Country' years, led by Jane Davidson, where the focus had been on actively expanding the role of the school in educating the whole pupil, and building the professional contribution of the workforce. Donaldson's prescription provided for radical change to address overload, redundancy, and complexity resulting from excessive modifications. Accepting the curriculum's four aims for pupils [to be lifelong learners, enterprising in life and work, ethical citizens and confident members of society], it argued that it should be focused on six areas, continuing the areas of learning started in Jane Davidson's Foundation Phase across the length of the pupil's experience: the expressive arts; health and wellbeing; the humanities; languages, literacy and communications; mathematics and numeracy; and science and technology. Teachers should be freer to select suitable material. A lighter touch on assessment was essential, and ministers whilst giving strategic direction should not become involved in the detail. The principle of maximum subsidiarity was endorsed.[57] Davidson comments:

> Donaldson explicitly builds on the approach of the Areas of Learning that we identified in the development of the Foundation Phase to create a coherent curriculum in Wales that would be different to other parts of the UK and build on Welsh values. He also suggests lighter touch assessment and strategic direction from ministers - both of which we aimed to deliver in the early years. However, in a small country, the balance between strategic direction and intervention is a hard one!

Offering a critical analysis of failure since devolution, Philip Dixon, abandoning any notion that effective reform is possible under current structures, advocates the creation of a Recovery Board, overwhelmingly

recruited from other parts of the UK, each member possessing a proven record of success, with overarching powers capable of supplanting existing national and local authorities, focusing upon strategy, implementation and, only exceptionally, policy, appointed by and answerable to the Assembly.[58] That such a solution, a throwback to empire, should be promoted by a former champion of devolution is startling, evidence for him, of the situation's seriousness. Nevertheless, Dixon's frame of reference is failure, since devolution and tacit acceptance of the validity of the PISA basis of comparison. However, there are grounds for believing there to be wider issues to be examined.

Whilst Donaldson's prescription has won general support in February 2017, there were now concerns that insufficient action had been taken to ensure implementation. A Welsh Assembly committee consisting of Labour party members, having taken evidence from the NAHT and the NUT, voiced the criticism that more had to be done by the government to define the way forward, and focused their attack upon the Liberal Democrat minister. Herein is a special irony. Donaldson, in sympathy with union criticism, that centralization had to be curbed and greater professional autonomy returned to the classroom, had significantly made such an endorsement. Now however, there yet remained a belief that central direction was needed: a dependency culture was still in place. This was reminiscent of conditions experienced in Bulgaria by the writer, in monitoring elections following the fall of the Berlin wall: a very intelligent population had become dependent upon state direction over minute detail and now found difficulty in operating in conditions of greater freedom. This response in Wales nevertheless owed much to the government's earlier determination to be the instrument of action and the progressive weakening of local government. Donaldson's prescription and its subsequent government endorsement, could have been seized by a liberated profession taking the initiative in collaboration with local government and institutions of higher education.

Whilst Donaldson's remedy seems to offer much, there remain worrying doubts. If we go back to the foundations of the welfare state and the inception of the 1944 legislation, there was a general belief that the endeavour was about the creation of a better world, of social harmony

and good health, eloquently captured at the time by William Temple.[59] In the quest to translate these civilizing and generous purposes into reality, prescription has increasingly focused upon a consumer-driven education, concentrating upon instruction of techniques including a capacity to satisfy examinations. That this approach is even a partial proxy for the wider purpose is increasingly the subject of doubt. The unreliability of the current examinations' regime is highlighted by the fact that schools, according to Seldon,

> …have come under unbearable pressure to teach not the academic subject, but the exam techniques that markers look for…Glenys Stacey, the outgoing chief executive of the exams regulator Ofqual is right to identify this problem…[60]

A fundamental challenge to the Global Education Reform Movement, of which Wales has been a participant, though falteringly, is comprehensively captured in an open letter to Andreas Schleicher, the Director of the OECD programme, by a group of international academics. The letter included its concerns about PISA claiming it:

> Shifts attention to short-term fixes designed to help a country quickly climb the rankings, despite the research demonstrating that enduring changes in education practice take decades to come to fruition;
>
> Takes attention away from the less measurable or immeasurable educational objectives like physical, moral, civic, and artistic development, thereby dangerously narrowing our collective view regarding the purpose of education;
>
> Is naturally biased in favor of the economic role of public schools[61] versus how to prepare students for participation in democratic self-government, moral action, and a life of personal development, growth and well-being;
>
> With its continuous cycle of global testing, harms children and adversely impacts classrooms, as it inevitably involves more and longer batteries of multiple-choice testing, more scripted 'vendor'-made lessons, and less professional autonomy for teachers. In this way, PISA has further increased the stress level in schools, which endangers the well-being of students and teachers.[62]

Notwithstanding, faith in PISA seemed to be retained when the results for 2016 were announced. They offered further grief: the scores of Welsh students in science, reading, and mathematics were below the average of 72 countries—worse than counterparts in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This was the fourth occasion on which Wales had done worse than the rest of the UK, prompting the Education minister, now the Liberal Democrat Kirsty Williams, in a coalition government, to observe 'Wales could do better.'

In the quest to raise standards and in the assessment of error, there has remained a commitment to the belief that there is a relationship between examination performance and economic prosperity, even though that relationship has been increasingly called into question internationally. Whilst, there has been a growing awareness that in making demands upon the system there comes a point when weariness, low morale and resistance occur. Thus, even if it is presumed that the quest was justified, the means by which it was pursued was mistaken.

In a renewed quest for reform, more attention must surely be paid to the stuff of community building, how individuals relate to one another and how various and changing communities relate to one another. That this, in part, must find expression in the curriculum dedicated to the four aims, alluded to above, is surely correct. However, more of an overt sociological character must surely also be attempted. It is in this latter context that consideration should be given to the contribution to be made by the community itself. With advances in information technology and robotics, questions will increasingly be asked about the utility of learning certain bodies of knowledge. According to the Institute of Labour Economics in Germany, nearly a third of jobs in Britain could be lost by the early 2030s because of automation from robotics and artificial intelligence. Middle-skilled and routine jobs, such as those in accountancy and medical diagnostics, are most at risk.[63]

Overarching questions concerning the curriculum's substance is the worrying realization that much learning is irrelevant and its teaching ineffective. Sustained improvement in learning and teaching requires a genuine sharing of values and skills and cooperative teamwork across institutional networks and face-to-face relationships between staff, as contended by Elmore, in his New York research.[64]

The wider context, however, as Davidson has pointed out, is the focus of a crucial piece of 2015 legislation: The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Its ambitious goals embrace the creation of a prosperous Wales with a resilient and healthier population, wherein there will be greater equality, a vibrant culture, cohesive communities, which are globally responsive, with a sustainable economy. Translation into tangible targets, in the first place, is a task placed upon Wales' public bodies who are charged with the creation of a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage, and the Welsh language and which encourages people to participate in the arts, sport and recreation—a Wales of cohesive communities—attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities. Public bodies, specifically including local authorities, are required to publish assessments by April 2017, and by 2018 are expected to deliver on the goals, descriptions, and ways of working identified in the Act. The published descriptions of the goals make it clear that what is envisaged goes beyond the purely mundane and utilitarian and embraces the quality of life and surely includes much of the terrain which, so it is contended, has been marginalized by the Global Education Reform Movement. In this respect, the purposes of the initiative are totally positive. Here is much that chimes with the imaginative programme informing the pioneering Cambridgeshire Village College described in Chapter 2. Not to cavil over the broad justification of the Act, two notes of caution are offered: whilst the earlier village college holistic analysis placed educationists at the centre of the movement, no such automatic role features in this current structure, and second, the introduction of further management structures affecting education in addition to consortia for school improvement, city regions, local authorities, governing bodies, as well as the Welsh government itself, runs the risk of generating further confusion and overload. Wales needs to learn its own lessons about what is important if it wants to succeed in improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of the people of Wales.

Notes

1. Government of Wales Act, 1998, www.legislation.gov.uk. The first elections took place in May, 1999.
2. Wellbeing of Future Generations [Wales] Act, 2015, www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015.
3. Primary and Secondary Education in Wales, Circular 18/70 [DES], 108/70 [Welsh Office].
4. The percentage of pupils in independent schools was 8 for England, 3 for Wales and Scotland, and 1 for Northern Ireland, D. Mackinnon and J. Statham, Education in the UK, London, 1999, p. 154.
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6

Education in Northern Ireland: A House Divided

Mary Gethins

Preface

The author of this chapter, though of Northern Irish birth and upbringing, spent almost 30 years of the twentieth century outside the province. Over 80% of those years were spent in England and the remainder in the Republic of Ireland. Having been a consumer and provider of education until the 1970s, she became an observer from outside of changes in the Northern Ireland system and context during a very significant period. What follows, therefore, results from combining personal recollections and paper research. Opinions expressed and conclusions reached, while inevitably influenced by those of others, are sincerely held by the author. Assistance given by McStravick, Ms L and Mr V is gratefully acknowledged. Special expression of appreciation is due to the seminal research done and published by (i) Farren and (ii) Birrell and Hayes from the University of Ulster. Warm thanks are

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offered to a couple of patient friends who read and commented on this piece of work in draft form.

The chapter is structured on a slightly different pattern to that announced by McCloy in Chapter 1. Since the story of education in Northern Ireland is so different from those in the three other parts of the UK, this chapter has four sections. The addition, one trusts, is excused on the grounds that the Belfast Agreement was the most profound event to take place on the island of Ireland since Partition and introduced a form of devolved government untried and unknown in the other countries of the UK. An experiment on which judgment must be reserved for commentators in the future.

Introduction

It is generally accepted in Great Britain, even by those who do not know much about Northern Ireland, that this small region about the size of Greater Manchester with a population of approximately 1.86 million people is 'different'. Its education system differs from England, Scotland and Wales in a number of ways. Not surprising, given the fraught historical three-cornered relationship between them and the Stormont government, the Catholic and Protestant Churches continue to exercise considerable influence on the management of schools in the province. There are currently two parallel systems: (i) controlled schools which are owned and run by the state, but are, in fact, Protestant in that school populations are drawn almost predominantly from Protestant families and taught by Protestant teachers; (ii) a sizeable voluntary maintained sector (including selective grammar schools) owned and governed mainly by Catholic Church trustees or their representatives, though there are some separate voluntary selective grammar schools run by Protestant trustees. Both categories cater for children until the statutory school leaving age of 16 years and grammar schools (controlled and voluntary) provide education until pupils have completed 'A' level examinations.

In the primary sector, the figures for year 2017/2018[1] are 365 controlled and 367 maintained Catholic schools, but only 45 integrated

(attended by pupils from Catholic and Protestant homes and from other faiths and none). At secondary level, there were 86 controlled (grammar and non-selective); 91 Catholic maintained (grammar and non-selective) and 21 other (Protestant) voluntary grammar schools. There are 20 second level integrated schools.

In order to begin to understand the unusual features of our education system, we must briefly seek the assistance of history.

Historical Background

The Partition of Ireland came about by the Government of Ireland Act (1921) following a Rising in 1916 against British rule, execution of the leaders and a brief Anglo-Irish War. The Irish Free State was established in 1922 inside the British Commonwealth, consisting of 26 counties with a predominantly Roman Catholic population and the remaining 6 counties came to be known as Northern Ireland (often referred to erroneously as 'Ulster', which in earlier times consisted of 9 counties) with a predominantly Protestant population, mainly of 'Ulster-Scots' Presbyterian origin. A devolved parliament was established at Stormont, east side of Belfast.

In Ireland, in 1831, a Board of Commissioners of National Education was established by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland through which public finance was supplied to schools whose managers applied for assistance. Arrangements ensured that the National Commissioners in Dublin controlled finance of education as well as the curriculum. The main Churches were represented on the Board. These so-called National Schools, established immediately after Catholic Emancipation (1829) were intended to be integrated in pursuit of mutual understanding of the main Christian traditions and they received equal finance for building and management costs, as well as teachers' salaries. A denominational system developed, however, due to clerical rivalry expressed in competing values and attitudes from the early years after the system was set up. The Church of Ireland, for example, in its capacity as the country's Established Church until 1869, 'claimed as such to be the only legitimate body through which education for all denominations

should be organised'. Presbyterians, historically suspicious of 'popery' objected to the integrationist ethos. Although the Catholic bishops were initially supportive of the National Schools, 'as being the first ostensibly integrated, non-proselytising form of schooling in Ireland', they changed their stance in the 1840s when Bishop Whately—the Church of Ireland's representative on the National Board—though a supporter of Catholic Emancipation, published textbooks in which he alluded to Catholic worship having 'pagan origins'.[2]

Whately's publications only strengthened Catholic opposition which was growing in principle, particularly under the influence of the man who was to become Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and later of Dublin, Paul Cullen. Catholic parents were strongly dissuaded from sending their children to non-Catholic managed schools. Furthermore, as religious orders became more closely involved in providing schools for Catholics, the system quickly lost its inter-denominational character.

After the partition of Ireland in 1921, control of education in Northern Ireland was in the hands of the dominant political party, the Unionists, as the few Nationalist politicians returned tended to disengage and to see Catholic education as being a matter for the Catholic bishops.

The liberal minded Minister for Education Lord Londonderry, experienced ongoing conflict in his dealings with the mainstream conservative Unionists and the Churches. In spite of the Prime Minister Craig's intention, famously encapsulated in the phrase: '*A Protestant parliament for a Protestant people*',[3] the Minister and his more liberal colleagues (of which there were few) wanted, in principle, to follow the English model in forming a progressive, democratically controlled non-denominational system to cater for both Protestant and Roman Catholic children. Neither history nor the socio-political context augured well for the realisation of such an optimistic aspiration.

Lack of foresight at government level was matched by uncompromising determination on the part of both Catholic and Protestant Churches to maintain a controlling grip on their respective flocks, through education policy and curriculum control. Indeed, the political and social control exercised by the Churches demonstrated the widespread unquestioning trust which the laity placed in their clerical

shepherds and which continued for several decades. The laity tended to allow their Church leaders to fight their battles for them in the belief that denominational interests of leaders and followers coincided. On occasions, though, the Catholic Church authorities found ready, vocal support from Nationalist politicians, while the Orange Order as well as Unionist politicians supported the Protestant Churches.

Two months after becoming the first Minister of Education, Lord Londonderry announced the establishment of a committee of enquiry to make proposals as to the future structures of education in Northern Ireland. As Chairman, Robert Lynn, Unionist MP for West Belfast and editor of the strongly Unionist daily newspaper, *The Northern Whig*, gave his name to the committee. The Minister's first disappointment came when Cardinal Michael Logue turned down an invitation to nominate four members to sit on the committee. His response conveys a clear lack of trust in Unionist politicians to provide for Catholic education. In it he states:

> I should be glad to cooperate in any effort for the improvement of education, but judging from the public utterances of some members of the Belfast Parliament and their sympathisers, I have little doubt that an attack is being organised against our Catholic schools.[4]

One might judge the cardinal's utterance as indicating good judgment, though it could be argued that he showed poor judgement, was impetuous and should have shown willingness by accepting the invitation.

Although the remit of the Churches covered the whole of the island, after Partition in the separate jurisdictions separate patterns of education developed with different aims, structures and curriculum content. The government in the North set out to educate its population broadly according to the British model, while in the South the aim was to follow a pattern which would seek to translate a post-colonial vision of re-Gaelicisation into reality, placing strong emphasis on the Irish language, history and culture including sports. One-third of the population in Northern Ireland for some years after Partition denied the legitimacy of the new statelet (a pejorative term, though it was as many Nationalists regarded it) and believed that their minority status would

likely bring economic, social, religious and cultural discrimination. Perhaps for that reason, or regretting their imposed severance from the remainder of the island, Catholic schools tended to resemble those in the south in terms of curriculum content.

From the outset, the Protestant clergy were known as 'transferors' because they transferred their schools into state control in the firm belief that Unionist governments would look after their interests and that they would be relieved of an unbearable burden of funding them. As early as 1931, the Education Act of that year contained concessions which provided for (i) 'transferred' schools to be represented on education committees and school management boards and (ii) the inclusion of religious education along sectarian lines in 'state' schools.

This legislation ensured that the province would continue to have a dual education system on denominational grounds and in terms of financial support. 'Transferred' schools had become state schools which would henceforth become in effect Protestant schools, attended by Protestant children, taught by Protestant teachers, retaining a distinctly Protestant ethos. Full grants for capital projects given to 'transferred' schools and partial grants to Catholic schools reduced from two-thirds available before 1922 to one-half. The Catholic voluntary sector—by their own choice indeed—had no representation on local education committees or on management committees of state schools and was totally dependent on the generosity of the Catholic community for large sums to provide financial support.

Cardinal William Conway succinctly, expressed the rationale of Catholic education thus many years later:

> Religion is not something which is just learned like a multiplication table. It is a way-of-life which affects all one's other attitudes. While they are growing up, children have to learn to live their faith and they will do this with much greater security and confidence if they spend their school day in a place where this way of life is seen as something shared between parents, pupils and teachers alike.[5]

The Catholic Church authorities, therefore, decided to retain their own school system while seeking to be subsidised from public funds to a

level granted to Catholic schools in Great Britain and justified by their community's contribution to public expenditure by taxes and rates.

The attitudes of the Protestant Churches suggested lack of unity among their clerical representatives who negotiated with politicians (whose views ranged from liberal to conservative to fundamentalist) but there was also marked dissonance between clergy and some laity. Among the latter were some Protestant teachers; the vociferous Ulster Teachers' Union struggled against clerical management of 'transferred schools', insisting that freedom of conscience be recognised and that denominational loyalties should not determine appointments.

According to McKelvey,[6] while concessions made to those Churches' demands tended to establish common ground between them, there were subtle differences between them as to their reasons for involvement in education. He (an insider in the Church of Ireland) chides them thus:

> neither the Church of Ireland nor the other Protestant Churches ever actually produced a rationale of its educational policy. There was no critical assessment of the purpose or content of education.

Against this backdrop of ongoing wrangling, finger pointing and dissatisfaction for a quarter of a century a new 'threat' arrived from Westminster just before World War II came to an end.

1944–1972

The Butler Act (1944) and Its Impact on the Northern Ireland Education System

The passing of the Butler Act in England increased the level of tension, already longstanding, between education decision-makers in Stormont and outside. The Hadow (1926) and Spens (1939) Reports indicated that Westminster envisaged educational reform which would provide equality of opportunity for all children to benefit from secondary education. It was obvious that while following a policy of social and educational parity with England, the Northern Ireland government would

be constrained by the Churches' attitudes to the far-reaching changes to come.

Both Protestant and Catholic Churches raised strong objections to the Westminster model of sweeping educational change, but on different grounds. The Protestant Churches feared that what they had won in the form of influence over state public elementary schools by the 1930 Act would be lost in relation to the proposed new secondary intermediate schools. A conscience clause would allow teachers to withdraw from worship and/or teaching Religion. Another difficulty arose, not highlighted previously, in that the Government of Ireland Act (1920) forbade endowment of denominational education and it was pointed out in the interim by the Attorney General that the provision of Bible instruction paid for by public funds contravened the Act. A third reason for opposition arose in the form of increased funding of capital costs from 50 to 65% for Catholic schools not transferred into the state system, but which had accepted two local authority members to sit on their management committees. This became known as the four-and-two arrangement—the 'four' representing trustees. The increase to 65% was later extended to all voluntary schools.

The Catholic Church reiterated its claim to responsibility with parents for the education of Catholic children attending Catholic schools, without the degree of state control intended. It argued that acknowledged freedom of religious conscience and worship placed a duty on the state to provide financial support for schools with Catholic ethos. Furthermore, the cost of building new schools for a secondary population without access to already established grammar schools was seen as placing an enormous financial burden on a largely poor laity. The truth of this point is demonstrated by the fact that by 1955–1956 only 7 Catholic intermediate schools had been built, as compared with 43 in the public authority sector.[7] Difficulty in finding suitable sites was an aggravating factor.

Despite a difficult birth, the 1947 Act marked a watershed in education structure and enhanced opportunities for at least four years and longer, if appropriate, of free secondary education in either grammar or secondary intermediate and technical schools. Two aspects of the 1947 Act showed it to differ from the Butler Act:

1. A majority of voluntary grammar schools agreed to allocate 80% of places to pupils who had passed the 11+ test, allowing the remaining 20% to be allocated to children whose parents could afford to pay the fees. From 1989 the latter was disallowed.
2. Scholarships were awarded to the 80% of pupils attending by the Department of Education (DENI) directly bypassing local education committees.

A small group of the richer, most prestigious grammar schools ignored an offer of 65% for capital costs and 100% recurrent funding in order to remain free to choose pupils as they wished. This freedom may have prompted the dramatist Samuel Beckett, while a teacher at Campbell College, Belfast, called to account by his headmaster who referred to the pupils as the 'cream' of Ulster, to remark scathingly: '*like double cream, rich and thick*'.[8] Of those grammar schools that accepted funding, the 20% of places were often taken up by pupils who had attended their partially subsidised preparatory departments, and after one year could obtain a scholarship via a 'review' procedure, on the recommendation of the head teacher.

The extension of grammar school education to all who were deemed capable of benefitting from it had huge social impact, particularly in relation to children from poorer households. This resulted as time went on in greater numbers of graduates entering the professions, more accurately reflecting the whole society and later challenging the status quo in relation to civil rights and equal opportunities. Criticism arose over the years that followed 1947 in relation to selection at the age of 11 in principle, the validity of the tests, but also to the testing procedure. Huge progress was also shown by the scale of provision of secondary intermediate schools. Total enrolment had increased from 27,000 in 1947 to almost 95,000 in 1963.[9]

One positive reform which soon followed the 1947 Act was the Ministry's decision to set up Advisory Councils to advise in the light of criticisms levelled by teachers and parents at the distortion of the curriculum and alleged pressures put on children by the selection tests. Cognisance was taken of research and experience emerging from England, particularly the questioning of intelligence testing as the best

indicator of future performance and the publication of Circulars 10/65 and 10/66 which suggested supplanting the tripartite system of primary, secondary and further education supposedly '*suited to the aptitudes and abilities of pupils*'. A choice of systems was offered: 11–18 years; 11–14 and 14–18 years; 11–16 and a sixth form college 16–18 years; 9–13 with variants of 13–18 years. In traditionally conservative Northern Ireland, an experiment using the 11–14 and 14–18 models was attempted.

Ora et Labora: Personal Reflections

A product of this segregated education system, the author will share briefly her experience of growing up in a pre-Troubles, pre-Direct Rule era.

The practice of families attending different Churches on Sunday being reflected in attendance of children at our village Roman Catholic and Protestant schools was accepted. Pupils formed and maintained friendships outside school hours, playing games, gathering wild fruits, dressing up for an annual fancy dress parade and attending birthday parties. Choice of school was, of course, dictated by parents' religious affiliation but no hostility or rivalry at adult level was apparent and one would doubt that any existed. Annual parades through the four streets and square by sashed Orangemen playing Lambeg drums were watched and apparently enjoyed by everyone on the 12th of July, the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne when William the Third, Prince of Orange, defeated James the Second in 1690. My parents tended to ignore the division in Ulster society as far as possible and socialised freely across the divide where this was possible and welcome. My father, for example, each year provided a huge array of his prize dahlias for the harvest thanksgiving in our neighbouring Presbyterian Church.

Facilities and equipment were restricted in both of the two-teacher public elementary schools in our village—particularly playing space—and the 3 Rs dominated the curriculum. Subjects such as Art and Craft, Storytelling, Music and PE were considered 'treats' when our teacher was pleased by our progress in Number, Reading or Writing. The only

knowledge of the Irish language we learned was during the daily half hour RE lesson when we were taught to make the sign of the cross accompanied by 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen' and to recite the 'Our Father' in translation. The parish priest called about once a month to examine our knowledge of the catechism, particularly as we approached First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Our Christian formation was of great importance to our parents and we never missed 11o'clock Mass each Sunday, except on rare occasions such as periods in hospital for tonsil or appendix removal. Our parish priest was overheard having conversations with the male teacher about matters pertaining to the school building such as replacement of tiles, water leaks and painting over the summer holiday period. Such were of concern to him at this time when Catholic schools were only partially funded by the government.

When we transferred from the female teacher's room at the age of 7–8 to 'the Master' the curriculum was extended to include more English grammar, history and geography. Rhyming off multiplication tables continued; history consisted of life during Celtic times and stories of Hannibal, Wilberforce, Marie Curie, Abraham Lincoln, Scott, Florence Nightingale and similar figures; geography lessons were conducted around a map of Ireland or of the British Isles following a similar pattern—mountains, rivers, lakes and chief towns. Radio programmes for schools were considered 'treats' during these senior years in the public elementary school. In the final year, the European countries were introduced into the curriculum when a very few pupils were selected to sit the 11+ examination. For us, homework consisted partly of practice tests for this feared experience in a large school some miles away.

A voluntary grammar school of 240 pupils owned by the Sisters of Mercy which catered for boarders and day pupils was my next destination. The school motto which was 'Ora et Labora' (Pray and Work) left the pupils in no doubt as to their priorities—spiritual development, character formation and academic success in accordance with one's abilities. We were streamed throughout our time there from the first year and the B stream girls tended to be older and from families in the 20% who did not sit the transfer tests, or failed to satisfy the examiners.

Our RE programme consisted of detailed study of the Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, Church History, Liturgy and Christian Apologetics. Our knowledge was tested each June by the 'Bishop's Exam'.

The girls studied all the subjects on offer in the first two years and on the basis of results were allowed to drop a subject in which they showed limited ability and/or interest. The exception was Latin, for which we had to take an internally set test on entry before being accepted by Sister A into her select club. In some cases, Irish was jettisoned by girls after first or second year, pleading that it would not be essential for entry to any career and would be of no practical use. While regretting their failure to recognise the Irish language as part of their cultural heritage, the headmistress put no pressure on to continue studying it. We covered mainly prescribed periods of British and European History, as well as the nineteenth century Irish history option. It was usual practice for Protestant grammar schools then and later to exclude Irish history from the curriculum until cross-community themes were introduced during the Troubles.

Our headmistress, a nun, a gifted mathematician and musician with an engaging sense of humour, came down heavily on any pupil who attempted to bring politics into school. A girl from a republican family had her pencil confiscated because the rubber on the end was coloured to imitate the Irish tricolour. There were no senior school debates on issues directly related to Irish politics; rather safer topics such as 'Single sex schools are best for girls', 'Religion is the opium of the people', 'A nation's wealth is in its people', 'Money is the root of all evil' being preferred.

One aspect of grammar school which I regret was the absence of a good science department, which inevitably restricted our choice of career. Our science graduate teacher spent most of her time teaching mathematics as there was only one poorly equipped chemistry laboratory. Hindsight suggests that, expense aside, there was still a lingering attitude that girls should emerge as caring and socially skilled, articulate and 'cultured' but not expected to excel in 'boys' subjects'. Our curriculum seemed to be borrowed from English Examination Boards, particularly our set texts for English literature which were by English writers. There was no mention of Joyce, Shaw, O'Casey, Wilde or

Swift—though the poetry of Yeats found a place. (Indeed, this tendency continued at university.) There were no youth clubs, but extra-curricular interests included reading, private piano and speech and drama lessons, staging musicals and plays and watching films usually related directly to our school work or conveying a moral message.

We were not conscious of living in a divided society, much less that this should be considered odd or unacceptable. If some people's thoughts were consumed by the constitutional question, precious little evidence of it appeared in everyday life. There certainly were no suggestions made by teachers during discussions that our generation should seek political or social change. There appeared to be general acceptance of the status quo, including division along lines of religious affiliation, which was respected. This attitude was in stark contrast to the situation which developed during the Troubles, when many people found it prudent to divide into separate camps and unelected 'protectors' arose in the form of paramilitaries who wrought murder and mayhem, until all were exhausted and there was no winner. There was no offensive banter on train journeys to school. Perhaps it would have been more normal if there had been. After pushing and crushing to board the train, the girls sat with their friends from class, while the boys scrapped with peers from their own or another school, but with pupils of their own religion. So, I expect it is true to say that there was a kind of voluntary, subtle apartheid between equal tribes. There was no crossing the divide, neither was there overt hostility, just mutual tolerance—either natural or unconsciously learned.

University came as a great, surprising, liberating intellectual experience. A majority of our RP sounding professors and tutors were from the south of England, though there was one Scot from St Andrew's, and a considerable number of Ulster unionists. Irish Catholic staff were comparatively rare and almost exclusively in the departments of scholastic philosophy and Celtic studies where they worked with a Welshman and a Manxman—so that the two branches of the Celtic languages were catered for. Academic life was based very loosely around the Oxbridge model with sherry on offer during meetings with a small number of the tutors after 5 p.m. This practice was not entirely appreciated by Catholic students who had been members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association since the age of 14, nor by the many Protestant

student members of the Christian Union. In my experience overindulgence in alcohol by the student body was virtually unknown, a reflection of their families' values.

Faith nurturing was catered for by chaplains and the vast majority of students spent a lot of their free time socialising at their denominational chaplaincies, particularly in the evening after the library had closed. Many Catholic students attended Mass there at lunchtime. In our first year, Catholic girls stayed in Aquinas Hall run by Dominican nuns, while Protestant girls stayed in Riddell Hall run by lay staff.

We never met for inter-hall social events, nor did we ever have an opportunity to attend broadly Christian services. Although student 'hops' were popular, except among fundamentalists, romantic relationships tended almost completely to observe the religious divide. From the arts faculty, we graduated in black gowns with ermine trimming, followed by strawberries and cream on the lawn accompanied by music from the Royal Ulster Constabulary band.

I found a hugely inspiring contrast when later I studied for a master's degree in Bristol University. There were people who openly admitted that they had no religion and our very progressive Jesuit chaplain and his opposite numbers organised inter-faith events, where the common Christian heritage was emphasised. What a contrast to what I had left behind in Ulster society and what a relief to find an alternative way of life—which included playing croquet on a vicarage lawn and quaffing rose wine made by the vicar! Having enjoyed this journey down memory lane, I must return to the general narrative.

The Dickson Plan—Variation on Selection

Innovative Director of Education in Armagh W. J. Dickson was seen to be of similar ilk to Stuart Mason and Sir Alec Clegg, progressive English educationalists. The new city of Craigavon was judged to be a suitable area to experiment with non-selective education, it being the fashionable gospel across the water in the 'sixties'.

Aware of difficulties facing him which included the dichotomy that existed between the social images of grammar and secondary (intermediate) schools in the Craigavon area and of the tension between

second level schools of both types and the technical colleges concerning bright pupils, Dickson bravely set out to convince his Education Committee and to consult with parents, teachers, management committees and staffs, as he strove to reform education in Craigavon which encompassed the established towns, Lurgan and Portadown as well as the planned large new housing and industrial development located in between. He realised, too, that he would have to cope with the strong, influential grammar school lobby containing parents as intransigent as trustees, governors and staff.

Dickson decided that a break at 14 was the preferred option since a good social mix was necessary in schools in the new area and that a two-tier system was less expensive than a tripartite one, as there could be less duplication of equipment. By initiating a consultation process and copying Mason, he was breaking new ground in Northern Ireland where people tended to accept decisions made for them from above. In an interview carried out by McStravick, the Director voiced his only partial awareness at the outset of the strength of the grammar school tradition, stating that '*the equal opportunity for all concept had not percolated or penetrated from England and Wales to these shores*'.[10] After holding 18 consultative meetings with stakeholders in both controlled and voluntary sectors, the entire voting pattern showed 479 in favour and 207 against. Primary, secondary intermediate and technical college, parents, staff and management were in favour. Predictably the grammar schools were against as they would lose their 11–14-year-old pupils. The Director had, however, to modify his plans as the consultation and negotiation process progressed, so that, in McStravick's opinion, the implemented Dickson Plan resembled a pale imitation of the Leicestershire scheme and a very modest experiment in non-selective education favoured by the Ministry of Education. Even those in favour of the scheme had reservations: they wanted all pupils to transfer at 14+ without a selection examination, but by a procedure based on teacher assessment with parental choice; parents should not be able to opt out of the new scheme at 11+, to prevent creaming off by the grammar schools outside the area (though within easy travelling distance).

By February 1967, Ministry approval had been obtained. Among the provisions were: only thirty-three and a third percent could transfer to

senior high school at 14+ by parental choice, teacher assessment and external examination; fee-paying places must still be provided in grammar schools; the concept of technical high school should be developed for those pupils not selected for senior high schools. Teacher and parent pressure, however, forced Dickson to drop the idea of 'The Craigavon Common Entrance' from the selection criteria for entry to grammar schools.

The Catholic managers in giving approval to the Dickson Plan in principle indicated that '*as far as possible, the voluntary system would develop along parallel lines*'. The approach taken as follow-up appears ambivalent but pragmatic. In the voluntary maintained sector in Lurgan and Portadown, a much larger proportion of parents have continued to use the 11+ selection tests to send their children to single-sex Grammar Schools outside the area—which had been the tradition since the schools were founded in the nineteenth century mostly by religious trustees. This has, obviously, had a 'creaming off' effect on the 11+ intake of the voluntary maintained Junior High School. A surprise came in 2014, when after public consultation, the Catholic bishop announced the amalgamation of two single sex junior high schools with the 14–18 grammar school to form a non-selective co-educational college with new build by 2019 on the site of the former grammar school. In the opinion of the Catholic authorities, this arrangement meets social justice demands for equality of opportunity and parity of esteem (between social classes), while affording choice to send their children outside the area at 11+ stage to 11–18 selective schools and to pay travelling expenses, free travel having been withdrawn.

No such far-reaching change is envisaged at this point in the controlled sector where, from the early 1970s, most pupils transferred at 14+ from feeder junior high schools to Lurgan College and Portadown College, further education colleges being alternative destinations.

The saga of selective versus comprehensive education still continues with a lobby of confident, middle-class folk, supported by the formidable Governing Bodies Association representing grammar schools from across the sectarian divide robustly withstanding any likely threat from any source, including the British Government.

McEwan[11] makes interesting comment on increasing 'crossover', largely by Catholic pupils attending Protestant grammar schools. One reason is obvious and has been in practice for several decades: in areas

where attending a Catholic school would involve long travelling each day, pupils have opted to attend the local Protestant school. A more recent practice—since fair employment legislation was passed and implemented in the 1970s, creating greater opportunities for Catholics to enter certain occupations and to be promoted on merit—some parents have chosen the more prestigious of the Protestant grammar schools e.g. the Royal School, Armagh, Methodist College or the Royal Belfast Academical Institution in Belfast, seeing them as ladders towards enhanced opportunities in business and the professions. An increased 'crossover' of teachers is also noticeable.

Local Government Downgraded?

Services introduced by the establishment of the Welfare State after WWII were not in Northern Ireland entrusted to local government to administer. One innovation which indicated lack of central government trust in local councils was the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, established after the civil rights demonstrations, which took over responsibility for providing much needed public sector housing for people on low incomes. Most local councils were dominated by Unionist councillors because proportional representation had been abolished in 1922 and the franchise was restricted to owners of property (including domestic dwellings) which in practice excluded approximately one-quarter of those entitled to vote in Stormont elections. Catholics, being generally poorer, were therefore disadvantaged. Birrell and Hayes[12] quote an example of how this worked out in practice: '*Londonderry County Borough was 60% Catholic, but they were represented by only 40% of councillors, due to the distortion or gerrymandering of ward boundaries*'.

Central government, by failing to investigate allegations of discrimination, indirectly promoted in part a growing demand for civil rights as the 1960s rolled forward. It was, however, the Matthew Report (1963)[13] which made a strong case for reforming local government in order to help meet demands for planning and development, finding the general infrastructure inadequate to meet the task. The rise to prominence of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association and the People's

Democracy and the infiltration of these peaceful organisations by paramilitaries prompted the Westminster government to lend support to the idea of tasking Lord Cameron and his team to investigate the causes of major civil disturbance and street riots.

The Cameron Report (1969),[14] in analysing the cause of the violence, identified local government as being significantly guilty in respect of public housing allocation, discrimination in making appointments, deliberate manipulation of electoral boundaries—all intended to perpetuate unionist control. In addition, the Stormont government was faulted for failing to investigate accusations against local councils' behaviour and to seek remedies in the face of burgeoning resentment among the large minority population.

As the Westminster government realised more and more that Northern Ireland was in a seriously unstable political condition, Direct Rule was imposed in March 1972. Public housing reform was quickly followed by attention to other services, in the wake of killing by members of the Parachute Regiment of 14 men taking part in an illegal civil rights protest in Derry/Londonderry on 'Bloody Sunday', 30 January 1972. The Stormont parliament was prorogued indefinitely. The Local Government Act (NI) 1972 and the Local Government (Transfer of Functions) (Northern Ireland) 1973 Order brought sweeping changes in all major services: housing, personal social services, local health, libraries, planning, roads, water and sewerage, as well as education, were removed from local government administration and transferred to statutory boards or to government departments. Relatively minor functions were given to the twenty-six new district councils whose areas had been altered by boundary reform.

Direct Rule 1972–1998 and Its Impact on Education

Education and Library Boards

So, education was a beneficiary of the 1973 legislation and the outworking of it gradually brought agencies staffed by professionals to form an intermediate layer between the Department of Education and

the individual institutions. Five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) were created for the local administration of 'controlled' schools and 40% membership was nominated by the Secretary of State, rather than elected by local government councillors. The remaining members consisted of transferors' representatives, trustees of maintained schools, serving teachers and members of the general public interested in the services provided by the Board. The amount of influence which councillors wielded on various bodies is debatable and probably varied according to the quality of their contributions. Hayes (1997)[15] suggests that many of them complained that there was general reluctance by government departments to take seriously the advice councillors offered or to act on it consistently. After the Belfast Agreement, the new arrangements for education meant that these Boards had two masters at central level, namely the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Learning—the latter in the case of higher and further education—as well as the general public to whom they were responsible for stewardship of public funds.

The Boards' responsibilities in relation to schools were: securing adequate provision for pre-school, primary and secondary schools, special educational needs, school meals and transport, school attendance and school uniform schemes. They were bound by strict rules regarding submission of estimates annually for approval, use of resources in exact accordance with an approved spending plan and they had a statutory duty to achieve best value for expenditure and to submit annual statements of accounts.

Data from an interview with Ms L, a lady who 'fancied a change' to Education Officer from Head of Department in a voluntary grammar school, cast light on relations between an Education and Library Board, the schools it served and the Department over a period of 25 years' service. During an interview, she said that the arrival of Local Management of Schools (LMS) and its implementation brought significant change for both ELBs and Boards of Governors, in that both had to use their newly acquired extension of autonomy and responsibility in efficient and effective ways. Much time, she said, was spent meeting representatives from the Boards and from DENI to clarify interpretation of legislation (Orders in Council) and to learn to work more closely.

Large secondary schools generally welcomed LMS as they were already used to buying small items and a very important new departure was freedom to allocate resources for teaching and non-teaching staff.

Training in management of finances had to be provided by ELB staff, but the Boards had no power to compel schools to participate. Large-scale curriculum reform required appropriate growth in the Advisory Service. Ms L was of the view that local councillors on Boards of Governors and on ELBs were selected for having given good service to their political parties, describing them as 'recycled' and 'parish pump types'.

She found DENI staff 'great to deal with' and the DENI Inspectorate 'super'. She identified a number of areas where tensions arose. These included:

(i) proposed school closures which required consultation with Boards of Governors, the community, including parents and where the Principal (i.e. Head) of a small rural school who, having reached early retirement age, 'wanted out', but felt obliged to act as a strong supporter of the local 'Save our School' campaign;
(ii) distribution of money to satisfy those who disagreed with differences in per capita funding between primary and secondary schools, or simply the 'my budget's not big enough' brigade;
(iii) interpersonal relationships were extremely important and had to be nurtured, in particular with Principals who were important gatekeepers in her opinion;
(iv) complaints about appointments, often from Vice-Principals who applied unsuccessfully for promotion within their own school. The Governors were required to interview (ideally) eight candidates and reduce the list to three for recommendation to the ELB. Frequently, they did not recommend the top three, but instead the best candidate and two 'lame ducks', thereby attempting to influence the outcome heavily.

It seems appropriate at this point to consider the thoughts of Mr V, retired Principal of a controlled secondary school and a 'client' of the

same ELB. In his day-to-day work, he had little contact with DENI and found the ELB staff in his area to be very supportive in helping schools deal with change, in providing suitable training to enable various groups of stakeholders to carry out their duties and to enjoy a sense of achievement. He felt that while he had no power as Secretary to the Appointments Panel in his school, he wielded considered influence on selection of candidates whose names were put forward for appointment by the ELB. He preferred lay governors nominated by 'transferors' rather than clergy, being strongly of the opinion that the latter considered their membership to be a duty without commitment, while the laity showed much greater personal loyalty to the school.

Both Ms L and Mr V welcomed encouragement from DENI to ELBs and schools to meet regularly with a view to working cooperatively and collaboratively to share both experience and resources, where possible. The 26 district councils and 2 city councils (Belfast and Derry/Londonderry) set up by the 1973 Order may be seen as having been divested of the range of services traditionally associated with local government in the remainder of the UK. Progress was made, however, in the sense that through practice and necessity, they gradually learnt to work together for the common good, eased by the introduction of the single transferable vote (STV) system under the Electoral Law (Northern Ireland) Order 1972, which increased voter turnout and only 5 out of the 26 councils elected one party to be in overall control a year later.

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)

While the ELBs brought about desirable change in the way controlled schools were managed and run, parallel changes for Catholic schools arrived with the establishment of the CCMS by way of the 1989 Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order. A Committee, chaired by Professor Alan Astin of Queen's University was asked by the government to '*take a completely new look at the way schools should be managed in Northern Ireland*'. After two years of discussions involving trustees of the Catholic schools and the Department of Education there emerged a

recommendation for a statutory body funded by DENI representing an upper tier of management with '*authority and responsibility*'.

In effect CCMS became employers of teachers in Catholic Maintained Schools (not selective Catholic grammar schools for which the Council had no brief) and '*would exercise certain other functions in policy formulation and negotiation for that sector*'.[16] This new body, therefore, had two distinct roles: (1) to support Trustees and Boards of Governors in the effective management and control of their schools and (2) to contribute with education partners to policy formulation on a wide range of issues including curriculum review, selection, pastoral care and leadership. Membership of the council broadly mirrored those of the ELBs—representatives of Trustees, parents, teachers and the Department of Education who selected their representatives from applicants who responded to press advertisement; politicians were not included.

Successful lobbying by CCMS and the Northern Bishops brought 100% capital funding for Catholic schools, bringing it into line with that given to state schools. It seemed that in contrast to those earlier decades of the twentieth century when the Catholic authorities did not feel they could trust the Stormont government to treat the minority population fairly, the attitude had changed completely, perhaps partly due to Direct Rule and to Minister Brian Mawhinney of Northern Irish birth and education, serving in the Northern Ireland Office at the time and playing a significant part in the preliminary negotiations and developments of this body.

Distant Ministers and Local Civil Servants

Northern Ireland experienced sweeping change for almost three decades following the suspension of the Stormont Parliament in 1972 by Prime Minister Edward Heath. Suddenly, no local MPs held posts as ministers in any departments of government, which were run by ministers based in Westminster, many of whom routinely spent only one day per week in Belfast. Ultimate power resided with the Secretary of State. Enactment of legislation came through a route different from

that applying in other parts of the UK. It was dealt with by Orders in Council on the authority of the Privy Council, deprived of full debate normally applicable to Parliamentary Bills. Dissatisfaction with this process was partially rectified by the creation of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee in the Commons which was given a limited remit to check implementation of Orders in Council for the purpose of holding Northern Ireland Office politicians and civil servants to account.

If Westminster politicians holding roles in the Northern Ireland Office were also representing English constituencies and considered by many to be 'at arm's length' from their local duties, it would appear logical that they depended heavily on local support in framing and implementing legislation. The peripheral role occupied by local government in this period resulted in civil servants in Stormont occupying relatively important positions of influence. DENI occupied:

> a unique position vis-à-vis its equivalent in the Welsh and Scottish Offices in the extent to which it [acted] as a regional authority unaccountable to local democratic bodies, whilst responsible for aspects of education including the payment of teachers' salaries, the Education and Library Boards' funds, the curriculum, and the framing of educational policy.[17]

Ministers were clearly dependent on local civil servants and agencies to judge the attitudes and responses to proposed developments from the various social groups.

Education Becomes an Agent of Social Change

Although a longstanding system of segregated education still remained in Northern Ireland during the period of Direct Rule, significant change occurred, partly explained by the violent context in which education operated. Initially, schools were depicted as 'oases of peace', where, for 5–6 hours during five days of the week, children were able to continue with their education, despite the distractions and temptations outside of school hours to engage in street rioting, or to join the junior ranks of paramilitary organisations—a matter of priority recognised

by teachers, particularly in relation to school leavers.[18] Credit is due to educationalists and parents for initiating change in the areas of structural differentiation and curriculum development. Government ministers tended to lend support by providing some funds to bring schools into the frame as instruments for the promotion of peace and reconciliation.

Following serious escalation of violence including incidents such as Bloody Sunday (1971), John Malone, Principal of Orangefield Boys School in Belfast was first to come forward with ideas for a curriculum development project to promote better community relations and he succeeded in obtaining modest funding from the Ministry for Education. A number of other projects followed, most notably Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) first mooted in 1983 by the Northern Ireland Council for Educational Development (NICED). The Education Reform (NI) Order (1989) placed a statutory requirement on schools to include EMU and Cultural Heritage in cross-curricular themes from 1992. The Northern Ireland Curriculum Council produced materials for pupils and teachers and so, schools became agents of social change. Enthusiasm in implementing this innovation varied between teachers and within schools and local areas.

Teachers were given considerable support in delivering the curricular demands and there developed an encouraging change in relations between 'controlled' and 'maintained' schools, as a result of the in-school programme followed, but also through joint extracurricular activities such as sports, the arts and historical site visits, sometimes organised and/or financially supported by business organisations or the police.

Integrated Education

In addition to curriculum change, there was stimulus for organisational change, providing more parental choice in the form of integrated schools, which came from a group of determined, mainly middle-class parents from both major communities. They argued that structural reform was needed going beyond mere curricular reform in a segregated

system. They were fortunate in that it was strongly supported in principle by the Conservative government in Westminster, where it was perceived to be a means of potentially promoting social cohesion in a seriously divided society. Progress from moral support to financial support was slow and uncertain.

Enthusiasts for integrated education, i.e. those who oppose a segregated system, claim either that there is a causal relationship between segregation in education and community divisions or that it sustains religious, political, social divisions historically embedded in our society. Robust negotiating and lobbying by the pioneering parents, with strong support from Lord Dunleath[19] of the Alliance Party, brought only a consolation prize in the form of an enabling Order in 1978 which made it possible for existing schools to be given controlled integrated status, whereas the All Children Together (ACT) members wanted legislation which would enable integrated schools to be established where a demand existed.

The enabling Order, however, opened a door to further possibilities. Negative responses from the Churches towards the idea of shared management of schools provoked brave enthusiasts to establish the first Independent Integrated School, Lagan College in 1981. The founder members of ACT led the successful charge, Tony Spencer and Maeve Mulholland—the former '*an impassioned English Catholic who taught sociology in Queen's University* … [the latter] *a Protestant from County Down, a nursery teacher, a veteran of several peace movements, and an Alliance Party supporter*'.[20]

Starting without buildings or money, Lagan College was rescued by the Rowntree Trust, a Quaker foundation which has generously provided funding to support peace-making in the province over several decades. The Trust paid the salaries of the first small group of teachers. Relief followed in 1984 when grant aid and maintained status were won and this marked a watershed in the modern history of education in Northern Ireland. (It is all the more extraordinary that Lagan College opened during one of the worst periods of 'the Troubles', when ten republican prisoners died on hunger strike in the Maze prison in response to PM Margaret Thatcher's refusal to award them political status, effectively the right to be treated as prisoners of war.)

By 1987 there were seven newly established integrated schools and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) was formed as a charitable organisation to:

- co-ordinate efforts to develop Integrated Education; and
- support parent groups through the process of opening new schools.

Under Article 64 of the 1989 Education Reform Order (ERO) (NI) the Department of Education was given a duty to '*encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, that is to say the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils*'. At last, grant aid was made available to integrated schools provided they met prescribed criteria. The expansion in numbers (23 by 1996) proved too expensive for the Department, though parental demand was not yet being met. Criteria for funding were tightened and the quality of buildings downgraded. In order to overcome this grave funding crisis, NICIE struck a novel deal with the business sector which lasted until the credit crunch in 2008, when the scheme ended, leaving NICIE in substantial debt.

The quango still survives, however, and it is official Assembly policy to encourage the facilitation of schools wishing to transform. The total number reached is currently 65 of which 45 are primaries and 20 are colleges, attended by approximately 7% of the school population.

The Belfast Agreement and Beyond—Conflict and Cooperation

The period of Direct Rule, as demonstrated earlier, brought significant change in the provision and management of education. Inevitably, British ministers and their officials tried to reflect developments at Westminster. Assisted, however, by local civil servants, they realised that local historical, cultural and social factors had to be taken into account, requiring modifications or backing down—for example, in trying to have Northern Irish schools go comprehensive. After 26 years of Direct

Rule major political change arrived. Tortuous and protracted negotiations involving five political parties, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair and his advisors with substantial, patient input from the Irish, British and American Governments brought the reward of a Belfast Agreement in the early hours of Good Friday 1998. The main purpose was to return Northern Ireland to devolved government, but with a very different mission, powers and structures from those enjoyed by the Stormont parliament which preceded the Direct Rule period.

'Power sharing' became the dominant phrase in political circles; political scientists describe it as 'consociational' government. Critics might say with justification that the Agreement attempted to 'share out' power between Unionist and Nationalist members of the Local Assembly (MLAs), little attention being paid to the squeezed middle, including those belonging to the non-sectarian Alliance Party. Not wishing to be labelled according to Protestant Unionist Loyalist (PUL) or Catholic Nationalist Republican (CNR) when the Assembly was formed, members of the latter party had no choice but to be designated 'Other'.

In fairness, it must be said that the Belfast Agreement was an enormous leap forward, even though Direct Rule was re-imposed between 2002 and 2007, because the two dominant partners (and furthest separated ideologically) could not work together cooperatively, reflecting long embedded political and sectarian divisions. When one reflects on the circumstances in which the Belfast Agreement was achieved, one might agree with the political analyst who commented thus on the public's verdict of a 71% 'Yes' vote in the referendum which followed: '*It was only acceptable because the moral imperative towards ending violence is so overwhelming*'.[21]

Yet, after nearly 20 years, progress has been made in that fundamental reforms were made in policing and the judicial system; both mainstream republican and loyalist paramilitaries have publicly decommissioned their weapons (though small groups with minimal public support remain); north–south bodies have been established to bring political and economic benefits. Welcome progress was promised in the 'Fresh Start' agreement reached in November 2015 after ten weeks of negotiations involving the usual interests from inside the province and outside.

In an article, Whysall[22] argues that only short-term stability has been reached in the 'Fresh Start' document, but that underlying problems still remain. He draws attention to Bills to be introduced to reduce membership of the Assembly from 108 to 90 and to reduce the number of ministries from 12 to 9 (the latter already implemented). There are further hints of saving money, though not receiving much publicity, in commitment to a process of greater control and transparency in relation to members' salaries and expenses. The controversial Petition of Concern procedure which, in effect, gives the DUP (the largest party) a veto on any Assembly proposal, is likely to be curbed. So far, the DUP have shown they tend to use this mechanism to defeat proposals on moral issues such as gay marriage and legal abortion, even though a slight numerical majority voted in favour of gay marriage on the last occasion that it was debated at Stormont. After protracted discussions they tend to produce encouraging documents with declarations of intent to bring about progress by initiating research projects, putting documents out for consultation, setting up advisory committees or replacing one or more which are already in existence, but whose members are not providing recommendations which they favour.

The presence of Senators Richard Haass and Gary Hart in successive years at moments of acute crisis in 2013 and 2014 failed to make progress on intractable problems related to the past (especially definition of a victim of the 'Troubles' and identification of those who ought to receive compensation, or to have police investigations reopened around the deaths of loved ones who died, perhaps as long as 40 years ago). The legacy of the past continues to be a powerful stumbling block to progress, as does lack of consensus on identity-related issues such as display of flags and emblems, permission to parade along public routes and standards of behaviour to be observed by marchers including loyalist band members. These unresolved issues, which may sound trivial or juvenile to outsiders, tend to constitute a powerful and time-consuming distraction, absorbing parliamentary resources which in other parts of the UK might be devoted to apparently heavier matters. To the loyalists of Northern Ireland, however, such concerns are at the very heart of the cultural expression of their Britishness and of their political identity.

If the story of the devolved Assembly has been a mixed one, what of local government? Earlier in this paper abuses of power by local councils were alluded to and it was noted that under Direct Rule councillors were not favoured when local government was reorganised on two memorable occasions in the seventies and the nineties. The Belfast Agreement makes no specific reference to local government since, as a transferred matter, it would fall within the remit of the Assembly.

Education at Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Level

From their earliest days, the children in Northern Irish schools are encouraged in varying degrees to mix with peers from the two major traditions as well as with growing numbers from ethnic minorities. Parents are given at least in principle a wide choice, but shortage of funding often prevents translation of principle into practice. Being a nationalist and moderate socialist, the strong Minister for Education, John O'Dowd of Sinn Fein in the years before the 2016 general election clearly favoured shared education, comprehensive schools and Irish medium schools for social and cultural reasons.

Although several had been in existence before, provision for Irish medium schools was notably enhanced by the Education (NI) Order 1998 which placed a duty on the Department 'to encourage and facilitate' their development. 'Immersion education', by which children learn most subjects through Irish, enables pupils to become bilingual. These schools enjoy similar status to integrated schools and can apply for voluntary maintained status. If freestanding schools are not viable, then they can be established as units in existing schools. There are currently approximately forty such schools, about two-thirds of which are stand alone.

At the other end of the spectrum there is a small number of independent fundamentalist Christian schools under the control of the Free Presbyterian Church, founded by the late First Minister and DUP leader, Reverend Ian Paisley. In recent days there have been murmurings of inter-faith primary schools being formed in rural areas where numbers have dropped below acceptable viability level and in order to retain

one local school, the Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy and community see amalgamation as a solution. This form of voluntary amalgamation would be preferable to 'forced marriages' and suggest healthy community relations of which the Department would approve.

Progress in having children educated together, whether part-time or full-time and with appropriate forms of school governance, may result in virtue born out of financial necessity, but one would hope that there is a hint of more parents favouring shared or integrated education as time passes and that the public increasingly see the merits of contributing to the emergence of a truly shared society.

Tensions remain within education structures and outcomes. The maintained and controlled sectors still eye each other closely in case one is favoured by government more than the other. One current bone of contention is the existence of the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools, whereas the controlled sector has a weaker champion in the Transferors Representative Council whose members closely monitor proposed new legislation, respond in writing and challenge its content in meeting with the Minister or his officials, but have failed so far to achieve a parallel organisation to CCMS.

While we can be justly proud of our excellent grammar schools, including the top academic scores which their pupils achieve, we must admit that teenagers, particularly Protestant boys from working-class homes are failed by the system and form 'a long tail of underachievement', leaving school at 16 years old without any qualifications. A large number live in East Belfast where their forbears could have realistically expected to find employment in the shipyard, aircraft factory or engineering firm, irrespective of paper qualifications. Such expectations cannot be fulfilled today in a city where high technology companies are large employers, consultancies require their workforce to have third level qualifications and employment legislation demands selection on merit.

Higher and Further Education

Post-school formal education in Northern Ireland has, in line with the rest of the UK, become more closely aligned with economic demands

for highly qualified manpower. The prevalence and popularity of grammar schools has historically led to relatively high numbers, almost 50%, choosing to pursue university courses. The highest percentage of 'A' level grades achieved at A-C standard in the UK is achieved consistently, particularly by grammar schools for Roman Catholic girls.

Unfortunately, approximately one-third of university entrants are obliged to go elsewhere—mainly to Scotland and England to take up places. In the two local universities, fees have been frozen at approximately £3800 per year, modest in comparison with a figure of £9000 in English universities. The fear in some quarters is that these graduates will not return to support the local economy, that some of our brightest young people are being educated for export. One might argue persuasively, however, that a period of work outside Northern Ireland might prove to be a significant stage in their general education. It must be remembered that Northern Ireland cannot provide all the opportunities sought by her graduates.

Educationalists, economists and local businesses are making good progress by working together in planning to have graduates appropriately qualified to fill the posts created by local employers and demanded by inward investors. Thirteen hundred additional undergraduate places are being created in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) with additional support for Ph.D. students in these areas. The growing trend, as universities have had their funding cut drastically, seems to place greater emphasis on vocationally-orientated courses and less emphasis on the traditional role of university education for its own sake, as a civilising influence.

Further education is also receiving attention at the centre of the skills infrastructure to ensure that needs are met now and in the future. A strategic advisory forum is being set up by the Department of Education and Learning to advise on provision of apprenticeships through a range of sectoral partnerships involving colleges, employers, government and trade unions. Further education is seen to be of pivotal importance in driving the economy forward.

There appears to be an imbalance between groups of professionals coming out of our education system, where currently a shortage of undergraduate engineers exists, but this is not true of teachers. Schools

have an estimated 50,000 empty pupil places. It is not surprising that there are qualified teachers qualitatively underemployed in catering, retail and other sectors, because they cannot find teaching posts. This problem was spotted decades ago by the Chilvers enquiry, whose report (1982) recommended the amalgamation of Stranmillis University College and St Mary's, the Catholic college which pre-dates Partition by more than a decade. The Catholic authorities, however, refused to accept this recommendation, wishing to retain a Catholic college with an ethos which would prepare teachers for schools with a similar ethos.

Dr Stephen Farry, while DEL Minister, raised the matter again but was overridden by successful lobbying, in spite of pointing out that Northern Ireland has five establishments producing teachers, namely Queen's University, the University of Ulster, Stranmillis (which has now merged with Queen's School of Education), St Mary's and the Open University in a province with a population of 1.86 million. One strong argument put forward for the continued existence of St Mary's was that it contributes as much to the economy of predominantly nationalist West Belfast as Bombardier, the Canadian manufacturer of aircraft, does in loyalist East Belfast. Stranmillis and St Mary's, both financially supported by the Department of Education and Learning are open to students from all backgrounds, provided they meet entry requirements. Applicants have tended overwhelmingly to come from the two distinct communities in the population; staff have been appointed on merit. Universities are publicly funded and multicultural, as one would expect.

Community Education—Or Education of Adults?

Outside the boundaries of formal education provision, non-governmental and voluntary organisations have been contributing enormously to the Peace Process, which is, in many ways an education project. Some have been Church or inter-Church based; others have been driven by members of the general public, some of whom strove first to end violent confrontation and, when an appropriate stage arrived, to embark on ambitious, long term journeys to achieve tolerance, mutual respect for all traditions, peaceful co-existence, reconciliation, even forgiveness.

Progress has been painstakingly slow and frequently inhibited by iconic events such as Bloody Sunday, the Omagh bombing, murders of security forces and civilians, deaths of Hunger Strikers. In the case of some organisations, single identity workshops educating groups about their history, culture, symbols, celebrations have had to precede cross-community encounters by newly empowered individuals and groups. There are still many instances where specially trained facilitators are working particularly with former loyalist activists at single identity stage.

The work of some of the best-known organisations is considered worthy of comment in a document from a leading US university.[23] A partnership between the Redemptorist Clonard Monastery and Fitzroy Presbyterian Church—both in Belfast—have for decades encouraged their parishioners to gather at joint Church services and to discuss ways forward in peace-making. Clonard Monastery is well known as the site where Gerry Adams, IRA leader agreed to meet clergy and John Hume, Nobel peace prize winner in order to persuade the paramilitary organisation to lay down their arms and to tread an exclusively peaceful political path. The Corrymeela Community, a Christian group based on the County Antrim coast for more than 50 years, has hosted peace building residential retreats involving an annual figure of 6000 individuals and has attained international recognition.

The Irish School of Economics (ISE), Trinity College, Dublin, with an outreach campus in Belfast has been a major theological research centre with an emphasis on conflict resolution, promoting reconciliation after cessation of hostilities. ISE staff have facilitated workshops, based on their research around trouble spots of the world, in Northern Ireland and the Republic, especially in the border counties. Unfortunately, its northern satellite has had to close due to lack of funds. On a very practical level, the Society of St Vincent de Paul, one of the largest voluntary social service organisations in the province, works in conjunction with Protestant organisations such as the Salvation Army. Food, clothing, coupons for heating oil and other forms of practical support in addition to training in budgeting and money management are available to needy groups, including immigrant communities in segregated social housing. Peace funding from

the European Union, Atlantic Philanthropies and private trusts gave a powerful fillip towards educating adults in new ways towards new outcomes, far removed from traditional evening classes focused on obtaining vocational qualifications and leisure activities in regional colleges. So, age groups too old to experience projects such as EMU in schools were included in the surge of peace building effort.

Community Outreach Group—A Case Study

(Here again, I draw upon my experience over more than eight years to illustrate a personal attempt in one area of Northern Ireland to begin solving a widespread problem, perceived by many to be insoluble.)

Working as Chairperson of the Community Outreach Group I have found parishioners from one Church of Ireland and two Roman Catholic parishes in a very divided town to have a keen appetite for Irish history, especially the period covering the 'Decade of Anniversaries' (1911–1921) which includes the centenary of the Ulster Covenant, World War I (WWI), the Rising in 1916, the execution of its leaders ordered by the British army chief in Dublin, the Anglo-Irish War which followed and the Treaty which brought Partition in 1921. These are all potentially contentious events if viewed exclusively through either unionist or nationalist prisms. Presentations by academic specialist historians followed by discussion have been most potent weapons for challenging 'certainty' and encouraging a questioning approach to bias and previously held 'facts'.

A second popular theme is Comparative Religion delivered at a level below university standard. One recent residential 24-hour seminar focused on the basic beliefs of the four main Churches in the province: Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland and Methodist and the ways their adherents live out their Christianity. Curiosity about the differences and similarities provoked keen discussion, following presentations by clergy representing the Churches. Visits to all the churches, large and small in the town form another part of the programme—at first, when there are no services going on and later, it is hoped, when there are. One has to make haste slowly in these sensitive areas.

Brave and sustained efforts to achieve societal transformation have been made for a long period from grass roots and organisations unrelated to political parties. Indeed, some of the most robust efforts are being made by reformed 'Troubles' activists, including ex-prisoners who try to dissuade youth from becoming involved, whereby they may throw away their chances of receiving a good education and of equipping themselves for employment. The problem arises when the public cast their votes in Westminster and Assembly elections. A substantial majority of those who turn out continue to elect representatives along traditional tribal lines for the confessional parties, though in 2016 local elections the cross-community Alliance Party found their vote increased from 7 to 10.1%.

Central and Local Government Balance in Education?

The Department of Education and its related agencies that control standards in teaching and examining have been and continue to be powerful decision-makers, even if their titles have altered slightly through the years. It is probably to be expected that the system is highly centralised in a region of such small area and population.

One might immediately think that an absence of strong local government input to decisions made in relation to the education provided in their council areas must be deemed inadvisable. It can be argued that before the breakdown of the Unionist regime and intervention by Westminster since 1969, democracy was seriously flawed in that the minority population could not play a proper part. Dominance from the centre and establishment of quangos such as the Equality Commission clearly contributed strongly to redressing the balance.

Those in authority in the Northern Ireland Office quickly reduced the power of local councils by reducing their representation on decision-making bodies such as the ELBs. The local knowledge of councillors was, however, useful in making suitable provision within the various Board areas. Two tranches of legislation left councillors out in the cold in one sense, but during that protracted period they learned that it was in their interest to work together, not least with their immediate colleagues but with their counterparts across the Border.

Review of local government, begun in 2002 and published in the Programme for Government 2012 brought in new 'super' local councils created by redrawing boundaries. The functions delegated by the Assembly and still in the process of learning to work together have been local planning and regeneration, urban regeneration, community development, local economic and tourism development and off street parking. Though the word does not appear anywhere in these new areas of responsibility, education must of necessity, be a significant factor in decision-making, especially since shared education and 'mixed' housing (occupied by people from different religious backgrounds) have been established as Executive priorities. The potential contribution which the 'super' councils will make towards improving the economy and the more subtle aim to improve community relations, it would be premature and foolhardy to attempt to predict, though they all have Good Relations personnel in place.

A New Millennium with Old Problems?

This chapter has attempted to show that for almost two centuries in Ireland, and later in Northern Ireland, education has been largely a tale of two systems running in parallel and based on different religious affiliations. Structures have been and still are different from the remainder of the UK, not least the substantially unequal balance of power between the Stormont Minister and inspectorate compared with local agencies delivering services. Quangos have been a prominent feature of the landscape for almost 50 years to ensure that government policy is implemented locally but also fairly. Periods of Direct Rule have brought attempts to change aspects of the education system to bring it into line with England and Wales. The most glaring failure was an attempt by the Labour Government in the person of Lord Melchett to abolish selection of pupils for second level education and to replace it with a comprehensive system.

Power sharing by the DUP and Sinn Fein has revealed clearly their conflicting visions. Martin McGuinness, Caitriona Ruane and John O'Dowd, consecutive Sinn Fein Ministers of Education between 2007

and 2016 forbade selection, but many schools still continue to ignore the directive. The May 2016 election brought a new Minister in the person of Peter Weir (DUP). His policy was early made clear: 'I support the continued right of schools to use academic selection as a means of entry criteria. The guidance that I am issuing today sets out the department's support of academic selection, this is not about compelling any school to take a particular course of action, rather the reverse'.[24] In an attempt to rationalise current practice, he set up a review panel to make recommendations on a common assessment tool, which he hoped would receive schools' approval. The selective grammar schools currently accept results from either or both of the two tests being used. Selection is highly competitive with numbers of applications far outweighing the number of places available.

Although the education model in the province might correctly be described as 'top down', since the Troubles there have been clear initiatives taken by parents and schools who identified the potential of education as a possible route to social change in the form of improved community relations. The push towards establishing integrated schools brought its first victory in 1981 when Lagan College without state funding was opened. Another example, mentioned earlier was the necessary invasion of the 'secret garden' by enlightened teachers such as John Malone, Principal of Orangefield Boys, whose initiative was taken up and developed by the Government beginning with EMU in schools and in teacher education colleges.

In more recent years, evidence of agreement between the First and Deputy First Ministers (OFMDFM) came in the form of an announcement that a Delivering Social Change Signature Project would be set up to improve literacy and numeracy standards in areas of high deprivation. This programme was to be funded from a Social Investment Fund set up by the Executive with a budget of £80 million over four years to reduce poverty and unemployment in needy areas. The scheme operated in primary schools at Key Stage 2 and in secondary schools at GCSE level to benefit pupils and recently graduated teachers unable to find permanent employment. Of the latter 80 were placed in primary schools and 150 in non-grammar secondary schools, providing one-to-one tuition. The success which the scheme achieved was described by a

teachers' union representative as 'a rare example of OFMDFM working together in a manner which is making a real and practical difference'.[25] The benefits of this commendable scheme must, however, be balanced against casualties of budget pressures. Programmes which had to be dropped were the Primary Modern Languages Programme, a building and maintenance scheme, as well as provision of books for pre-school children issued free to parents to read to their young children. Likely redundancies of 500 teachers and 1000 support staff were predicted to happen in the years to follow.

A thrust towards Shared Education has continued. By March 2015, 31 partnerships involving 66 schools had received funding to further the process, using various collaborative projects intended to have two positive outcomes: (i) improving educational standards and (ii) promoting peace and reconciliation by educating children together.

Minister O'Dowd also announced 'a new era in education delivery' in the form of a new Education Authority to replace five ELBs with a budget of £1.5 billion in order to 'provide efficient and effective administrative arrangements in the years ahead'.[26] Burgeoning pressure on financial resource is inevitably forcing undesirable change, but perhaps also indicating, as in the example above, increasing central control.

More Trouble at Stormont

The early months of 2017 brought collapse of the Executive and another election is to be held on 2 March, a mere ten months since the previous one. Poor relations between the DUP and Sinn Fein deteriorated rapidly during 2016, to the extent that a budget was not agreed for 2017/2018. Mutual distrust and hostility and several accusations of corrupt practice mainly, but not exclusively, around property deals involving DUP politicians, provoked the collapse of the Assembly. The catalyst was alleged maladministration, incompetence and insider dealing by the DUP of a scheme introduced in 2012 to reduce the level of carbon emissions. The Renewable Heating Incentive (RHI), nicknamed 'Ash for cash' and 'Burn to earn' by its critics was intended to subsidise the cost which businesses had to pay to run economically friendly

boilers, but the subsidy levels were set too high and without caps, giving a return of £1.60 for every £1 spent on fuel. A broadly similar scheme with caps was already in operation in England, but this appears not have been copied even in modified form. Two warnings from a whistle-blower in 2012 and 2014, who pointed out that the scheme was unviable, were disregarded. The scheme was presided over by Arlene Foster when she was Economy Minister, who on the resignation of Peter Robinson in early 2016, became First Minister and DUP leader.

As the fiasco, fired by huge local media coverage, gripped public attention, Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness advised her to step down for a short period with his public support, while an investigation was held to establish the truth, but she steadfastly refused, insisting repeatedly that she had nothing to hide and was 'going nowhere'. McGuinness resigned on 9 January 2017 in obvious serious ill health and died a short time later. The institutions collapsed one week after his resignation, when his party refused to name a successor. An independent public enquiry was triggered by the Sinn Fein Minister of Finance. A year later, Northern Ireland still has no functioning government, in spite of unsuccessful attempts by successive Secretaries of State to bring the DUP and Sinn Fein parties together to negotiate conditions on which they could return to Stormont. The dire political vacuum shows no signs of being filled and public services are accordingly suffering severely. No budget has been agreed for 2018/2019, so departments do not know how much funding they will receive. Civil servants resist taking decisions which are within the remit of ministers who cannot be appointed until the parties return to the Assembly.

The future of the land border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland after Brexit is worrying and uncertain for those who cross it daily to carry on business, find employment, go to college or pursue recreational activities. The mutual dependence, especially in economic terms, between the north and the south of the island is a matter of great concern. Huge unresolved issues remain, which relate to dealing with the past and national security, flags and emblems, marches by loyal orders, in addition to the budgetary dilemma. In short, Northern Ireland retains its unresolved historic sectarian-related problems, while

experiencing an unstable present and contemplating a threatening future.

Viewed in context, education in Northern Ireland is unlikely to be considered an issue of high priority for an uncertain period, either by Westminster or a devolved administration (if and when it returns).

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7

Scotland: A Reputation Challenged

Robert McCloy

The Chapter's Purpose

The principal focus of the chapter is Scotland's public education service, not simply since devolution but prior to that act, the more necessary since there was much in the earlier arrangements that bore a distinctive stamp. This, in essence, had its genesis in the Act of Union which recognised a separate legal system and the Presbyterian established church. Scotland's culture and its education character constituted powerful impulses informing subsequent developments.

Unlike most of the other contributions to this book, anchored in personal experience, this chapter has been written from afar both in time and space. Nevertheless, it has been examined by Richard Evans, a senior education adviser who served in two authorities in Scotland, in the lengthy and critical central period of this study from 1970 to 1994, and thereafter, as a member of Ofsted in England. Such a vantage point offers a valid perspective and has served to

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qualify the narrative, in particular with reference to the distinctive contribution made by the advisory services of local authorities. Such a professional participation, made on an individual basis, has been invaluable and is gratefully acknowledged. Notwithstanding, error in fact and judgement remaining in the text must be attributable to the writer, a partial Scot by distant lineage.

Scotland's Distinctiveness

Relative to England, there was greater social cohesion and homogeneity resulting in less, proportionately, private education. A significant exception was Edinburgh where approximately a quarter of secondary school pupils attended private schools. The distribution of population outside the four cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dundee, was such that there was little opportunity for segregating older pupils according to ability. The cities offered greater scope for specialist provision. The Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment gave spur to both egalitarianism and literacy whilst an Edinburgh-based national education department and inspectorate and the existence of a statutory teaching professional body all helped to emphasise a distinctive and assertive focus.

Characteristics Common to the UK

Nevertheless, there were features shared with the rest of the UK. The pattern of national school certificates was similar as was the low level of participation in further education, not unrelated to a common public antipathy towards technical education. The role of local government in the superintendence of the education was comparable, as was the education service's general indebtedness to the church in its formative years.

Common Historical Phases

As in the case of the United Kingdom as a whole, the narrative in Scotland falls into three phases punctuated by the war's end, the election of the Thatcher government, and that of Blair: 1945–1979, 1979–1997, and 1997 to the present.

Phase 1: 1945–1979

The local education authority, in this initial phase, focussed upon the supply of resources, as in England and Wales, and saw its principal task to be that of supporting institutions. There was a broad consensus, shared by politicians, professional administrators, the public at large, and Scotland's teaching establishment, as to the general competence of the system. Notwithstanding, that relative stability was to be challenged by two commissioned national reports which crystallized concerns about the curriculum and the structure of qualifications, and a re-organization of local government.

The 1945 Education Act [Scotland]

A separate act for Scotland was a constitutional necessity to reflect the distinctive educational terrain, but did not of course, reflect a fundamental cleavage between Scotland on the one hand, and England and Wales on the other. Indeed, Scotland and Wales had been prime movers in the promotion of the Welfare State, of which the 1944 and 1945 acts were seen at the time as essential elements. The principal features of the former were faithfully mirrored in the latter: the same commitment to the development of primary, secondary and further education and free provision, although Scotland had already made major progress on these fronts. There was also the prospect of a rise in the school leaving age, a reassertion and development of the role of the local education authority, commitment to the partnership with the teaching profession, and a place for Christian worship in all schools. So too, were included the health and welfare support functions. There was in Scotland an emphasis upon the development of nursery schools, the raising of the school leaving age facilitating an obligatory three year course from 12 plus, the establishment of junior colleges for compulsory part-time further education, local technical colleges and added provision for voluntary adult education 'essential if the fullest harvest is to be reaped in culture, in good citizenship and in technical efficiency.' The *caveat* was added '…in making these advances, we must be careful to do nothing

that would destroy any facilities our young people already enjoy.' The reference was to the Cadets, Scouts, and Guides etc.[1]

In introducing the second reading, Thomas Johnson, the Secretary of State for Scotland, spoke of the strongly opposed views about the appropriate administrative structure. Whilst there had been general unanimity about the rest of the bill, here was a subject of much contention. Amongst the views held were those favouring a Scotland-wide entity, others separately elected boards, yet others, a standard local government arrangement like any other. The bill offered a compromise: an entity within local government with up to two-fifths directly-elected education members, with church representatives.[2] The solution duly determined, after discussion in the Scottish Grand Committee, was the establishment of a specialist committee within local government with extensive delegated powers and additional places for the churches [and teaching profession], as provided by schemes proposed by the LEA and approved by the Secretary of State.[3]

Progress in Its Implementation

The immediate post war period was one of austerity. As in England and Wales, the local education authorities set about their redefined and enlarged tasks with commitment and energy. The focus was essentially upon the task of supply: organising school places, recruiting staff, and planning new provision. So much had to be done, and hopes were high that a better world would shortly be created. Improvisation and high levels of trust were essential. Consultation, by the standards of a later age, was muted. Necessarily, whilst initially there could be but limited development of a material character, for want of finance, much energy and effort were successfully expended upon future plans. From a contemporary perspective, what possibly provokes most surprise is the general absence of any collective concern about the curriculum on the part of local authorities. In the spirit of the age this was left largely to the classroom teacher, tempered by a knowledge of the requirements of the national examination system and guidance from the national education department. The period witnessed also, the building up as part of the

local authority, of advisory services. In many instances, they constituted the principal contact between the local education department and the institution. Their *modus vivendi* was to counsel and to offer encouragement, to play an active part in the selection and appointment of teaching staff, to help channel teaching materials, to play a crucial part in preparing design briefs for specialist accommodation, guide inexperienced teachers, and to provide up-to-date in-service training. Foremost, they were enablers and a source of inspiration and encouragement: they were not inquisitional, checking up on a school's compliance with any targets set elsewhere. In much, the focus would be the individual teacher rather than the whole school, most advisers having been appointed with responsibility for particular subjects. Notwithstanding, the team would be led often by a chief inspector with a more general remit, with a more questioning authority. At its best, this broadly-supportive agency was a force for good and helped to justify the local authority's high reputation. Characteristic of that initial period was the relative insularity of the education service. The local education authority was still recognisably the same as it had been from 1929. Some of the jurisdictions were relatively small.

As austerity yielded in the late 50s, to prosperity of sorts, a start was possible to translate development plans into reality. School and college building projects, complemented by vast supplies of equipment and books, invariably arranged by the advisory services, now became commonplace. However, careful planning by authorities remained essential. Loan sanction for capital projects from ministers was not easily forthcoming: convincing cases had to be made showing that without some building easement, there would be gross under provision. The claims sometimes currently advanced about over-crowded institutions would have been dismissed by many authorities as hyperbole. A perennial problem was that there was often a disjunction between the location of population and an obvious and economical way in which its educational needs might be served. A scattered rural area would contain a population of varying needs and ages, ideally needing disparate specialist provision. Densely populated urban areas, whilst possessing their own demands, offered the opportunity of varied specialist provision within the compass of manageable travelling distances.

Circular 600

The Labour government now intent, in the 60s, upon the abolition of selection at the beginning of secondary education, resolved to effect the change, not by an act of parliament, but by the publication of administrative circulars, 10/65 in respect of England and Wales and 600 for Scotland. In two important respects the latter differed from the former: it offered but a single possible arrangement and prescribed a uniform transfer age of 12. A general supposition is that the response in Scotland was, for the most part, sympathetic. Here was an initiative by a Labour government simply announcing a development of the welfare state, owing much to the Labour party in Scotland, which was still politically dominant in Scotland. It was at one with the egalitarian spirit of the population, and, in any case, Scotland's *omnibus* schools, commonplace in much of the rural area, surely anticipated the proposed new order. The Advisory Council, set up by Thomas Johnston, the Labour Scottish Secretary of State in the wartime coalition government, in its 1947 report on secondary education, had recommended:

> …undifferentiated secondary schools based on what it presented as the traditional model of the rural *omnibus school* and proposed also that the external examinations be ended and replaced by assessment by teachers moderated by inspectors…and had advocated using schools to overcome social divisions and to foster individual creativity and the voluntary acceptance of the value of social cohesion….

Though the advisory council's report had not been endorsed by government it remained a point of reference.[4]

A detailed examination of reactions in the populous west, embracing Glasgow, Dunbartonshire, Lanarkshire, and Renfrewshire, counters that judgement. What is revealed is widespread hostility, on the part of a range of interviewees, believing it to have been imposed without consultation from England, ill-conceived, and at variance with local sympathies.[5] The study nevertheless rehearsed the wide-spread concerns then attaching to the *status quo*. There was much wastage in the senior high schools, whither those judged to have academic potential

were sent. Too many failed to proceed to higher education and the professions. The junior high schools failed to provide adequately for the greater number thither sent. Notwithstanding these serious reservations, those consulted overwhelmingly doubted the capacity of the ill-defined and untested comprehensive school to effect remedy. Commitment to current arrangements, by many who had played a part in their development since the war, was possibly also an element. Independent of the case for comprehensive schools, it is clear that circular 600 was recognised as a decisive challenge to the local education authority, which since 1945 had been left alone largely to manage local matters. Viewed retrospectively, the period 1945–1965 witnessed the local authority's zenith albeit one marked initially by austerity.

Changes in Society

Whilst Circular 600 marked a changing point, other major factors were to destabilise further a relatively-ordered world of education: de-industrialisation, the rise of consumerism, and, shortly, local government's reorganisation. Each made its demands on education provoking differing curriculum demands, greater articulation from a less passive public, and a greater ascendancy of politics in the daily management of the education service.

Further, significant developments were to occur in 1965, the passing of the Teaching Council [Scotland] Act which set up a General Teaching Council for Scotland to deal with the training, registration, and professional conduct of teachers. A decade later, in 1975, the Alexander Report advocated the union of adult education and the youth and community service at local level. Two years later in 1977, the Munn Report, critical of the curriculum on offer in many of the comprehensive schools following the raising of the school leaving age, advocated a core of compulsory subjects and a choice of elective subjects in the third and fourth years whilst advocating first year diagnostic unselected provision. In parallel, the contemporary Dunning Report recommended a complementary national certification system for all pupils and provoked, according to Evans, the greater controversy as to

how the new broadly-based curriculum was to be assessed. The Munn Report was a significant stimulus to local authority advisory services which played an important part in seeking to address the concerns of the report.

Phase 2: 1979–1997

In the second phase of this narrative commencing with the election of the Thatcher government and lasting to the eve of devolution, there was less turbulence in Scotland than south of the border. The relative insularity of Scotland's education service with a high level of public support for a system generally well regarded, and the reality that the Labour party remained dominant, meant that many of the reforms promoted in England, characterised by a market economy, were resisted in Scotland. Nevertheless, some common features were promoted, for example, parental choice of school, and giving parents places on school boards.

The Conservative Government's 1980 Education [Scotland] Act was largely a consolidation measure embracing all types of school [maintained, grant-aided, and independent schools]. It empowered the Secretary of State to issue regulations to local authorities, defined the responsibilities and rights of parents, established the Scottish Examination Board to conduct Scottish Certificates of Education examinations, set up committees for negotiating teachers' pay and made provision for children with special educational needs. The following year, 1981, the Education [Scotland] Act gave parents the right to choose schools.

Significantly, the Education Reform Act 1986, which fundamentally recast education in England and Wales, was not applied to Scotland. Its focus was especially upon the curriculum and the role of government in its formulation. It was an initiative breaking new ground in the former two countries. The government had hitherto kept out of 'the secret garden,' the preserve of teachers and institutions, notwithstanding the special exception of religious education and the implicit invasion effected by *Circular 10/65*. The role of the Scottish Education Department had already established a substantial interventionist role in respect of the

curriculum. The legislation profoundly affected the role of local education authority in England and Wales.

As for Scotland, whilst structural changes were avoided, similar nostrums about the curriculum, relating for example, to its purposes in serving a consumer-aware society, informed the guidance of the education department. In 1986 the School Boards [Scotland] Act was passed, establishing boards with strong parental and community representation, granting extensive rights to be consulted concerning education provision, discipline and finance and participation in the appointment of senior staff. The following year, 1989, the Self-government etc. [Scotland] Act, providing procedures for schools to opt out of local authority supervision was enacted. By 1998 only two schools had applied. In 1992 the Further and Higher Education [Scotland] Act severed the relationship between Further Education Colleges and local authorities, each college becoming a corporate body. Funding arrangements for the universities and higher education institutions were unified under the Higher and Further Education Funding Council. The 1996 Education [Scotland] Act established the Scottish Qualifications Authority [SQA] [combining academic and vocational bodies], provided a statutory voucher scheme for nursery education [withdrawn by the subsequent Labour government], set out regulations concerning membership and elections to school boards, and facilitated assessment arrangements in the first two years of secondary education [under SQA].

School Boards

Unlike governing and managing bodies in England and Wales, school boards in Scotland had followed their own trajectory. Here they were essentially representative of those served by the institution, speaking on behalf of the consumers of education and being entitled to be consulted. In England and Wales, managing and governing bodies were foremost responsible for the institution's superintendence to whom the head teacher was responsible. The Scottish model more assuredly recognised the head teacher's distinctive and separate role existing prior to the creation of school boards.

Phase 3: 1997–The Present Time

The period subsequent to the act of devolution has witnessed a general sympathy by the Scottish Government with the Global Education Reform Movement, albeit rejecting some of its excesses. It has also recognised a concern for the significant minority for whom the education system is seriously failing. Nevertheless, in its quest to make greater progress in its promotion of the national Curriculum for Excellence, by its many and detailed interventions, it has drawn criticism not simply from the teaching profession but from an independent review and by the OECD. The latter has seriously questioned its relationship with local government, advocating that the Government should resist excessive interference and encourage local government to be the vital and effective 'middle' level between itself and institutions.

Devolution

Quite palpably, Scotland already exercised decisive autonomy over education prior to devolution under the Scotland Act, 1998, in spite of the contention that comprehensive education was foisted upon the country by England, and the fact that much legislation echoed that already introduced in England and Wales. Its distinctiveness subsisted in a relatively strong and cohesive education establishment of professional educationists, in the Edinburgh-based education department, the Scottish HMI, the Scottish Association of Directors of Education, and the General Teaching Council. Whilst this possessed no absolute unanimity of outlook, it nevertheless conveyed a powerful sense of authority and assurance. It was proud of the country's educational achievements which, for the most part, seemed to be shared by the community. Legislation originating in England and Wales could be tempered and even resisted.

Consensus and the Curriculum for Excellence

Late in 2000 priorities had been approved under the titles: Framework for Learning, Inclusion and Equality, Values and Citizenship, and learning for Life. A national debate was launched in 2002. Meanwhile, in 2002/2003,

Parliament inquired into the purposes of education. The Scottish Executive gave its response to the national debate and set up the Curriculum for Excellence review in 2003 which reported the following year.

The National Debate showed that people, whilst supporting much in current provision, wanted a curriculum that would fully prepare today's children for adult life in the twenty-first century, be less crowded, better connected and offer more choice and enjoyment.[6] The purposes of the curriculum from 3 to 18 henceforth would be that every young person would be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible individuals, and effective contributors.[7] The curriculum's design would be based upon offering challenges and enjoyment, breadth, progression, depth, personalisation and choice, coherence and relevance.[8] Overall, it was claimed, this would benefit young people, parents, teachers, schools, early years' centres and colleges, employers and higher education, the education system, and society.[9]

An Initial Test

A tranquillity of sorts that had hitherto existed had been rudely interrupted. A crisis erupted in 2000: public examinations were late in publication. With public uproar, new parliament and government felt obliged to intervene. Officials of the Scottish Qualifications Authority and members of the inspectorate were summoned to parliament. Duly both, in a sense, were indicted: their management, processes and styles were at fault. The authority's chief executive departed, the authority was reconstituted, and the inspectorate's role redefined. From a perspective, distant in both space and time, this seems to have been an overreaction. Possibly, as an initial test of virility, the new parliament and government could not do otherwise. The event marked an end, possibly temporarily, to the dominance of a self-confident professional establishment: politicians and their public had triumphed.

Education [Scotland] Act, 2009

Care for the educationally most vulnerable prompted special measures: The Education [Scotland] [Additional Support for Learning] Act, 2009

gave education authorities a duty to identify needs, and, if necessary, to collaborate with others in its provision, and thereafter to review progress. An act of 2004 had provided an initial basis.

Reviewing Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence had promised much, but progress was cause for concern. Two policy think tanks collaborated in 2011 and established a Commission on School Reform. Its report concluded that Scotland's system no longer ranked amongst the world's best, that it failed to tackle successfully the educational consequences of social and economic disadvantage, the system was too uniform, greater variety was essential, which would be best achieved by greater school autonomy. The current system's culture was disempowering with too little communication and with an unwelcoming attitude to constructive criticism. The tiers of management were ill-defined and government had a strong tendency to become involved in detail. Head teachers should be seen as chief executives of largely autonomous bodies. Curriculum for Excellence should not be seen as a 'one-off' change but a long-term process.[10]

Its recommendations reflected this analysis: Curriculum for Excellence should be modified over time [recommendation 1], greater emphasis placed upon skills for employability [3], disadvantaged pupils given targeted help [7], talented staff encouraged to remain in the most disadvantaged schools [8], an integrated service for disadvantaged children quickly established [9], greater attention placed on social development of the young [11], learning linked with community [12], specified preconditions set for changing processes [13], greater diversity and school autonomy promoted [14], statutory backing given to promoting Curriculum for Excellence's four purposes [16], schools free to select suppliers [19], local authorities' role in championing interests of families and individuals and promoting school collaboration strengthened [24], wider skills represented on school boards [25], education committees include

representatives of parents, business, and community but retain elected member majorities [26], the concept of hub training schools linked to universities and other schools implemented to increase leadership and models for change [29], and, school leaders have responsibility for professional development focussing upon teaching and learning [35]. Significantly, reflected in this last cited recommendation, amongst evidence considered was material relating to Elmore's researches concerning successful professional development in New York.[11] However, in effect the move to institutional autonomy was resisted whilst many of the other recommendations were to be echoed by the OECD and the Wood Report [see below].

The Organization for Economic and Cultural Development [OECD]

At the Government's request, the OECD also undertook a review of progress. Its report, whilst sharing some of the above insights, departed fundamentally in one important respect: it advocated strongly the strengthening of the role of local government and challenged the notion of institutional independence. Overall, its judgement was that there was academic achievement above international averages in Science and Reading, achievement levels were spread relatively equally, students were 'resilient,' and schools inclusive [comparable with Finland, Norway, and Sweden], nearly two thirds of the school population continued in further and higher education, and at least three quarters of pupils had a positive attitude to school. Moreover, behaviour was improving, smoking and alcohol consumption declining, whilst teachers were reporting less disruptive behaviour. Nevertheless, there were problems: a minority of schools and a small number of early learning centres remained only 'satisfactory' or below, mathematics performance was declining relatively [2012 PISA results were only average, hitherto amongst leaders], there were fewer top performers in primary and secondary school reading and lower performances in numeracy in secondary schools, there had been a drop in the number of pupils liking school, and low achievement had risen.

As for implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence, there was now a need for boldness: the approach had to go beyond management. The review called for a strengthened ‘Middle’ operating through networks and collaborations amongst schools in and across local authorities. As local authorities were an integral complement, action was needed to address gaps between high and low performing local authorities. International practice was cited and the example of Ontario [visited by the writer] was warmly commended.[12] In the Ontario example the focus of the programme, ‘Essential for Some, Good for All’ [ESGA] was specifically on special needs:

> *…driven by school district officers in a context where there is cross-pollination and communication of key ideas… making the argument for collective rather than individual professional autonomy as a force for change. What makes it especially powerful is that it engaged all 72 boards in horizontal networking thereby making for system-wide change but driven from the middle not the top… Ontario's school board leaders and superintendents have been the dynamo behind the province's special education strategy, generating the forces that have given it momentum and energy. This influential group of highly respected middle level school system administrators did not just deliver but also delivered much of the reform strategy that included processes of coaching, mentoring, cross-pollination and communication of key ideas. The capacity and energy of this group was made possible, in large part, by a resourcing strategy of equal funding that incentivised all 72 boards, especially the smaller ones. This built a critical mass of political and professional capital among directors and superintendents of education, acting as a well net worked province-wide community. Their impact and success point to the power of collective rather than individual autonomy as a force for positive educational change.*[13]

The recommendations presented at the conclusion of the Ontario programme, prepared by researchers at Boston College, University of Massachusetts, in full collaboration with the boards, urged general endorsement of the approach, as a better way forward than that offered by the Global Education Reform Movement [GERM].

The review had presented a summary of GERM and ESGA:

GERM	**ESGA**
Centralized	*Leading from the middle*
Practice changes before beliefs	*Beliefs also inspire and drive practice*
Imposed standardization	*Responsiveness to diversity*
Individual autonomy	*Collective responsibility*
Data-driven improvement	*Evidence-informed improvement*
Pressure to reach thresholds	*Progress measured by growth*
Technology as separate solution	*Technology as integrated practice*
Rigid standardization	*Flexible customization*
S.E. is low status and marginalized	*S.E. is integrated and integral*
Short-term gains	*Short-term actions; lasting results*

[*S.E. Special Education*]

Specifically, the Ontario report contended that this new legacy be continued, embracing the understanding that beliefs by individual teachers be respected as a vital impulse, technology, as an aid, be employed with discrimination, rising rates of identification of pupils needing special education, which was still taking place, be critically scrutinised, and attention be focussed away from meeting targets to growth. Further, as for senior administrative staff, it was necessary to improve their capability in interpreting evidence and offering informed assessments, and increase their longevity in office. In the case of school boards, their authority should be reaffirmed to the end that they provided leadership *from the middle*, rather than central government or individual schools; and they should collaborate with other boards, possibly through the agency of the directors of education council. Lastly, efforts should be intensified to identify the educational needs of individual pupils, going beyond literacy and numeracy and into social studies, technology, and the arts.[14]

Beyond the above critique, the OECD review, in respect of Scotland, also concluded that current assessment and evaluation arrangements did not provide sufficiently robust information for local authorities, schools and policy makers, but noted that the proposed National Information Framework [see below] could address that problem. Research and evaluation for Curriculum for Excellence was also lacking which the universities could be enlisted to supply. The terms employed in Curriculum for Excellence merited clarification.

The National Improvement Framework

The National Improvement Network [NIF], duly announced in January, 2016, was to be a new national standardised assessment system for pupils at various stages, concentrating on progress in literacy and numeracy. It was also intended to bring a greater focus to health and well-being, provide consistency, transparency, and robustness, informing teachers of the progress being made with the Curriculum for Excellence, whilst avoiding the disadvantages of rigid testing. Further it would be put on a statutory basis and had drawn on international experience.[15]

This initiative, however, was subjected to severe censure by Stephen Ball, seeing it as a move away from inputs to outputs: a further example of the castigated Global Education Reform Movement [GERM]. This latter, for Ball, concentrated on core subjects, uniformity, riskless goals, and accountability by tests, and whilst initially claiming to be teacher-supportive, progressively marginalised them as more and more interventions took place. Further, it could stimulate a belief that economic effectiveness was related to test ranking. The focus on schools was mistaken: only 11–15% of the factors causing poor performance were attributable to schools. When GERM reforms fail, more reforms follow, as in England, with marketisation, free schools, and academies. Much derives from USA and Sweden where relative performances are declining based upon a false logic of linking teacher performance and general economic performance. Conflict with teachers results.[16] The movement and processes that concerned Bell most importantly, were, in effect, creating an alternative to a democratically accountable state system which he had described in 'Networks, New Governance and Education.'[17]

Events continue to unfold. It should be noted that the Ontario example, commended by OECD, operated within a province-wide regime of assessments and that OECD had presumed that NIF would make good that alleged lacuna in Scotland's arrangements.

Overall Supplementary Themes

Complementing the foregoing historical analysis focussing upon three phases, a number of themes are identified of relevance to the whole period from

the war's end to the current time: local government, the General Teaching Council, Reshaping the teaching profession, The role of the churches, Adult education, Further and higher education, Careers advice, Gaelic, and The commercial world and City Deals.

Local Government

Reference has been made to local government and it is pertinent to review its development. In the period 1929–1973 there had been a two-tier system: counties and various lower level units, with the four cities possessing the powers of both tiers. Between 1973 and 1996, this had been replaced, again a two tier system, but with large regional councils and smaller districts, and three Island Councils. Thereafter from 1996, this yielded to a unitary system of 32 local authorities.[18]

Exemplifying the character of the efficiency offered by the larger regional authorities, is the experience of Richard Evans, a general adviser, who testifies to his own experience in Fife in being the principal interlocutor 'in a quasi-inspectorial role liaising between the authority's directorate and six secondary schools,' effected largely by weekly meetings with a member of the directorate. In particular his role focussed upon 'matters of governance, staffing, curriculum development, assessment and the holistic work and effectiveness of the school.' This brief contrasted with general practice, cited above, where advisers were subject-related, dealt with more schools, but had a less holistic responsibility for particular schools. In the latter model, the adviser, by focus, concentration, and the breadth of professional concern, could offer advice which was both better informed and authoritative. Evans believed that here was a service of inestimable value to schools: knowledgeable and helpful advice, easily accessible.[19] It was a formula superior to previous practice, and to what was to follow, when, after a further reorganisation, and the creation of unitary [and generally smaller authorities] local authority, advisory services were progressively reduced, their role in part, subsumed in the function of a more remote Scotland-wide inspectorate, outside the local authority, not part of the same corporate entity with common responsibilities, commitments and loyalties,

but with an inquisitional role and very much part of a performance-related culture, quite removed from any notion of friendly counsellor.

Essentially, the two local government reorganisations reflected changes elsewhere in the UK. Their effect was destabilising. Structures had a more ephemeral character than those existing prior to the seventies. New ways of working subordinated the education service to the wider concerns of councils as a whole, and the Education [Scotland] Act 1980 reinforced the capacity of government to give directions to local government. Nevertheless, some of the cultural vigour of local government's education service remained intact: the Convention of Scotland Local Authorities [COSLA], possibly a partially-detached member of Scotland's distinctive education establishment, centred on the Edinburgh-based government education department, and the General Teaching Council. As such there was little prospect, a Scottish version of the Education Reform Act or sympathy for schools opting out of local government control.

As revealed by the independent review of progress by the Commission on School Reform, cited above, there was nevertheless criticism of local authority supervision of education. The concern focussed upon a suffocating culture inhibiting initiative and resistance to greater school autonomy. The detachment of further education from local authorities, mirroring developments in England and Wales was also evidence of reservations concerning local government's capacity. Latterly, the Scottish Government has excited the ire of COSLA by contemplating the establishment of regional boards to take over the powers of local councils for education.

General Teaching Council

Viewed from England and Wales, the General Teaching Council for Scotland [GTCS] was an entity to be copied. It gave the teachers a professional status, to be compared with lawyers and doctors. Duly such a body was created in England but it did not last. The GTCS, however, established in 1965, has indeed survived. Its status as an independent self-governing body for teachers was reinforced by statute in 2012 and it is manifestly still part of the education establishment: consulted and its

representations respected. Earlier, the Educational Institute of Education, the teachers' principal professional body, had collaborated in national research. That body, too, enjoyed a superior status so it seemed, to other UK teachers' associations, claiming to be the world's oldest teachers' union and having been granted a charter by Queen Victoria.

Reshaping the Teaching Profession

A preoccupation, not only in Scotland but in other countries intent upon the search for a relevant curriculum, has been a remoulding of the teacher. The spur has often been the expression of dissatisfaction on the part of teachers facing frequent changes in regulation and loss of professional status. In Scotland's case, these changes were not technically mandatory: they were merely guidelines. Notwithstanding, teachers regarded them as otherwise and believed that they were judged by the extent to which they complied. The government's response was to seek to raise the status of teachers by a programme of higher remuneration, revision of career structures, and more flexible conditions of service.[20] Duly this culminated in the McCrone Agreement, notably providing job sizing and a category of chartered teachers. Contemporaneously, debate embraced the initial training and career-long development and in-service training. In 2009, Donaldson's extensive report offered fifty recommendations covering entry qualifications, the professional standards to be laid down by GTCS, partnerships between teacher training institutions, 'hub' schools and local authorities, practice placement arrangements, and the valuation and development of leadership paths. The then current B.Ed. pedagogy-laden course was criticised: it needed to be replaced by a more demanding academic programme of in-depth study of subjects alongside professional studies.[21]

The Role of the Churches

The Church, as in other parts of the United Kingdom, had been the dominant provider of education. From the Reformation this had primarily meant the Presbyterian established church. With time there had

occurred various mutations effected by divisions of opinion both religious and secular. Whilst literacy to facilitate reading Calvin's catechism would have been an important impulse, it is a caricature to suppose that this was an overriding consideration. Overwhelmingly, more comprehensive purposes were in the frame: the inculcation of vital values for a civilised community which the church saw as emanating from its interpretation of texts, both classical and later. Nor was its concern in establishing a school in every parish, limited to the literary: numeracy and the practical were not ignored.

Public funding and issues of equity posed serious problems duly resolved in part by legislation in 1872. A nationwide structure, administered by elected parish boards assumed responsibility for publicly funded schools. Denominational instruction could be provided at the beginning or closure of the day, parents being permitted to determine their children's attendance. Whilst such a formula accommodated the established church and many others, it was unacceptable to the Roman Catholics and Anglicans. The Act did not ban denominational schools which managed as best they could without public funding until 1918 when new arrangements provided relief. Thereafter, public funding was extended and assurances by the state offered, concerning religious instruction and observance and the right of the denomination to appoint staff, subject to state inspection and admission of any pupil to vacant places. The denominational schools thus became part of the state system locally administered by newly reconstituted boards replacing the old boards. Unlike the establishment of either voluntary aided or voluntary controlled schools in England and Wales, that formula was not available in Scotland. The fact that it was possible for Roman Catholics and Anglicans, whilst having their own denominational schools, to serve amicably on the boards, contributed, it has been contended, to the eventual settlement of 1918. The act replaced school boards with 38 specialist education authorities elected by a form of proportional representation in order to safeguard the interests of the Roman Catholics. Duly, but eleven years later, in 1929, these were subsumed into general local government.

Adult Education

Adult Education as a category of provision, lacks precise definition. It includes full and part-time classes; formal and informal structures; free, paid, and subsidised sessions; provision by the state, voluntary organisations and commercial enterprise, and that undertaken by the individual alone. Its scope is as varied: elementary basic education compensating for inadequacies or absence in childhood, specialist skills for adult employment, learning to levels beyond that available at school, preparation for higher education, education for its own sake, leisure and social recreation, and the means by which individuals and groups may change society. Physical accommodation is similarly varied: schools, colleges, community centres, village halls, churches, universities, huts, private houses, factories, and sometimes, but rarely, bespoke.

Scotland's experience of adult education prior to the Second World War post war settlement had many characteristics common to other parts of the UK: the phenomenon of self-help; philosophical, literary and scientific societies, libraries, mechanics institutions; and social reform movements, such as the Chartists, Owenites, and the Co-operative movement. The tradition of Scottish universities allowing liberal attendance at lectures, and the unwillingness, for many years, of the Scottish Education Department to grant aid to the Workers Educational Association, on the grounds that such help was unnecessary, helps to mark off differences.[22]

The importance of adult education had been emphasised when the Secretary of State introduced the second reading of the 1945 Act:

> …Clearly, too, at the other end of school life changes are imperative… Junior colleges for compulsory part-time further education, local technical colleges and added provision for voluntary adult education are essential if the fullest harvest is to be reaped in culture, in good citizenship and in technical efficiency…[23] '…The main features of the educational changes we propose are: [1]Nursery classes…[2] From 5 to about 12…[3] Secondary schools…[4] Between the upper age limits…and 18 further education…at Junior Colleges…and [5] …voluntary further education, either full time or part time, for persons of any age over school age.

> This education includes all kinds of adult and technical instruction. All the various types of education may be provided at day schools, colleges or boarding schools. It will be the statutory duty of education authorities to prepare schemes for their areas covering all this extensive field of instruction…[24]

This clarion call echoed Butler's observation in the draft circular, presented to the War Cabinet introducing the 1944 Act, highlighting adult education's role in helping to make a civilised country.

Reinforcing this newly affirmed importance for adult education, was the creation of the Scottish Institute of Adult Education in 1949. This largely liberal and open approach was to prevail for the next two decades, culminating in the publication of the Alexander Report in 1975. The report accepted that society no longer was to be categorised as being deferential or possessing common values. The task to be tackled was one of community development wherein those engaged had to focus upon listening, understanding, and facilitating, necessitating the combining of adult education and youth work into a community education service. Such, for a brief moment, so it seemed, was the accepted orthodoxy.

However, with a rise in consumerism in the 80s, the second phase of this book's narrative, the focus now turned to a quest for performance targets. Adult education was not immune from these pressures. Duly, provision fractured: a mainstream remaining in the public sector increasingly subject to delivering sharply-aimed programmes, such as enabling particular groups to find employment or raising standards in numeracy and literacy. For the rest, it was increasingly a matter for the commercial market and the voluntary sector. Notwithstanding, a residue of professional workers committed to an earlier ethic, continued to practice.

In due time, subsequent to devolution in the third phase of this narrative, a stabilising occurs marked by the publication of the Osler Report.[25] It would not be enough to concentrate solely upon the individual. In addition to action to improve the qualities of individual lives, there had to be a focus upon aiding them to contribute to their own communities, and to participate in local and national democracy.

This repositioning would require close working partnerships between community workers and other agencies. Further guidance was issued in 2003, under the title Working and Learning Together to Build Stronger Communities, emphasising the complementary and all-embracing role. The object's purpose was foremost the creation of community. Eight years later the government and COSLA were able to sign a concordat signalling unanimity as to agreed purposes.

A crucial agency in communicating ideas in this critical field is the Scottish Community Development Centre which supports best practice, and is recognised by the Government as the national lead body for community development. Essentially its mission is to influence policy makers, work with others with related interests, and build 'strong, healthy, sustainable, and equitable communities.' It works at four levels: with policy makers, public bodies, dedicated community agencies, and community groups. Examples of its work have been a detailed commentary upon the Government's draft guidance and regulations consequent upon the enactment of the Community Empowerment [Scotland] Act, 2015, and promotion of a conference on the Third Sector dealing with its relationship with academia.[26]

Further and Higher Education

As noted above, Further Education colleges were withdrawn from the superintendence of local government in a move paralleling that in England and Wales. This major initiative rent asunder 'the seamless robe' of local government's education service. Each institution became a corporate body and was directly funded by the Scottish Government. Whilst some would have welcomed such a constitutional change, it was not long before an intimate, possibly, sometimes, a cramping local control was recognised to have yielded to what was perceived to be a more insensitive command structure, the more so as the colleges were grouped into regional units as a precursor to merger. Though their work was ostensibly cast as being vital to the nation's economic well-being, each often saw itself as the Cinderella of the education world as the university and even the school went to the ball. As for the universities,

as in the case of England and Wales, the binary system of universities and institutions of higher education, fulfilling separate and complementary roles, was abandoned. Both were brought under a common funding regime, and, in due course subject to meeting certain criteria, the so-called central institutions became universities. As elsewhere in the UK, the sector had vastly expanded following the Robbins Report. However, they continued to project a distinctive image, attributable at least in part, in latter years, to the Scottish Government's policy of free provision for students.

Careers Advice

The Scottish Government identified as a priority the development of career services. The commitment was to an all-age universal service which would give independent advice of high quality. The strategy, published in March 2011, was to modernise provision with the object in mind of raising aspirations and realising everyone's potential. What was thought to be needed was a wider range of services, including 'on-line, telephone, face-to-face and partnership working.' The best use of resources was essential, albeit these were necessarily limited. More people had to be encouraged and helped to make full use of new technologies. There had to be more face-to-face support, especially for those needing additional aid. In consequence, the improved service would be characterised by the extensive use of the Web, involve user and self-managed provision, have a life-long perspective on skills development, be properly related to the curriculum, be delivered through a range of partners in addition to career professionals, be enabling rather than directive, and make use of many channels and resources. Overall strategic direction would be handled by Skills Development Scotland working collaboratively with schools, colleges, local authorities, and others.[27]

Further progress was registered with the publication of the Wood Report in 2014. Here was a determined attempt to translate hope into a tangible programme to address the growing problem of unemployment amongst the young: prepare the young more competently for the world of work whilst still in school, ensure that colleges focussed

upon employment and progress, promote modern apprenticeships based on higher level skills and the needs of industry, and ensure that more employers engaged with education and the recruitment of workers directly from school and college. There would be firm targets and crafted programmes. By way of illustration, each of Scotland's 363 secondary schools should be in a long-term partnership arrangement with employers within three years.[28]

Gaelic

A theme of increasing importance has been the place of Gaelic in the curriculum. At the time of the enactment of the 1945 legislation there was sympathy within the teaching profession and the education establishment generally for a child-centric focus. Thus in areas in the northwest and islands, where the language of the home and street was Gaelic, there was support for its use in primary schools.[29] Shortly, this was followed by permission for Gaelic in the teaching of language and literature in similar areas in secondary schools.[30] The Advisory Council, however, rejected the proposal that Gaelic should be on the curriculum of all Scottish secondary schools, stressing the driving impulse to equip pupils for the wider world. In the bleak terms of the Advisory Committee, Gaelic 'was difficult to learn…lacked utility value, did not have a literature of "sustained greatness" comparable with the immense range and volume of its European counterparts.'[31] Given time, demand for the language's support increased and in 1961 it was reported that some lowland towns with a strong Gaelic speaking population required provision.

What was now emerging was acceptance of a dual aspect: not only should the young, whose first language it was, be supported in the interests of effective education, but the language itself should be promoted in the interests of its survival. A Gaelic Education Scheme was launched in bilingual areas of Inverness-shire in 1956. Its focus was on oral immersion in the early primary stage, introduction of reading for monolingual Gaelic speakers, teaching of Gaelic through the medium of Gaelic, and the use of Gaelic for the teaching of history, geography, nature study,

physical education, art and scripture. This initiative was prompted by reviewing practice in Wales. A bilingual programme was initiated by the Western Isles Council in 1975 with Scottish Education Department financial support and was successfully extended by 1981 to thirty-four of their sixty primary schools. Parental attitudes had changed over the years from initially having reservations that Gaelic could be an impediment to social mobility to encouragement of the use of the language.[32] Secondary school provision of Gaelic is more limited: only fifteen of the thirty-three secondary schools to which Gaelic-medium primary schools transfer, provided any subjects through the medium of Gaelic.[33] Whilst progress in sustaining the language has thus been made nationally, further development is, however, faltering for want of Gaelic speaking teachers.

Commercial World and City Deals

Attracting commercial enterprise to the cause of school improvement in the maintained sector has been firmly resisted. Historically, nevertheless, the profits of business played a major part in establishing and building up the major private secondary schools in Edinburgh which, even to this day, make a significant contribution to overall provision. Likewise, commercial enterprise has facilitated growth in higher education.

More recently, in emulation of developments elsewhere in the United Kingdom, attention is turning to the concept of City Regions. Intrinsically, the notion is the promotion of economic well-being by harnessing public resources, including further and higher education and commercial backing with financial aid, and, the granting of powers by government [both UK and devolved]. In this scenario, local authorities in a region voluntarily agree to collaborate in the interests of a greater whole. The movement is in essence, a local government reorganisation from the bottom up, but one dependent upon support from on high. In the 2016 UK budget a 'City Region Deal' announcement was made in respect of Edinburgh, including the local authorities in the south east of Scotland [26% of Scotland's population]. It was recognised:

> …as a mechanism for accelerated growth by pulling in significant government investment in infrastructure, skills and innovation our economic

performance will be significantly improved, which will not only generate funds to pay back this initial investment but also draw in significantly additional funding from the private sector. It is also about greater autonomy and decision-making power for the region to help us deliver public services more effectively and to tackle inequality and deprivation…' [£Ibn from government and an estimated £3.2bn from the private sector].[34]

Conclusions

Reflecting upon Scotland's history of the administration of education since the Second World War, the overriding characteristic distinguishing it from that of England and Wales, is the phenomenon of a central education establishment holding sway, exercising a broadly conservative set of attitudes towards reform, and upholding a national pride in the system's achievements. That establishment, whilst lacking constitutional fixity, included the Edinburgh-based education department, the inspectorate, various agencies such as that controlling qualifications, assessment, and the teaching profession in the shape of the General Teaching Council.

Local government in this assessment, stands slightly outside that establishment, its ambivalent status possibly attributable to a history different from that of English and Welsh local government. As noted, unlike the case of England and Wales, the local boards did not yield immediately to local government: there was a significant intermediary stage, from 1918 to 1929, when the education service was managed by ad hoc directly-elected regional boards. It is clear, too, that at the time of the parliamentary debate on the 1945 legislation, there were many, including the Secretary of State, who then entertained a preference for a specialist body for the local education service. As in England and Wales, there were further reorganisations, in the 1970s and 1990s, which contributed to a destabilising of the institution of local government. In this process local democracy became a casualty. Both the 1944 Act for England and Wales and the 1945 Act for Scotland had as their *leitmotif* the very purpose of education as sustaining and promoting democracy. Whilst the larger regional authorities, created in the 70s, were able to

provide strong advisory services to beneficial effect, the subsequent local government reorganisation in the 90s, was to witness the passing away of this significant manifestation of the utility of the local authority education service.

More recently, the vesting of responsibility for further education colleges in regional authorities, and, deliberation about the transfer of general education provision from the contemporary local government entities to regional units is further evidence of the fragility of local government's status. This may be contrasted with the assured position of the pre-1970s local government in England and Wales when Sir William Alexander, Secretary of the Association of Education Committees, could and did confer with Whitehall ministers from a position of equality. Significant, too, is the contrast between the current perceived ambiguity in the condition of Scotland's local government's position and that advocated for it by the OECD. The OECD is highly critical of the current 'marginalising' of local government, considering that it has a vital part in effecting necessary reform in the 'middle' between central government and individual institutions. [Needless to say, Alexander would not have countenanced such a lowly 'middle' status.]

The Calvinistic antecedents of the school boards had presumed purposes in education that were very much more than the utilitarian. A more secular age has more readily embraced an agenda focussing upon competitiveness, especially in economic matters. Though good citizenship and well-being feature in the litany of reform, enabling the state to outperform other developed and developing countries seems to feature more prominently in government rhetoric and processes. The inculcation of tolerance, be it in the fields of race, mobility of population, migration, community, or any other distinguishing characteristic, seems to be more muted.

In spite of the energetic zeal put into reform, it remains the case that many derive little from school. The Wood Report, as late as 2014, noted that much of the school population failed to continue in either further or higher education and that one in five school leavers was unemployed. In England, where comparable disappointing results for reform are witnessed, attention is turning to the creation of a new generation of

university technical colleges for the 14–19 age range, on a self-selecting basis, concentrating upon technical skills, modern apprenticeships, and many of the concerns featured in the Wood Report.[35]

Like the rest of the United Kingdom, Scotland, too, has sought to be in the vanguard of the Global Education Reform Movement [GERM] whilst its excesses have not characterised the Government's programme. Though Scotland has resisted particular initiatives, such as free schools, academies, and opting out of local authority control, it has, nevertheless, fully embraced assessment, targets, and categorisation. It has regularly intervened in the detailed working out of programmes and has created a climate of control, recognised by teachers as a challenge to their professional status. In resisting some of the manifestations of GERM, it has also provided a more uniform structure which has the merit in the creation of a less divided society, albeit at the price of less innovation. In spite of spirited efforts to restore its reputation the 2016 PISA scores were the worst ever performance for Scotland, now behind England and Northern Ireland in Reading and Science.

Historically, Scotland has pioneered much in Education, including, monumentally, free primary, secondary and university education. In adult education it developed the mechanical institute which spread elsewhere. In more recent times, since devolution, it has been a powerful influence in shaping developments in Wales relating in particular, as considered in Chapter 6, to the curriculum and to the training of teachers.

Notes

1. Hansard Parliamentary Debates, Education [Scotland] Bill, Second Reading, 1 May 1945, Column 1263.
2. Ibid., Columns 1272–1276.
3. Education [Scotland] Act, 1945. Legislation.gov.uk. Evans was duly to serve as the third religious representative for three years on the Fife Education Committee.
4. Patterson, L., Schools and Schooling, in *The University of Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, Lynch, M., editor, University of Oxford Press, 2001, p. 567.

5. Watt, J., The Introduction and development of the comprehensive school in the west of Scotland 1965–1980 in Dunbartonshire, the City of Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire, PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1989.
6. *A Curriculum for Excellence: The Curriculum Review Group*, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh, 2004, p. 3.
7. Ibid., p. 12.
8. Ibid., pp. 14/15.
9. Ibid., pp. 16/17.
10. *By Diverse Means: Improving Scottish Education, Commission on School Reform*, Final Report, March 2013, Reform Scotland, pp. 5–6.
11. Ibid., pp. 113–114. R. Elmore commends practice in New York's District 2, a deprived area, which effected permanent high quality professional development focussing upon learning and teaching as a management strategy, involving all staff in the district and schools.
12. The writer participated in an exchange programme involving the Council of Ontario Directors of Education and Society of Education Officers and witnessed at first hand developments in urban Toronto and rural Huron County.
13. *OECD, Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective*, 2015. http://www.oecd.org/e. pp. 102/103.
14. http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/downloads/EssentialExecSummaryFinal.pdf. Leading for All, Executive Summary, Recommendations, pp. 22–25.
15. Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister, statement, January 16, 2016.
16. Stephen Ball, seminar, Glasgow University, February 23, 2016.
17. Stephen Ball and Carolina Junemann, *Networks, New Governance and Education*, The Policy Press, Bristol, 2012.
18. Lindsay Paterson, Schools and Schooling, in *The Scottish Companion to Scottish History*, edited by M. Lynch, Oxford University Press, 2001, contends that the period of the large regional councils, abolished in 1996, provided the education service with the beneficial advantage of being able to redistribute resources. p. 569.
19. Evans cites the appointment of Principal [and Assistant] Teachers of Guidance 'to supply support to pupils who needed it in multifarious aspects of guidance addressing their training and common problems'.
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22. Sutherland, D., Adult education, c. 1750–1950: A distinctive mission? In *The Edinburgh History of Education in Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 2015, pp. 247–261.
23. Hansard, ibid., column 1263.
24. Ibid., columns 1266 and 1267.
25. Osler Report: Change Through Learning, 1998. Scottish Executive.
26. Scottish Community Development Centre, SCDC, www.scdc.uk.
27. www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/skills-strategy/adviceandguidance.
28. Scottish Government, Sir Ian Wood, Education Working For All! Committee for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, Final Report, June, 2014.
29. Scottish Education Department, *Report of the Advisory Committee on Education*, Primary Education, HMSO, 1946.
30. Ibid., Secondary Education, 1947, p. 271.
31. Ibid., p. 271.
32. Mitchell, R., and others, *Report of an Independent Evaluation of the Western Isles Bilingual Education Project*, University of Stirling, 1987, pp. 190–199.
33. O'Hanlon F., and Paterson, L., Gaelic education since 1872, in *The Edinburgh History of Education*, p. 315.
34. A. Burns, Leader, City of Edinburgh Council, Accelerating Growth, City Region Deal, Edinburgh and South East Scotland, 2015, www.acceleratinggrowth.org.uk.
35. *The Guardian*, Are University Technical Colleges the Next Big Thing? https://theguardian.com/education/2011/ma.

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8

Post-Brexit Education in the UK: A Formidable Challenge But a Chance to Change Direction in Schooling

Tim Brighouse

Introduction

Predicting the end of one age and the beginning of another baffles the skills of most contemporary commentators. Few in France in 1788 would really have expected the events of the following year: nor, in the early months of 1989, would the shrewdest of Berliners have expected that the Wall was about to come down. Both these events were the precursors to massive social changes whose rippling effects reached the education system in their own and other societies.

It is therefore tempting to see the referendum decision to leave the European Union—so-called Brexit—as similar. There are of course hazards in any historical comparisons. Among them in the case of Brexit is that, whereas the other two historical watersheds had a unifying effect on hitherto divided societies, Brexit, arguably, has laid bare a society starkly divided on attitudes, values and opinions on many issues within the ironically misnamed United Kingdom. After all, 'Leavers' and

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'Remainers' appeared to have polar-opposite views on the importance of independence and interdependence, on nationalism and internationalism, on our obligations towards others, on diversity, on immigration and on a whole range of other issues including the health of the economy. There have even been some concerns at the escalation of 'hate' crimes and racist behaviours in the wake of Brexit. This represents a picture of a society not at peace with itself and fearful for the future.

This impression was confirmed by the General Election of 2017 where for the first time for many years the two major parties presented sharply contrasting manifesto promises with neither of the two major parties achieving an overall majority despite sharply increased votes for each.

In short Brexit, amid the inevitable and great uncertainty which accompanies its exact form, has bought into sharp relief what divides rather than unites us as a society.

Schools are the wishing-well for all society's hopes and fears. Fall behind in Pisa international tests on the basics and it's the schools' fault. Terrorist attacks? Introduce the Prevent agenda and promote 'British Values'—in the schools. From economic woes to sporting failures, from concerns about mental health, eating habits to a rise in drug and drink problems, it's usually the schools which are simultaneously seen as instrumental in tackling the problem and one of the vital keys to finding the right solution.

Brexit and the economic and social problems it poses will not be resolved unless the schools throughout the UK play their part. If there is a link between standards of educational outcome in the schools and economic performance, as politicians believe, schools will need to have yet greater success in terms of improvement than they have achieved over the last twenty-five years. And a country so obviously divided, will need to heal its wounds. Here too school is the main community space which a country trusts to bring up its future citizens with the highest common factor of shared values to ensure it remains prosperous, stable, secure and reasonably harmonious.

It is for this reason that this chapter focuses on schools and colleges rather than universities. Schools and colleges affect all youngsters until the age of 19. Universities, which have of course expanded their reach from a single figure percentage of any age group to almost half the

population. Moreover, a thriving university sector is vital to a country's prosperity but the vitality of the existing UK university sector is such that it stands a good chance of withstanding the undoubted turbulence caused by Brexit and remaining world class while contributing vitally to the economic and other well-being of our country. But universities do not touch everyone and I shall therefore confine my attention mainly to the schooling system.

The Schooling System's Inheritance

It will be necessary to harness the successes and tackle the weaknesses of the present schooling arrangements. Among the former is a collective greater understanding over the years of how to effect school improvement and improve teaching quality within a school and therefore pupil outcomes as measured by test and exam results. Therein however lies a weakness, namely that tests and exams are narrowly drawn leading to an equally narrowly drawn curriculum. Brexit therefore could be a stimulus to address this issue and, without in any way distracting from essential basic skills and knowledge, to extending the collective ambition for all our schools so that all our future citizens know what it is to:

- Solve multi-dimensional problems which demand interdisciplinary knowledge skill and judgement.
- Work effectively and collaboratively in teams.
- Be digitally aware, skilled, and creative.

There is however another important aspect of schools' and colleges' work. They will have a key role to play in any post-Brexit plan to heal the divisions and uncertainties which the referendum campaign starkly revealed. It is not merely that any economically successful modern society needs its citizens to have high level skills and education to prosper, but that as many commentators have remarked, education is an essential ingredient in any society's claim to be civilised. Some agreement, therefore, on shared values and attitudes needs to be articulated by the state to provide overt support for the daily work of schools and colleges.

I shall argue that it is urgent, at the highest level and in general terms, for the four countries of the United Kingdom, while exercising separately their devolved powers over detail, to agree what are the unifying and overarching values, aims, purposes, skills and knowledge we need in future UK citizens and on what principles the schooling systems—for they are individually very different in each of Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England—might be organised to achieve this. Ideally, there would be ready agreement about a shared commitment to equal opportunities, even if differently organised, for a UK citizen to realise their talents whether they live in any of the four countries.

As other chapters in this book have revealed, irrespective of Brexit, we are probably at a watershed moment for these issues affecting our different systems within the four countries. What Brexit does is to throw into sharp relief the urgency of addressing them—at least if we are anxious to preserve a *United* Kingdom.

Before turning to the issues of the schooling system's aims and purposes together with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and purposes it seeks to promote, I reflect briefly on matters covered in greater detail by other contributors to the book in order to be clear about our weaknesses and strengths. In doing so I shall argue that we have lived through two ages, the second of which, dubbed 'Markets and Managerialism' is naturally coming to its exhausted close and should give way, post-Brexit, to one of 'Hope, Ambition and Partnership'.

The first, an age of 'Optimism and Trust', was gestated in the darkest days of the Second World War.

I have a slightly different view of the various educational ages since Butler's 1944 Act[1]: but what all agree about is that Butler's Act heralded a post-war age of 'Trust and Optimism'.

The Act was based on three assumptions.

The first was that central government's role was to set the general policy guidelines only; the detail and most power should be left to local government which was closer to the people and therefore better able to understand their needs. (After all, a war had been fought against Dictators in the Axis countries who had consolidated their power base in their respective countries by getting rid of local government.)

Moreover, there was a long tradition in England that the state should intervene in education only as a provider of last resort.

Legislation gave the secretary of state just three specific duties—approving the removal of air-raid shelters; securing a sufficient supply of suitably qualified teachers; and approving the opening and closure of schools and the rationing of scarce capital resource for new schools. Power over the curriculum, staffing and resources was left mainly to local education authorities, who in their turn handed over curricular power to the schools.

The second assumption related to the purpose of education and schooling. In that, Butler was influenced[2] heavily by the writings of William Temple, a former Archbishop of Canterbury and particularly one passage he had written:

> Until Education has done more work than it has had an opportunity of doing, you cannot have a society organised on the basis of justice, for this reason…. that there will always be a strain between what is due to a man, in view of his humanity with all his powers and capabilities and what is due to him at the moment of time as a member of society with all his faculties still undeveloped, with many of his tastes warped, with his powers largely crushed.
>
> Are you going to treat a man as what he is or what he might be? Morality, I think, requires that you should treat him as what he might be, as what he might become…and business requires that you should treat him as he is.
>
> You cannot get rid of that strain except by raising what he is to the level of what he might be. That is the whole work of education. Give him the full development of his powers and there will no longer be that conflict between the man as he is and the man as he might become.
>
> And so you can have no justice as the basis of your social life until education has done its full work. And then again, you can have no real freedom, because until a man's whole personality has developed, he cannot be free in his own life…..And you cannot have political freedom any more than you can have moral freedom until people's powers are developed, for the simple reason that over and over again we find men with a cause which is just… are unable to state it in a way which might enable it to prevail….there exists a form of mental slavery which is as real as any economic form….We are pledged to destroy it…if you want human liberty, you must have educated people.

In short 'political freedom', 'moral freedom' and 'social justice' were concepts which resonated with politicians from all parties and across the four countries of the UK. After all they had just fought a long and violent war and remembered only too well the years of the 'depression' which preceded it. It was easy to agree that Education was a 'good thing' and we needed more of it.

The third assumption was that it was not for governments to interfere in matters best left to professionals. In education, this meant *what should be taught and how it should be taught*. Some politicians remembered from their youth, the end—forty years earlier—of the disastrous period of central national prescription, known as 'payment by results' (I suppose today we would call it Performance Related Pay through Performance Management).

This age of 'Trust and Optimism' affected all four countries of the UK and was characterised by a general agreement that education was at the heart of a better society. Schools were built; Colleges of Further Education, Teacher Training Colleges, Colleges of Advanced Technology—later turned into Polytechnics (and ultimately Universities)—were created and run by LEAs. As other chapters underline, Local Authorities also created a Youth Service, Adult Education Centres, Teachers Centres and Outdoor Pursuit Centres for residential trips as they also founded a network of public libraries and youth employment services (later called the Careers Service). During these years—in the early 1970s—children who, up to then had been regarded as 'ineducable', were brought within the remit of LEAs, as special schools were established and the world of Special Educational Needs expanded.

Gradually however the consensus which had welcomed the creation of the Welfare State after the end of the Second World War evaporated. And its disappearance affected the direction of education policies and practice.

Starting in 1980, a second age, which superseded the first of Optimism and Trust, emerged. Margaret Thatcher was the key figure in instigating the change as she introduced what some have called neo-liberal inspired reforms, first of a sluggish and lethargic economy and then of sclerotic public services including education. This second educational

age might be dubbed one of 'Markets and Managerialism', and was punctuated by 'White Papers'—followed by Acts of Parliament—with mantra words such as 'choice' (for parents) 'diversity' (of provision and types of school) 'autonomy' (for schools) and 'accountability'. Taken together it was hoped that the realisation of the ideas behind such words in practice would foster competition within a 'market' of schooling. Such measures would begin to solve what was perceived as unsatisfactory standards of outcome from schools. The same educational 'White Papers' however, sometimes contained the words 'Equity' and 'Equality' and, if both were to be realised, they demanded regulation by the state since market forces, though never publicly acknowledged, couldn't be relied upon to deliver those ideals. On the contrary markets and competition tend to produce losers as well as winners—sometimes more of the former than the latter. It was necessary therefore, to allow the state to be 'managerial' as it attempted to reduce failure and promote equity. From 1980, there have been more than 40 Acts of Parliament which have given the Secretary of State over 2000 powers but with the holder of that office not obviously accountable, even to Parliament in a regular way,[3] for their exercise. The writer Alan Bennett has called it a 'totalitarian tendency'.[4] It extends to the Secretary of State defining in detail what shall be taught, how it should be taught and when it should be taught—something never attempted by Napoleon, Hitler and other continental dictators, and interestingly by no other western developed country—at least to the same extent as that enacted in England.

The three other countries within the UK found it increasingly difficult to live within the constraints imposed by Westminster's departure from the Butler settlement. The approach was increasingly unpopular in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. Although in the post-war years the detailed flowering of Butler's blueprint had influenced Northern Ireland and Scotland less directly than England and Wales, it had still powerfully affected their educational climates. (The Scottish Office and Stormont, until it collapsed during the troubles,[5] had always contrived to take the best from Westminster initiatives but had adapted them to legitimately different local circumstances.) That changed however with the creation of the Welsh Assembly, the Scottish Parliament and the

Northern Ireland Assembly in 1998. Westminster's writ in education no longer applied beyond England to the great relief of the other three countries: and, in the twenty years since, the four countries' systems have diverged more widely.

For example, a large audience of Scottish teachers in 2015[6] had never heard of the requirement, imposed and policed by OFSTED to promote what are called 'British Values'.[7] Nor were they aware of the 'Prevent'[8] strategy.

With Brexit that divergence becomes much more serious not least because if there is no agreement among the four countries on aims, values, purposes, skills and knowledge, there is more likelihood of the UK earning the soubriquet 'the sick man of Europe' torn by internal strife and self-reproach, than of it emerging from its post-Brexit confusion as an exemplar of a creative, compassionate, prosperous, harmonious and collaborative set of societies respecting and celebrating each other's differences while united by an explicitly agreed shared educational and civic purpose.

What is needed is a UK summit of the first ministers from the four countries to agree, necessarily in the most general terms, some UK-wide Educational Aims and Principles. For such an event to be successful, it would need to be preceded by a set of conferences, some real and others digitally organised, with participants—teachers, headteachers, parents, community representatives and experts—of the four countries, who would have a chance to add their voices as background to the deliberations of the four first ministers.

The outcomes would include a set of statements in general terms about aims and purposes with an acknowledgement that it was, is and will remain for each country separately to determine in detail its own policies and practices.

What, therefore, in general terms might a report from such a summit look like?

It might have five sections;

The first would outline the **Context** both of the UK in the wake of Brexit and of the wider world. It would include migration and immigration statistics and make the reasonable assumption that, even if the respective figures were to balance, it is increasingly important to educate

a future set of citizens ready to take their place either within the UK or in other parts of an increasingly mobile world, where different cultures, faiths and languages sit side by side.

It would cover the transformative effects, irrespective of Brexit, of recent developments in technologies and their impact in particular on how young people grow up and on career opportunities and the world of work.

It will be necessary at least to ask the questions:

- 'If curricular and exam arrangements which reflect some of the needs of a pre-informational technological age continue to be essential, are they sufficient for our future needs?'
- 'If they are not sufficient how will they need to change?'
- 'How will we value and develop skills other than those dependent on language and numeracy skills? And what skills will they be?'
- 'How will we assess and report on a young person's ability to work in teams and their skill in solving interdisciplinary problems?'[9]
- 'Will we continue to be dominated by a view of intelligence which while valid in 1944 is increasingly questioned by research? In short do we still ask 'how intelligent someone is' when we might better be asking 'how are they intelligent'?
- 'And if that is the right question what implications are there for curriculum, exams and accountability?'

The second section would cover **Background** information outlining both the economic and educational differences within the four countries in terms of structures and outcomes in schools, colleges and universities. This would be mainly descriptive and be illuminated by a section on comparative performances in international tests such as PIRLS, TIMMS and PISA over time: it would acknowledge that, although there have been very different approaches to structural arrangements in the four countries over the last twenty years especially, there appears to be no significant difference in pupil outcomes, at least as measured by these international tests. The background would also need to illustrate the differences in approach to Further Education and to Universities.

The third section would be focused on **Aims, Purposes, Values and Principles.** It isn't necessary here to rehearse these in detail, but is fair to pose some questions which will need to be considered and which have foiled our attempts to answer satisfactorily in the past. For example, if our overall **aim** is expressed as seeking to educate all children and young people to become citizens '*who can think for themselves and act for others*', how do we organise our pre-school, schooling system, colleges and universities to overcome the abnormal barriers facing children born in disadvantaged circumstances?

It could be argued that we have attempted to do just that through special schools and provision within mainstream schools for those with the most obvious cognitive and physical barriers to learning, but that we wrestle with doing so for those who, through no fault of their own, face considerable barriers, through an absence of aspirational role models and a surfeit of pessimism, resignation and simmering violence in their communities and where action relating to housing, poverty and employment needs to do hand in hand with high quality educational provision.

In short, it will need to be explicit about the need to aim high for **all,** not just **some** or even **many** of our children and young people. To do so has both an economic and moral imperative.

That will lead naturally to a section on how people have different talents and that the state and the individual will profit by releasing and making the best of that talent. The report might cover here our changing view of intelligence[10] and the need for the four systems in the UK to adapt to that changed view of intelligence in both the means of assessment/exams, our different methods of reporting on them and our accountability arrangements through inspection.

It might in consequence at least ask whether there is any evidence to support the working assumption within recent changes in the English system that all children should make progress in their learning at the same pace at least in English and Maths.[11]

It should be clear that one of the purposes of schooling in particular is to make sure with parental support that children grow up honest and with the usual virtues outlined in the major religions, all of which are differently represented in the four countries. Whatever a school's approach to religion it should be expected to promote pluralism, which

requires an emphasis on the need for any citizen to respect other people's legitimate views, even though she/he has argued fiercely to the contrary and consider them to be wrong.

Doubtless it will be necessary for the four first ministers to agree what values unite the four countries: these will presumably be called 'UK Values' and would replace those inexplicably promoted as British Values by the Westminster government.

The subsequent sections of the report would underline the fact that in each of the four countries there are different arrangements and that it will properly remain for each country to take decisions on its own particular detailed direction and that the first ministers are rehearsing the need to compare notes and for UK educators to learn from each other as well as elsewhere in order to make our system constantly better. It might even go so far as to agree to take stock every five or ten years of the different countries progress and the different arrangements which have led to it.

The fourth section of the First Ministers' report would affirm their support for **Pre-school and Early Years** provision. There is good evidence that some of subsequent inequalities have their roots in infant experiences in the first 18 months of life.[12] While not suggesting great change, there is surely a case, given the UK agreements on maternity and paternity leave entitlements to ensure that more emphasis is placed by the four countries on parental support services based in health settings in order to ensure that parents are well informed and encouraged to immerse their youngsters in language, music and creative play as well as all those diet practices advocated by Health Visitors.

A fifth section on **Schools** will need to cover the differences which have grown up among the four countries. It will illustrate the different approaches to the following:

- *Structures, Governance and Finance*

It is arguable that England has the most concentration of power in the national government in what is a centralised system with, consequently, the least involvement of local government. Wales and Scotland still have local authorities with a strong role. Northern Ireland has recently

replaced the five Education and Library Boards with one organised on an area basis. {The population of Northern Ireland (c.1.5 million) means that communication and accessibility to those making decisions is less an issue than it is in England (population c.47 million).} Governance doesn't stop there. Schools themselves in England and Wales have always had and still have governing bodies drawn with representation from various interest groups (e.g. staff, parents, churches, business and the community). There are also school governors in Northern Ireland, but Scotland has no such school governing bodies, although it does have more direct parental influence. It is fair to say that the Scottish local authority is more powerful vis-à-vis the school head and staff, than is the case elsewhere.

All four countries have 'Faith' state schools: Northern Ireland because of its history has the most though some of the cities in England and Scotland have a similar profile.

The recent move towards all schools in England becoming Academies or Free Schools and the encouragement of Multi-Academy Trusts[13] is not replicated in any of the three other countries.

Northern Ireland has a selective secondary school system and there is much selection (some overt as in Kent, Buckinghamshire and Lincolnshire and some covert through admission practices) in England and may be more. Scotland and Wales can lay claim to having secondary schools organised along comprehensive lines.

So far as finance is concerned, England has gone furthest in delegating budgets to schools. Schools have control now of all their revenue budgets and can move money freely from one heading to another—including staffing. English schools also control monies for repairs and capital. England is committed to introducing a national funding formula having abandoned in 2006 a system still maintained in Scotland and Wales of being content with allowing local authorities to determine how much is spent on schools education. (Northern Ireland had left it to the five Education and Library Boards but is rationalising through the one board for the whole country.)

- *Curriculum, Assessment and Examinations*

There is great variation in curriculum arrangements. England uniquely allows the Secretary of State to determine within a legislative framework

what should be taught and recently how it should be taught and assessed. Over the years teacher and other professional influence over the curriculum has all but disappeared.

Each of the other three counties also have a national curriculum but, in the case of Scotland and Wales, with much more involvement of teachers in the design. England's National Curriculum is more narrowly defined in terms of knowledge and skills.

In all four countries, teachers feel that whatever the national curriculum declares—and the Welsh and Scottish versions are internationally admired for being exemplars of what might be described as a 'Whole Education'—they are in effect constrained in what they teach by the testing and examination system. In England this is particularly so: national tests and exams are norm-referenced, externally set and mainly externally marked with the results published as part of the accountability system. Tests are required at 7, 11, 16 and 18. In the three other countries there is less frequent testing although more frequent testing is being discussed.

It is fair to state that the same tests or exams have been used for multiple individual and collective purposes—diagnostic, formative, summative and comparative (both among and between schools and to trace standards over time). This has detracted from reliability so exams, which have been reasonably reliable for one purpose have been much less so for another.

There is a strong argument for random sample testing to establish not only comparisons of standards over time but comparisons of performance in the four countries. PIRLS, TIMMS and PISA and other new international tests could be used for such purposes. Would the four first ministers agree?

There might be a case for arguing that post 16 there is the need for a British BAC to replace existing Highers and Advanced Level. Such a development might pave the way for a more appropriate way of assessing all the skills and qualities schools and colleges are trying to develop in their students.

In all countries, a running sore in danger of becoming a fatal wound for so many youngsters' prospects is the absence of IAG (Independent Advice and Guidance) for youngsters at 14 and again at 16, 17, 18 and 19.

- *Accountability*

Since the late 1980s, led by practice in England, schools have become more and more accountable. It has reached the point in England where one set of poor test/exam results can cause school headteachers to lose their jobs[14] and where to teach in Year 6 in primary schools, or to be head of English or Maths in secondary schools is regarded as to be in a particularly vulnerable post.

The combination of published results and Inspection has made UK school accountability the fiercest, as well as the most narrowly focused in the developed world, with England leading the way. Because the process is so narrow, schools are not held accountable for the contribution they make to the physical and mental health and well-being of their students. It would be easy with existing instruments to repair that gap at least on a locality basis.[15]

Each country has national inspectorates, the development of which has reflected the move away from an age of 'Trust and Optimism' to one of 'Markets and Managerialism'. So great is professional distrust that schools have been given less and less notice of inspection. Of the four inspectorates, OFSTED has gone furthest in this direction and commands the least respect in schools.

- *Admissions Arrangements to Schools*

There are stark variations for parents in the question of admissions. In Wales and Scotland, the local authority lays down the criteria for admissions of pupils. In Northern Ireland, although the five Library Boards have given way to one board with five offices, government's role in admission arrangements is necessarily less. This is because 95% of schools are either 'Controlled' or 'Maintained' and secondary education despite the abolition of the eleven plus remains selective with grammar schools setting their own tests. Contrary to practice in the other three countries neither Catholic nor Protestant schools can stipulate religious affiliation within their admission requirements.

In England with the growth of the number of Free Schools and Academies, the plethora of different, and in urban areas, mutually incoherent admission criteria baffle most parents.

It begs the question of the four first ministers 'Should parents, wherever they live in the UK, have the right, if they want to exercise it, to attend the school closest to them?'

- *Teachers: Their Initial Training, Development and Retention*

The supply, development and retention of teachers is arguably the greatest challenge for Wales, Scotland and England. All are suffering from shortages with Northern Ireland, on the other hand, having a strong record for initial training development retention and development. Without teachers, improving schools is a pipe-dream. England is stumbling into a serious shortfall with individual schools resorting to unqualified staff and, in urban areas especially London, seeking recruitment abroad, despite the restrictions on immigration which makes that increasingly difficult.

The Continuous Professional Development of teachers once they are trained is even more important because if done well, it helps retain teachers in the profession as well as encouraging teachers to become ever better at what they do. This too is tackled differently in the four countries.

Indeed the differences among the four countries in this—arguably the most important matter—are many. There are GTCs (General Teaching Councils) but not in England or Northern Ireland. Pay scales are different and, while there remains huge respect for the profession in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the incessant denigration of schools and teachers is a serious issue in England.

- *Services for Pupils with Special Needs and Services for the Individual Beyond the School*

One of the great success stories of the last 45 years has been the progress made in identifying barriers to children's learning and then making provision either through separate special schools or units or through the mainstream to overcome some of those barriers and to develop such youngsters' potential. This has been true of all four countries. Of course, we continue to discover how Special provision might improve further and there will remain a constant debate about how far it is possible to proceed along the inclusion spectrum from locational to social to

educational. Again a comparative study of practice across the UK would benefit policy and practice in each territory.

When it comes to the Youth and Careers Services there has developed wide divergence, with the English System having neglected the Youth Service in recent years and having abandoned attempts to have any coherent planned or reliable provision for Independent Careers Advice and Guidance. This has hit hardest those youngsters in mainstream schools achieving least from the system though it has also led to other youngsters making poor choices. It is arguably the most important 'unmet need issue' facing the education services in the four countries. A recent Welsh report[16] on Youth Provision and a report from Gatsby[17] on IAG point out better directions for both. To some extent, this area for too long has been the Cinderella of the system.

To complete a comprehensive picture of a post-Brexit UK, there would need to be a sixth section covering the much-neglected contributions which **Colleges of FE and Adult Education** make to second, third and fourth chance education. Again, the provisions have grown apart among the four countries and very little attention has been given to making the best of what we have or in funding what we need in the future.

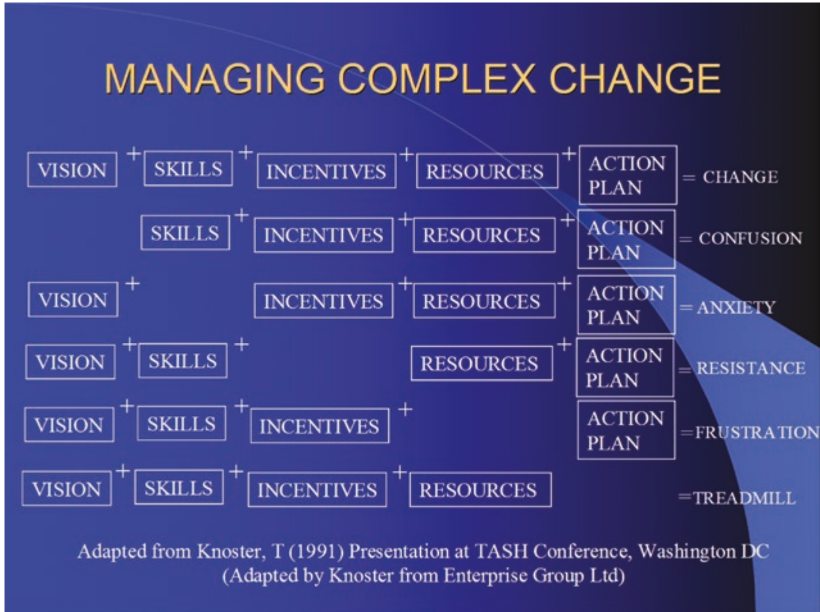
Conclusions

In the immediate post-war years, there was a discernible strategy for the creation of a renewed society. As I have argued, it was characterised by Trust and Optimism and there was a sense of a 'plan' of how the vision for a better society would be realised. Such 'plans' fell into disrepute in the subsequent age of 'Markets and Managerialism': after all those who espoused such neo-liberal economic policies believed that the market itself would find the solution. 'Planning' became a dirty word and was replaced by 'choice', 'diversity', 'autonomy' and 'accountability'.

More recently in other areas of our public life, the Iraq adventure for example or Brexit itself, the lack of a plan has been exposed as a weakness. Perhaps we are reaching a point where having some sort of

strategic plan, albeit in the knowledge that it will need to be modified in the light of circumstances is sensible.

In support of the need for a plan when managing complex change Knoster has used the schema set out below:



In the wake of Brexit, UK citizens could be forgiven for doubting the existence of any of the five essential ingredients postulated by Knoster and used widely by those responsible for running complex organisations in the public and private sectors.

Nowhere is it more needed now at least in England where successive Secretaries of State for Education—and Health for that matter—have continually sought what is called 'legacy' by constant and sometimes incoherent change. In the process and since 1998 in particular, our four countries are marching to different drum-beats. We are out of tune with each other.

It is probably inappropriate to suggest that the Four Ministers' Education Summit should produce or commission such a 'plan' since

they will be agreeing broad aims and purposes but it might be sensible for them to commit that, just as each of them commend development plans to all their schools and colleges, so each country might have a five-year plan which will be modified in the light of changing needs and events. The ministers, as suggested earlier might also commit to reviewing and comparing notes on a regular if infrequent basis.

The prize after all would be a United Kingdom pulling roughly in the same direction and once more using their separate education systems in broad alignment signalling a new age of 'Ambition Hope and Partnership'.

Notes

1. Pring, R., and Roberts, M. (Eds.), '*A Generation of Radical Change: Stories from the Field*', Routledge, 2015, Chapter 12.
2. Butler, R. A. '*Art of the Possible*', Hamish Hamilton, 1983.
3. Most of the legislation since 1988 has given powers to the Secretary of State who has to answer from time to the enquiries of House of Commons Select Committees. More recently 'arms-length' Quangos advising on the Curriculum have been discontinued.
4. '*The Guardian*', 31 October 2015.
5. Stormont was suspended in 1971 favour of direct rule from London, two years after the 'Battle of the Bogside'.
6. 'Tapestry' Master-class conference: Glasgow, 25 November 2015.
7. 'British Values' were set out in a press release from the DFE for English schools (27 November 2014) and followed up by OFSTED in school inspections. Among them was instilling among pupils a 'respect for *English* (sic) law'.
8. 'Prevent' is a strategy designed to pre-empt terrorism by identifying those teachers think might be at risk. They and school governors are required to take training in Prevent awareness and this is checked at Ofsted inspections.
9. CBI/Pearson annual report, '*The Right Combination*', July 2016.
10. The work of Howard Gardner, in particular, among many others has suggested different sorts of intelligence and talent.
11. The new English Curriculum lays down a requirement that children should not proceed beyond work lais out for their particular age group,

while GCSE accountability measures punish schools which allow children to take GCSE earlier than year 11.

12. The Importance of Early Years education received a boost from research in the USA from the Ypsilanti Highscope Perry Pre-school Project started by David Weikartt and researched in terms of impact over 40 years. The headline outcome suggests £16 saved for every $1 spent.
13. The growth of Multi-Academy Trusts has had the perverse effect of diminishing the autonomy of individual schools and the role of governing bodies who have become subservient to the Trust Board.
14. '*The Guardian*', 24 August 2016.
15. There is a survey devised by Strathclyde and Warwick Universities which assesses physical and mental health at age 9 and 14 which could be used to highlight the need to promote the health of young people.
16. Wylie report to Welsh Minister for Education March 2016.
17. A report from the Gatsby Foundation by Sir John Holman, '*Good Career Guidance*' (2015).

9

A Journalist's View

George Low

'That's what we fought the last war about' used to be a frequently used slogan in Sir William Alexander's weekly column for 'Education' magazine. What he was referring to was the essential message in the 1944 Education Act, passed through Parliament by the wartime Minister R. A. Butler in the year of the Normandy landings, that the country should set up a new education system after the war was over. This would be quite different from those in Stalinist Russia or Nazi Germany, it would be 'a national system locally administered' and one that gave to all children the right to an education suited to their 'age, ability and aptitude'. Above all, it would be subject to local democratic control through the new 'local education authorities' the Act envisaged as the creative agents for the new order of life in the era of post-war reconstruction.

For Sir William and his colleagues in the Association of Education Committees over the next 30 years the Butler Act was their Bible and

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they lived, worked and were prepared to die by it.[1] Alexander himself had worked right through the war trying to create, run and preserve a school system in Margate with German bombers and Spitfire fighters overhead and a permanent shortage of food, clothing, books and teachers to contend with and manage.[2] He saw the Butler Act as the creation of a new world where the next generation would not have to experience what their fathers, mothers and families had endured, suffered and died for. After the war, he moved up to Sheffield and created one of the best LEA systems in the country from nursery to university levels of learning.

I worked for Sir William on the editorial staff of the AEC magazine 'Education'. At first, I found this blunt old-fashioned Glaswegian a strange and rather harsh-tongued boss. But it was not long before I came to respect and admire his strong personal commitment to education and to local democracy. His work ethic and talents were formidable and he worked long, hard and fast every day. He could be critical of his staff and colleagues, but he was also a very good teacher and was prepared to spend time explaining and arguing with them. We all respected and shared his vision of education. My immediate boss was a Welshman, Tudor David, and he too had a powerful commitment to education, to local government—and to music, especially singing Welsh hymns. So I was in the hands of two top teachers, both from the outer reaches of the United Kingdom.

Another canny Scotsman on the scene was Stuart Maclure, the editor of the Times Educational Supplement at that time. Before, he had been the editor of 'Education' for many years and had devoted a lot of his time and skills to researching and writing the history of education in this country. He was a skilled journalist and editor who also knew how to establish contacts both in Westminster, Whitehall and in local government. He brought those skills and a small library of his own books on educational history with him to the TES, which he turned into one of the finest and strongest educational publications in the world. He also helped establish a strong professional body called the Education Correspondents Group. This used to meet regularly and lunch with the politicians and bureaucrats of the day and put them through a delightful and delicious inquisition over coffee.[3] He was also a key figure in establishing and developing another secret society called the All Souls

Group, which used to bring together all the top administrators and the Press in meetings that were 'strictly off the record' at Oxford weekends devoted to a Platonic study of the problems and best policies for the education system of this country—and the world.

The media were gaining an important influence on Westminster politics, but Alexander's weekly column in 'Education' continued to be the best source of information and advice for educational administrators in local government.[4] Unfortunately, times were changing in local politics: I joined the magazine just before the massive reorganization of counties and metropolitan councils in 1974 and the implementation of the Bains report,[5] which brought in the corporate management philosophy and put the LEAs under the central control of chief executives, personnel managers and corporate policymakers. This undermined the financial and political base of the AEC and it folded up, leaving its Education Publishing Company to Longmans. Sir William was given a peerage but continued to put forth his regular warnings about the centralization of education in both speeches and writing. But the role of the LEAs was on the way out and a new generation had taken over public administration which had forgotten 'what we fought the last war about'.[6]

Westminster politicians were beginning to wake up to the details of managing the education system and no longer shrugged off parliamentary questions about schools and colleges as 'not our responsibility'. They needed to know more about what teachers were doing and saying in the classrooms—and that is why the media grew increasingly important. A new breed of political advisers moved into the Department for Education and Science (DES) and made strong media contacts. The teachers, too, found themselves increasingly the focus of media attention both nationally and locally, especially when the Burnham Committee negotiations on teachers' pay turned into a slanging match and open warfare on the streets. The late 1970s and early 80s brought in a new brand of media-savvy union leaders like Fred Jarvis at the NUT and Peter Smith at the ATL (then called AMMA) to compete with Ministers like Shirley Williams or Keith Joseph on the national media stage.

A key figure in the dialogue between politicians, the Press and the teaching profession at that time (the 70s and 80s) was John Izbicki,

education correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* for many years.[7] Although Ministers thought in that job he would be a typical right wing, ex-public schoolboy with elitist views about education, they found instead a highly sensitive and intelligent journalist with a deep knowledge of education both in this country and abroad. From a Jewish refugee family, who left Berlin at the outbreak of the Second World War, John was able to enjoy a fine post-1944 education in Manchester followed by National Service in the Army during the Suez crisis and then a brilliant degree course at Nottingham University. With that background he rose rapidly in journalism and became one of the first education correspondents at the *Telegraph*. He also had spent time in France and had very good knowledge of Europe with advanced language skills in both French and German. So he was no typical Tory and could cover every aspect of education from special needs to scientific research. One of his closest contacts and friends was Gerald Fowler, a Labour education Minister in the Wilson-Callaghan era, who later employed him in a key role as his Press Officer for North London Polytechnic, when the polys were prised out of LEA control in the late 1980s. John Izbicki's work there and in the wider polytechnic sector established a very good image for the new HE institutions which were struggling to compete with the universities for students and funding.

John Izbicki had other surprising qualities as well as writing. During his student days in Paris he had learned the Franco-Italian art of silent comedy by dancing and mimicry and used to use it to good effect at teachers' and other education conferences. He used to get several of his colleagues together to create late-night comic sketches ridiculing the government of the day, especially in the Thatcher era, together with his own mimes and music. He used to share the stage with the late Bruce Kemble, who was an emblematic education journalist who worked on the *Daily Express* as well as many other Fleet Street publications in his long career.[8] The two comedians, although rivals in their everyday life, did much to amuse and revive the spirits of the teachers and other education staff at conferences, especially in times of austerity, cuts and industrial unrest. Indeed they became legends in their own lunchtime, to use an old Fleet Street saying.

The truth was that education was moving up both the political and media agendas in the last two decades of the millennium. Higher and further education were expanding, but there was growing discontent in the schools sector and in the local education authorities. Margaret Thatcher, who had served four years as Minister and gained a solid reputation there, was inclined to blame the teachers and the socialist local authorities for the disaffection. She sent her old mentor Sir Keith Joseph into her old DES department to 'sort things out'. The trouble was that Sir Keith, for all his academic expertise and political experience, knew very little about the 'national education system locally administered'. He distrusted much of the information he was given by his civil servants and went out often to speak to education journalists (such as John Izbicki) and to teachers. He believed in creating a free market for education, such as in school admissions, and in stimulating better performance among the teachers by 'payment by results' rather than the Burnham Committee and its elaborate pay scales.

Sir Keith brought in a new special adviser to help him in the department, a very bright young Harvard postgraduate named Oliver Letwin. Sir Keith sent him off to learn about the system by talking to education journalists and also 'teachers in the classroom'. One day Oliver was lunching with the education correspondents group in Soho and told them: 'The trouble is all the teachers I've met are so dull and boring. They don't seem to have any enthusiasm for the job or desire to improve their performance'. On his way back to work at the DES Letwin picked up a copy of the *Evening Standard*—only to find that his comments about teachers had leaked out into the gossip column. When other journalists followed up the story, they spoke to one of the teachers involved and were told: 'Yes, we had Letwin at our school. But he seemed unable to communicate with teachers or students. It was as if he lived in another country and spoke a different language.- part Harvard and part Tory politics, I suppose'. Oliver Letwin was a key figure in David Cameron's government, who ran the back office and put together much of the Cabinet policy papers. But there is not much evidence that he is any closer to reality with his policies on education than he was 30 years ago.[9]

One education journalist, who had an important influence on education policy over many years, was Andrew (now Lord) Adonis. As education correspondent for the *Financial Times*, he used to attend the ECG lunches and chat with Ministers and their political advisers. He had an interesting background. From a poor Cypriot family in London he won a scholarship to a public school and then went on to a first-class degree in modern history at Oxford and then a postgraduate degree and fellowship there, entering politics first as a local Social Democrat (and later Liberal) councillor. He believed that State schools should be given the freedom and DNA of the private sector by being released from LEA control. That is how he invented the'academy' programme, which became a key policy of the Blair Government. When he became Prime Minister Tony Blair appointed Adonis his policy adviser and then promoted him head of the No. 10 Policy Unit in 2001. Four years later he was made a life peer and became Minister of State for Education and was able to put his 'academy' ideas into practice.

It was not just the Blairites that Adonis impressed, however. At the end of the Labour government only 30 new academies had been opened. When the Conservative Minister for Education Michael Gove took over a few weeks later he expressed his admiration for Adonis and his academies and was even said to have offered him a job in his department, Although Adonis declined it, his policy went ahead and was pushed through Parliament at breakneck speed by Gove in the first days of the Coalition Government. The Cameron government rushed through a new flagship Bill to force academisation on all schools together with a central funding formula for the whole system. While claiming that the new Bill would 'transform the education system by giving power and responsibility to teachers on the front line', David Cameron and Co. were in fact burying the last remains of the 1944 Education Act and Butler's 'national system locally administered'. Lord Adonis, however, then became a national commissioner for the railways, realizing a childhood dream of building railway lines all round the country with new stations, bridges and tunnels.

Most education correspondents were not so keen on joining up with the Westminster politicians, however, except for 'good stories', and retained a deep sympathy for the staff and students in the educational

world. In those days journalists had mostly come up to the national Press through local newspapers and so retained respects and sympathy for local government and local sources of information, such as schools and colleges. One member of the group, Peter Scott, a long-serving editor of the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, left the Press to become vice-chancellor of Kingston University which he turned into quite a high-profile institution in five years or so before retiring. Many others went on to lecture or become academic chairs in the growing field of media studies. Several devoted their retirement time to writing books, often about education. Veteran correspondent Richard Garner, who served for 36 years for the TES, *Daily Mirror* and then *The Independent*, is now writing a novel based on his inside knowledge of life at the chalk face.

I personally was a long-standing believer in lifelong learning, and this enthusiasm I acquired through working as editor of the educational studies faculty at the Open University. So when I was not editing or writing for a living I used to spend time studying in colleges of adult and further education. I was also a school governor locally in Richmond upon Thames LEA for many years at primary and secondary level and was later a college governor at Kingsway College near Euston in the ILEA. More importantly, I have been married to a primary teacher for nearly 50 years, who was also a student at the Open University, and so we were both quite closely involved with the education of our four children—and then grandchildren. Close involvement of this kind was useful as a background for my work as an education journalist but it also gave me a means of evaluating the political and legislative documents I had to write about for many years and now read about in the papers.

One of the benefits of being a member of the education correspondents group was occasional foreign travel, enabling us to study developments overseas, not just in Europe but around the world, especially the USA but also in under-developed countries. We soon learned that in many countries teaching was seen as a more highly esteemed and important profession than in England. In Finland especially, teachers enjoyed a particularly high regard both nationally and locally—but they were also expected to practise continual professional development

throughout their careers. The Finns regularly topped the international tables for student achievement at nearly every level. But such stories seldom made the headlines in the English Press and when they did both public and politicians quickly turned the page. So news editors usually preferred stories of school failure to those of teaching success—which usually gave the same message to the politicians.

Now there is a continuing public debate about the UK in Europe, but the role of education is seldom mentioned. This is a great pity, I personally believe. My own children were able to benefit considerably from the cultural connexions our LEA had with similar local government communities in France and West Germany (as it then was). My four sons spent days and weeks in schools there and one or two also spent terms and even longer during university. This was not just good for learning modern languages but also history and culture. One of the other skills was in social interaction and creating links which have been useful in their jobs and careers to this day. In my work as an education correspondent, I often went to LEAs all round the country with strong connexions in Europe which were beneficial for education in many subjects of the curriculum besides modern languages. In West Sussex the teachers became pioneers and leaders in developing modern languages in all schools and with specialist centres for particular languages and learning support materials. Their chief education officer Dick Bunker also pioneered space science and astronomy in the county schools, greatly helped by the presence of the great TV astronomer Patrick Moore, who helped the county build their own observatory in Chichester. One of the local students was Tim Peake, who is the first British astronaut to live out in space for a year, and Dick Bunker's own son is now Britain's Astronomer Royal and professor at Oxford.

The LEAs also had important cultural links outside the EU, especially with Commonwealth countries. One of my close friends was Kabir Shaikh, formerly CEO of Bournemouth LEA, after it was taken away from Hampshire County Council.[10] From a Moslem family in India he came to Britain as a research scientist in the early 1970s, only to find his overseer, a professor, had gone abroad on a sabbatical year. So he had to find a job—and went into teaching with the ILEA, which offered good on-the-job training in an East London comprehensive. He developed

his knowledge and classroom skills through the Association for Science Education, where his ability was soon recognized. He soon became head of science and then an adviser with the ILEA, and he also joined a team of science teachers under Professor Dick West, a very charismatic professor from Bath University, who developed the Science for All curriculum for the Schools Council.[11] It was a success and Kabir was promoted to the role of science adviser in the ILEA.

When the ILEA was abolished, Kabir became a chief inspector in one of the new LEAs, the London Borough of Ealing, where his administrative and leadership skills were soon recognized and he came to a chief education officer. After a few years there, Kabir was selected to form another new LEA at Bournemouth where he settled with his family. Within five years he had turned the seaside borough into one of the best LEAs in the country which was rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted. He was awarded a CBE by Her Majesty for his services to education nationally. Many chiefs might have eased into retirement at Bournemouth, but Kabir had another project. He joined UNWRA, the Palestine refugee agency, and went out to set up and head a new refugee education service in Gaza and the West Bank. Despite the most difficult and dangerous of circumstances, he managed to create a successful service and left after seven years to international applause. When he reached the normal age of retirement, most of us thought Kabir would finally retire to Bournemouth. But Kabir had an even bigger project in mind and has begun work for the Indian government on setting up an international agency for education and the environment.

On his occasional visits to London I used to meet Kabir for lunch, when I used to ask him whether he wanted to write his memoirs and what lessons he had for the rest of us about education, both in policy and practice, throughout the world. His name means 'Great Leader' in Arabic and that is indeed what he was. He told me he owed so much to some of the leadership he had seen and received in the ILEA and other LEAs and there were certain politicians he admired, although not many. But he also believed in teaching as a science and an art and strongly supported the idea of continuing professional development (CPD) in teaching. He greatly valued the experiences and friendships he had made through the Association for Science Education.[12] He also believed

the Open University was an ideal model for CPD which could easily be developed. I asked him, more than half seriously, if he would mind if I put his name forward to David Cameron as a special adviser on education to help solve the problems of the current European refugee crisis....

Besides his 'great leadership' Kabir brought strong and exact skills of scientific analysis to his educational administration. For example, there was, and still is, always a difficult task of planning school places at LEA level, which is particularly hard in London and made more difficult by frequent local government and school reorganization. I remember having it explained to me in Richmond by a very experienced education officer called Peter Waters. 'Actually it is rather more a black art than a science', he told me. For example, he had to guess the numbers of migrants, ethnic groups or religious families and other special needs, based on his local knowledge and experience. He also had to estimate the number of parents choosing private schools for their children. He aimed to achieve school places in a neighbourhood with a 5% surplus to allow for sudden changes in demand. He also had to take careful note of upcoming planning decisions in the borough. But he was always painfully aware of the steadily and fast-growing population in London's child population, especially in Richmond. Ian has now long since gone, but the problem has not—and with the increasing reliance on academies and free schools it has turned into a crisis. Not surprisingly the National Audit Office (NAO) has just sounded the alarm bells about the estimated cost of providing school places, produced by the Department of Education for the new Academies legislation, which would take this 'black art' almost totally out of LEA administration. The NAO has judged the department's own accounts as 'adverse' and its cost estimates as 'unclear' and 'risky'.[13]

When questioned in the House of Commons on the 'affordability' of his academisation programme and accused by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn of 'attempting an unnecessary and unpopular top-down reorganization of the education system', David Cameron insisted he would press ahead with the programme, because schools had 'a huge amount to gain'. 'The truth is academies and greater independence, letting head teachers run their schools, has been hugely effective', the Prime Minister insisted. However, the NAO warned him: 'The policy of autonomy for

academies brings with it significant risks if the financial capability of the department and academies are not strengthened; and the financial statements do not present a true and fair view and meet the accountability requirements of parliament. This will become even more significant in the context of the planned expansion of the academy sector'.

Cameron's confident announcement that greater autonomy for schools, and more freedom for head teachers, would make the good ones better and failing schools good, had already stirred some unease, and not just among financial auditors. Even experienced head teachers were concerned about the consequences, not just for schools but for local communities and for the economy. Even some of his own MPs were concerned about the long-term effect the loss of school services would have on local government, since the older ones may well have remembered that the Conservatives once called themselves 'the party of local government' and relied on it as their bedrock of support. As for education journalists, many of them started their careers in local newspapers and attended council meetings, with education providing regularly much of the news. So when David Cameron told Parliament that there was a six-year timescale for implementing the Act and that 'there was time to discuss key issues', he may well have realized that the political debate and the divisions were probably only just beginning.

The quest for more 'freedom for head teachers and autonomy for schools' has been used many times before by Westminster politicians to justify taking education away from local authorities and dismantling the 1944 Education Act. It used to play well among leader writers and political correspondents in the national Press. But it has not generally impressed the education correspondents, who know that most head teachers will want to see the small print. Principals of FE colleges were generally quite happy to be given their 'freedom from local control' some time ago, but many of them learned all too soon that the freedom was rather an illusion and was in reality a transfer of control and funding from local to central government and could bring dire consequences for them, their staff and students. They could in fact lose more freedom than they gained and, most importantly, the support of their local communities.

All head teachers, both primary and secondary, do need support during their careers. In their first year or two, they usually need help

from above them, usually from the LEA, or below them, from staff, governors and parents. This is especially true if their school is in difficulty or underperforming with Ofsted inspections in the offing. Many of them find that the head teacher and management training they received is not very relevant or up-to-date. As a local governor in both primary and secondary schools locally I saw heads come and go. One or two were outstanding and went on to greater things, but others had problems in mid-career, sometimes personal and social, often financial, but they needed local help of all kinds. Then there are the head teachers who, like the Vicars of Bray, have seen political and social changes come and go but kept on at the school regardless. In one college, at Kingston-upon-Thames, the principal was there for more than 20 years and came to be known as 'King Arthur' who held court with his management team regularly in the local pub. The governing body also dined out with him and spent weekends in the country devoted to 'management expertise' and 'performance enhancement'. However, when he retired, a new broom was brought in from elsewhere and all the members of Arthur's Court were swept aside and the college completely lost its local identity and soon merged.

It was the end of an era. However, the steady move towards centralization and marketization of education and other public services has now begun to create a growing political reaction. The arrival of Theresa May at No. 10 Downing Street came as a pleasant surprise to many people in local government who remembered her quite fondly as a leading councillor and committee chairman from Merton in South-West London. But it soon became clear that Theresa had turned her back on local government, just as she had on membership of the European Union. The vicar's daughter with an elegant taste in shoes was now locked into the sordid battles of party politics and Brexit negotiations as well as the grim economic policy of 'austerity'. When it came to her personal pledge to reinvent the grammar schools, even her friends began to wonder what era this Prime Minister was living in.

The general election of summer 2017 produced some surprising results, not just nationally but regionally and locally. Although the contest was designed to provide firm backing for Theresa May in her Brexit negotiations, the effects of austerity on schools, colleges and universities

stirred both teachers and students and even parents to see education as a key local and national issue to talk about and influence their voting intentions. Maybe it is time to blow the dust off the old 1944 Education Act and create a new version for the twenty-first century …?

Notes

1. The Association of Education Committees: A Retrospect, *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, Peter Gosden, July 2006.
2. Chapter 2 makes reference to school experience during war in west Kent, and shortly thereafter in adjacent Ramsgate.
3. All Souls Group correspondence and papers January 1, 1962–December 31, 1967, National Archives, Kew, London.
4. Evidence of a local education authority's dependence upon the Association of Education Committees is cited in Chapter 2 relating to Cambridgeshire.
5. Bains Report, M.A. Bains, Chairman, Study Group on Local Government Management Structures, Great Britain, Department of the Environment, London, HMSO, 1972.
6. A significant step was taken in May 1974, according to 'Education Policy', ed. Ian Abbott and others, when Reg Prentice, Secretary of State for Education, in the then new Labour government, wrote advising the Association that it would lose its membership of the Burnham Committee, p. 36.
7. 'Life Between the Lines: A Memoir', John Izbicki. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/Feb/02/life.
8. Bruce Kemble. https://www.amazon.co.uk/Bruce-kemble/e/B001KElPQ1.
9. In my own dealings with Letwin on the need for reform, in clarifying what was meant by the market economy and in the months preceding the Downing Street conference, alluded to in Chapters 1 and 2, I recognized a highly creative mind, tolerance, and receptivity to new ideas. Editor.
10. Kabir Shaikh. https://www.uil.unesco.org/unesco-institute/kabir-shaikh.
11. Science for All Curriculum, Schools Council https://www.ase.org.uk/curriculum.
12. https://www.ase.org.uk.
13. https://www.nao.org.uk/report/department-for-education-the-academies-programme.

10

A New Dispensation of Trust

Robert McCloy

Pragmatism and Evolution

The intent of this chapter is to set out the rationale for a new dispensation and to outline its principal characteristics. Essentially, the approach is to capture from the past what worked and to lay aside our failures. Two features prevail: pragmatism and evolution. The former recognises the merit of basing proposals on what is perceived as likely to work, the latter on a continuing commitment to the efficacy of building upon extant structures, as opposed to a root and branch radicalism. As to the former, it is not simply a recognition that much in the spirit of the original 1944 legislation remains valid, but that some of the subsequent reforms have actually stood the test of time and fully merit retention in a new dispensation. Further, if a measure actually works or even were its usefulness to be judged questionable, there is much to be said for avoiding the wasteful effort in seeking its removal.

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A second conviction informs the approach. There is a strong warrant for gradualism in constitutional reform. A process of modifying structure, rather than pressing for and achieving a radical upheaval, might be more effective. Evolution rather than revolution is accordingly commended.

Economic Prosperity and Cultural Change

The period since 1944 has witnessed much: most notably, greater economic prosperity and cultural change. The former has provided newer buildings and teaching resources, the latter less deference and greater materialism. The internet and information technology generally are now transforming how we learn and teach. Possibly in the near future, children will learn lessons at home, going to school to be taught how to be social beings. It is inevitable that the content of education will change as technologies advance. Whilst mastery of some content and skill will cease to be essential, the need for a focus upon ethical issues and how individuals and communities relate should remain a dominant preoccupation. In constitutional terms the process of devolution is unfolding. Units of local government and educational institutions have become larger. There are ambiguities in this inheritance, some meriting gratitude, others caution. In one very important respect, what was taken for granted in 1944 was the comprehensive purpose of education: the safe-guarding and development of civilization, fulfilment of society and the individual's, and a belief in education for itself.[1] Whilst neither state nor its agencies have sought to contradict this broad understanding, their increasing emphasis upon measuring outcomes, and equipping students for success in a consumer-driven society, has had the effect of marginalising this wider purpose.

Two constitutional changes are consonant with a necessary refashioning of arrangements: greater institutional independence and devolution of government. Beyond the endorsement of these reforms there are other initiatives to be seized: the tempering of state interference, the reassertion of professional trust, a curb on corporate management, the realisation that communities are often now much less localised than

hitherto, and the necessity to pool resources and share talents. These phenomena merit examination. Their cumulative impact impels the new reordering.

Greater Institutional Independence

As observed in the historical narrative, some local education authorities, prior to any central government initiative, had promoted greater institutional autonomy in the belief this would be more efficient. This was not done as a precursor to total independence and the dissolution of authorities. However, the narrative suggests that central government seized upon this initiative in a process deliberately aimed at undermining local government and asserting its own control. Notwithstanding the motives, it is accepted that greater institutional autonomy is now part of the accepted landscape and should be purposefully encouraged with rational safeguards. As for this latter consideration, many support functions, including being a catalyst for new ideas, should be provided collectively in the interests of economy and efficiency.

Devolution of Government

Whereas devolution of power to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, each with distinctive impulses, has shaped current debate about constitutional reform, a recognition that further steps had to be taken within England, to stimulate the economy and to ensure that growth was not corralled within the south-east, had also been a decisive factor. The principal initial focus in England had been on the 'Northern Powerhouse' and the conurbations, stimulated in part, by a realisation that improved transport was necessary. This latter development had its genesis in Barbara Castle's reforms in the 1960s with the establishment of Passenger Transport Authorities.[2] The process, no longer limited to the English conurbations, also has its parallels elsewhere in the European Union. It is palpably one that enjoys a general warrant.

Tempering of State Interference

The regularity with which new legislation and regulation is introduced has a two-fold effect: weariness and indifference. The former may even yield to demotivation on the part of those immediately affected, the latter gives rise to hostility. Neither condition is desirable in a law-abiding country. That it is resented and sometimes proves to be a wasteful distraction, even prompting competent and gifted staff to abandon the service need not be doubted. Less could prove to be more, if beneficial effects were taken as the measure.

Reassertion of Professional Trust

Related to excessive regulatory direction and its effects is the perceived low estimation of teachers and the deleterious results this has upon staff retention and recruitment. High professional standards could be better achieved by a culture of encouragement and overt support, alongside publically announced codes of professional conduct, rather than inquisitional testing. A culture of league tables and heavy reliance upon frequent student tests needs modification.

Curbing Corporate Management

A strong conviction arose in the 1970s and 1980s that departmentalism within local government was handicapping its ability to serve the wider public: many opportunities were being missed and competition between departments was wasteful. This analysis was shared by government and a national report.[3] The Institute of Local Government powerfully promoted this cause and progressively corporate management assumed a position of orthodoxy.[4] As the historical account indicates this profoundly affected the education service. In retrospect, it is clear that the public voice of education became increasingly confused and weakened, exemplified, in particular, by the marginalisation and subsequently the dissolution of the Association of Education Committees.[5]

Though clearly it is important that there should be engaged dialogue between the education service and those responsible for economic affairs, spatial planning, health and social services, its mechanics should not assume such dominance that the distinctive characters of the separate major services are seriously compromised.[6]

Changing Character of Community

Though strong attachment remains towards ancient towns and jurisdictions, the fact must be faced that increasing physical mobility, especially since the end of the First World War, has seriously compromised that earlier sense of community. No longer do most people live in the place of their work. Community is necessarily now much more diffused: transport has developed exponentially. In most parts of the country a central town increasingly becomes the focus of a wider region's communal and economic well-being and the town and surrounding area become interdependent. This reality, recognised in the Redcliffe Maud reforms,[7] must be accepted for the re-shaping of the principal units of localised government. In another respect, mobility of a social character is possibly slowing down and merits greater attention.

Economic Necessity

Other priorities, be they defined by the state or the community at large, will necessarily limit the resources available to education. It is to be anticipated that though a re-focused education service will be able to articulate more effectively than at present the case for its proper share of national resources, it will not be in a position where it would be able to sustain a large number of units, each lacking viability. Arguments concerning viability, be they the number of forms of entry for a comprehensive school, the number of advisors an education authority should employ, or the number of ambulances that could be afforded by a local health service, often on subsequent reflection seem suspect. Nevertheless, the increasing complexity and costs involved in modern

administration cannot be easily avoided, and, though they must be subject to scrutiny, it should be accepted that a combining of resources, as exemplified in the voluntary combining of authorities in England, will be essential.[8]

The principal sources of finance for the education service would be from precepts from constituent local authorities including the product of the business rates, student fees, sponsored grants for research, and further and higher education allocations by government, the latter limits set by government.

The Proposed Reform

The above considerations should inform proposals for a re-organisation which would be characterised by seven features arising from the narrative's perception of what has hitherto worked and what has not:

1. separation of policymaking from management
2. maximum subsidiarity
3. pluralism in provision
4. comprehensiveness in range from preschool to higher education and learning for life
5. democratic control
6. correspondence with city and county regions
7. juxtaposing between the state and institution of a supporting entity

Separation Between Policy and Management

Wasted effort, confusion, demoralisation, and a neglect of strategic purpose can result from a failure to distinguish between overall direction and daily management. Those elected to represent the public will, should focus upon the formulation of policy, the broad allocation of resources and articulating as best they can the values and priorities of the public at large. Necessarily, they, representing the community will come from a wide variety of backgrounds. They will often be in

employment unrelated to the administration of education. Herein is their warrant to exercise their office which should not be compromised by becoming embroiled in management. This latter is the function of professional staff specialising in the work with appropriate training and largely undertaking it as a full-time responsibility. This division of labour is accepted as commonplace in the military, police and public transport.[9]

Maximum Subsidiarity

Subsidiarity, decision-making at the lowest level consistent with efficiency, merits greater support and implementation. The temptation of each level of government to hold onto whatever authority it possesses and to resist further devolution is commonplace. Yet generally, this is an antidote to efficiency. Essentially, it is a matter of trust. In the context of education, in the first place, greater trust must be placed in the teacher: a zeal for inquisition and censure must be tempered by a greater demonstration of encouragement and support. Decision-making at the point of implementation has the merit of being qualitatively superior because of immediate information about the circumstances and of being owned by those affected. It is also more economical in that the cost of operating through administrative layers is minimised.

Where practicable, a focus upon units numbering no more than 150, if Dunbar's analysis is accepted, might well produce, on average, greater well-being and overall competence.[10] The crucial consideration is the nurturing of professional relationships, generating mutual aid, inspiration and advice. This is the better achieved if the unit, albeit part of a larger whole, is not excessively large, wherein, for example, institutional heads and principal managers can know one another. Likewise, within institutions the need to craft the organisational structure to accommodate professional relationships should be honoured. Notwithstanding, it is conceded, for the purposes of the efficient superintendence of education, recognising the need for specialisation, large units will often be necessary, in the first place, for individual institutions, and secondly, for

overall policymaking and supply. Within them, however, smaller units should be formed.

The involvement of local neighbourhoods in real participative consultation is a *sine qua non*. Whilst the re-establishment of a robust organisation betwixt the state and the institution is judged essential, it is for the sovereign state and the devolved parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales to set the parameters of citizenship, duties, and obligations, within which education must play a decisive part. Accordingly, it is for these bodies to define the overall objectives of character of education. Except in the broadest sense however, they should not become embroiled in the detail as to how these are executed.[11]

Pluralism in Provision

Uniformity is neither possible nor desirable. All attempts at imposing upon the country a single shape and order, be it in religion or in society, have failed. Any further such initiative will probably face the same fate. Further, there is merit in having a variety of arrangements, to reflect a range of convictions likely in a free society and to facilitate choice and competition. The 1944 settlement accommodated pluralism in facilitating the co-existence of state and church participation within a maintained system. A mark of that settlement was its intrinsic flexibility: not only providing two variants of 'voluntary' institutions, 'aided', and 'controlled,' depending upon the extent of financial investment; but full membership by the church of the local education committee. In higher education the churches were major providers of teacher training. That partnership, very much evidence of a pluralist, tolerant and flexible society, should be roundly confirmed in any reordered dispensation. Thus the churches [and indeed other state-recognised providers] should be represented on the proposed councils and executive bodies. The private sector was also allowed to survive and flourish subsequent to the 1944 settlement. For the future the quest should be to remove gross inequality. Nevertheless, variety in provision should be maintained.

Comprehensive in Range

In the provision of education, the imposition of any limitation in the age range to be served or the subject matter to be covered will prove to be contrived and largely impossible to enforce. The parameters should be widely cast: from preschool to higher education and lifelong learning. Implicit is the concept that education is not simply a process of acquiring skills for employment but the means by which civilisation survives and develops and the individual finds fulfilment. In this the 1944 inheritance should be resolutely re-embraced. Whilst the curriculum reforms, instigated by the state, as this narrative contends, were intrusive, unnecessarily prescriptive and undermining of professional integrity, their modification and more relaxed application should allow them to find a proper place in a reordered environment. Nevertheless, their interpretation must be consonant with the wider civilising purposes of education implicit in the values of the 1944 Act, and not narrowly defined as primarily equipping the young for employment in consumerism. The curriculum's definition is primarily a responsibility of the education profession, the articulation of its broad purposes a matter for the state, the choice of materials to be taught a matter for the teacher, in the case of the young, for the learner, in the case of the mature. Choice of preschool and school should rest with the parent or guardian and variety of provision should be encouraged.

Democratic Accountability

Ultimately, the refashioned structures must be crafted to ensure that reasonable democratic control can be exercised. Whilst it is judged essential to differentiate between overall policy and management, as contended above, it is no less essential for there to be democratic accountability. Accordingly, those elected should remain accountable to the electorate for their overall supervision of the service, in particular, for the quantum of public expenditure, priorities, and the appointment of senior public officials. The presumption is that those elected would

run for office on the policies they would support and be judged by the electorate on their performance. Institutions in the private sector should be subject to inspection to ensure minimum standards and to minimise gross inequality.

Running counter to this concept of democratic accountability, as well as putting at risk the need for reasonable economy, was the recently proposed establishment of all maintained schools in England as academies to be run by trusts independent of local authorities. This announcement provoked many hostile responses, including, perhaps somewhat ironically, that of Shirley Williams, who had played a part in the first assault on local government with Circular 10/65.[12] Conservative politicians and many representatives of local government joined this chorus, and, duly the measure, in its comprehensive intention was withdrawn. Setting aside the hyperbole of advocates and detractors, there are some common themes that should find a place in a new order: the need respectively, for the grouping of institutions for mutual support, accountability and economy; and for a wide measure of institutional autonomy and professional trust. In essence, what materially divides them from the proposed new dispensation is the place education should enjoy in the emerging system of democratic devolution.

City Regions and an Emergent Re-Organisation of Local Government

We are possibly on the cusp of a new reordering of local government, partly prompted by devolution within the United Kingdom at large.[13] Unlike reforms of latter times what is now emerging in part is a bottom-up movement, wherein existing units of local government voluntarily combine with central government support. Hitherto reform had been propelled by a top-down view by central government that perceived deficiencies in local government had to be removed by a national re-organisation. The current phenomenon is more organic than mechanical: the product of an understanding that greater effectiveness might be better achieved by responding to local understandings

of identity and interests rather than by the imposition of constructs designed elsewhere.

The role of central government in this approach, is to provide encouragement, most notably, by promising to devolve to these emergent authorities' further powers currently exercised by central government and its agencies, plus additional funds. Whilst an initial focus had been upon the English conurbations, attention is increasingly turning to rural and suburban areas. Nor is the process limited to proposed combinations of authorities, as is evident in the instance of Cornwall, now a unitary authority, with a strong self-identity. This pragmatic approach, with an explicit rejection of the notion that 'one size must fit all,' and that validity has its genesis in local commitment and feelings of loyalty and attachment, is to be warmly endorsed. A significant development of this approach beyond the 'Northern Powerhouse' was announced in the budget address of March 2016, when it was claimed that half the country would be led by directly elected mayors within five years with directly elected mayors in greater Lincolnshire, East Anglia, the West Midlands, and the west of England. Further, deals would be available to counties nationwide, and cities in the southeast, if, they signed up to an elected mayor. Manchester, Liverpool, and London would be able to retain full business rates to fund local services from 2017. Deals with Edinburgh and Swansea and a 'growth deal' in north Wales were in the pipeline.[14]

In the wake of the vote to leave the European Union, the Local Government Association published what it called a green paper offering an analysis of the opportunity that was now presented for further devolution. It endorsed the principle of designing arrangements to accommodate local priorities and rejecting any quest for uniformity. The spatial jurisdictions should be in general, economic entities. Whilst reform thus far had focussed upon economic regeneration, skills development, transport and housing, it was now appropriate to bring into the frame all public services. The focus was to put residents and not institutions first, 'to move to place-based budgeting for all local public services, across all public service agencies, as part of the next phase of devolution.' This should include school and education provision.

The Government's intention to make all schools academies independent of local authorities was gravely mistaken and ran counter to the Government's devolution plans. The Association advocated local discussion and welcomed responses over the coming months.[15]

A Sensitive and Supporting Entity Between the State and Institution

The need for an entity juxtaposed between the state and the individual institution arises from the need to provide a sense of belonging and community on a plausible scale, wherein relationships can be efficiently organised, realistic accountability can be exercised, ideas can ferment in successful professional development, plans can be developed, assessment of performances made, and, as necessary, supply functions economically ordered. The argument has been successfully advanced by R. Elmore that sustained improvement in learning and teaching, as opposed to temporary performance boosts by, say, a focus upon teaching for examinations, or concentrating upon particular groups, or dependence on charismatic leadership, requires a genuine sharing of values and skills, and co-operative team-work across institutional networks and face-to-face relationships between professional staff.[16] Effective professional development has been shown to be at the core of successful teaching and learning and is dependent upon such collaborative structures. In this dispensation, institutions would exercise high levels of autonomy suggesting an analogy more apposite than that provided by any strictly controlled commercial enterprise, namely the Commonwealth with its emphasis upon shared values and willing co-operation.[17]

The Building Bricks for a New Structure

In framing proposals for the future organisation of the education service, it is, accordingly, contended that it be firmly characterised by the following seven distinguishing features: the separation of policymaking

from management, maximum subsidiarity, pluralism in provision, comprehensive cover from preschool to higher education and lifelong learning, democratic supervision, dovetailing into the emergent re-organisation of local government, and possessing a collaborative entity juxtaposed between the state and the individual institution. Necessarily, each part of the United Kingdom with its distinctive history would need to adapt such features to accommodate its particular cultural terrain. In elaboration of the foregoing it is emphasised that a clear distinction be made between overall superintendence and management. The overall supervising body [here referred to as the council] would have parallel bodies for other public functions, and, as necessary, co-ordination of functions. Notwithstanding, it is judged crucial that the legitimate pretext of co-ordination should not be employed to compromise the role of the council for education or its executive body.

Separation of Authority and Management

Each unit of government, be it city region or other entity to which devolved powers are granted, would have a council consisting of elected members, either elected directly or representative of constituent councils. As contended above, the churches and other state-recognised providers, would have reserved places on the council and executive board. The function of the council would be to determine overall policies on the advice of an executive board [see below], hold that body to account, be the principal interlocutor with central government, set the financial parameters and render an account to the electorate. The requirement in the instance of the English conurbations to agree to the election of a directly elected mayor is significant, and is a valid initiative to overcome the inherent democratic deficit where the democratic mandate is wholly dependent upon representatives of councils. Noticeably, Cornwall, which is not a combination of councils, is not being required to agree to a directly elected mayor. It does nevertheless, offer an arrangement involving directly elected councillors.

Executive Board

Subject to the council would be an executive board responsible for implementation, planning and advising the council. It would be the principal organ in relating to institutions, in making contracts with suppliers of services, and would be a corporate body. It would consist of officers of stakeholders drawn from the community, industry and commerce, professional associations, unions and educational institutions. The basis of appointment would be specialist expertise. Each person would hold office under terms determined by the council, if consisting of entirely elected persons, or the mayor. Following the successful and established model in London for police and transport, the principal officer who would be appointed and not elected would be the commissioner for education.

Conclusion

The above outline seeks to address weaknesses that have developed since 1944, build upon subsequent developments that have enjoyed a wide measure of support, provide an effective structure and approach which minimises costly upheaval consonant with the belief that the best constitutional reform has a practical stamp.

Notes

1. Secret Draft White Paper, 'Educational Re-Construction,' War Cabinet, July 9, 1943, pp. 20/21. Referring to the vital part Adult Education, just one element of a comprehensive service, was to play '…it is only when the pupil or student reaches mature years that he will have served an apprenticeship in the affairs of life sufficient to enable him fully to fit himself for service to the community. It is within the sphere of Adult Education that an ultimate training in democratic citizenship must be sought…' Herein is significant commitment to the wider purposes of education at a moment when the Second World War was yet to be won.

2. Barbara Castle, Minister of Transport, introduced the Transport Act, 1968, which provided for the designation in conurbations of Passenger Transport Authorities [consisting of councillors representing constituent councils] and Passenger Transport Executives [a corporate body consisting of officials]. The intent of the legislation was to stimulate the economy and promote community well-being by associating spatial planning, housing and transport.
3. *Management of Local Government: The Maud Report*, 1967.
4. The writer attended a term's course for senior local government officers at the Institute of Local Government and was left in no doubt as to the centrality of corporate management.
5. The Association was regularly consulted by education authorities and supported the weekly and very influential journal 'Education.'
6. By Diverse means: Improving Scottish Education, The Commission on School Reform, March 2013, Recommendation 24, p. 77, presses the counter case for an integrated local government service in the interests of disadvantaged children, and is at one with the rationale that informs the existence of unified local government children's services.
7. *The Redcliffe-Maud Report: Royal Commission on Local Government in England 1966–1969.*
8. Combined authorities were facilitated by the Local Democracy, Economic and Construction Act, 2009 and the first, Greater Manchester, was established on April 1, 2011.
9. Most notably, in the instance of London with an elected mayor to whom are responsible commissioners for transport and the police.
10. S. Pinker, *The Village Effect: Why Face-to-Face Contact Matters*, Random House, London, 2015. This comprehensive sociological analysis convincingly argues that human beings require constant contact and cites R. Dunbar positing that about 150 as the maximum number of relationships that the human brain can manage and that this number has remained fairly static over the past ten thousand years. pp. 268–270.
11. Rowan Williams, former archbishop of Canterbury, warns of the dangers of being indifferent to the basic question of what cannot be franchised or delegated to non-state actors. New Statesman, May 5, 2016, pp. 21–25.
12. Shirley Williams, 'Perverse' reform best left undone, *Tablet Education*, April, 2016. pp. s.1/2.

13. Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016. Whilst economic development, skills and further education and careers services feature, a significant lacuna is primary and secondary education.
14. House of Commons, budget address, March 16, 2016.
15. Local Government Association, What Next for Devolution, July 2016, www.local.gov.uk.
16. R. Elmore, *School Reform from the Inside Out: Policy, Practice, and Performance*, Harvard Education Press, 2004. His testimony concerning New York's district number 2, including much deprivation, is convincing.
17. The writer presented a paper 'Education Needs Local Government' to the Council of Local Education Authorities Conference, July 17–19, 1991, citing this analogy.

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