

A BETTER PLAN FOR EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

Whether it be William Lovett's Chartist Schools, R.H Tawney and the Workers Educational Association, Anthony Crosland and the Comprehensive Movement, or Andrew Adonis's Sponsored Academy Programme; the belief in the emancipatory power of education, its ability to lift people out of poverty and deliver social justice, has always been core to the Labour movement. Not least because giving our children the best start in life leads to a more vibrant society and a stronger economy. Britain only succeeds when the majority of working people succeed. And that only happens when we have an education system that harnesses the talent and potential of all our children.

Yet as we survey a century where the powerful combination of globalisation and rapid technological progress looks set to reshape our social fabric, ensuring our children receive an excellent education is, if possible, even more important. Because in a world where companies can move across borders it is the human capital - the skills and talents of a people - that is the unique national asset. And though the move to a digital economy could herald an era when enterprise and creativity finally become the true currency of opportunity, if we fail to equip young people with the skills and knowledge to make the most of this brave new world it could just as easily lead to enormous social problems.

The Labour Party will never allow increased competition and change to temper our sense of social mission. We know that a successful economic future - both for the country and our children - depends upon breaking out of the current low-skill, low-wage, low-innovation model. That means investing in education. We need to spread excellence and high standards throughout the whole system - from the early years to schools and further education; in every classroom, studio and workshop. This manifesto sets out how Labour, working alongside dedicated carers, inspiring teachers and outstanding leaders, would achieve it.

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Introduction

One of the biggest challenges we face as a country is preparing our young people for the economy and society of the future. In an era that should offer all young people more opportunities than ever before, young people today also face more pressures. The journey into adulthood and a good career is much less certain than it used to be.

So if young people are to succeed in life and work they need the right skills, knowledge and experience. And just as this is crucial for the individual it is also crucial for the country, because it is only through maximising the talents of all our young people that we will build prosperity and raise living standards. So Labour will deliver high standard education and increased opportunities to every young person.

This needs to start in the early years. Giving every child the best possible start is crucial for their success later in life. But investment in early intervention has fallen dramatically in recent years, storing up problems for the future. Hundreds of Sure Start centres have been lost, prohibitive childcare costs are restricting access to quality early education, and disadvantaged children are arriving at school already behind in

core language and literacy skills. So reinvigorating Sure Start, protecting its funding and giving it a renewed role in the community, will be a key focus of a new Labour Government.

From the early years onwards we need to deliver high standards in every area of the country. Today, the quality of education a young person receives still depends too heavily on where they live, restricting the attainment of many children and curbing social mobility. Although we have many excellent schools and colleges in England, areas of chronic underperformance across the country are not being challenged or supported to improve and 1.6 million young people are still being educated in schools that are less than 'good'. So Labour will introduce local accountability and high expectations in every area and for all schools.

To raise standards everywhere we need great teaching in every classroom. Labour understands that more important than the structure or type of school is the quality of teaching inside it. Over the last five years however we've seen the systematic undermining of teaching, not least via the decision to allow unqualified teachers into schools

on a permanent basis. We are now facing a serious shortage of teachers, particularly in STEM subjects, with record numbers leaving the profession and fewer joining. So we will value and support teaching as a profession, with requirements on standards and more opportunities for teachers to train and progress in their careers.

Finally, to deliver opportunities for every young person we need to change a culture that for too long has considered vocational and technical education second best. Currently there is no clear or quality route through education and into a career for the 50 per cent of young people not pursuing the traditional route into university. This failure on vocational education is a key contributor to the disproportionately high number of young people unemployed and the growing skills gaps in the economy. So Labour will put in place a new, high standard vocational and technical route through education to support the transition into apprenticeships and good careers.

Labour has a better plan. We will invest in and reform education so that all young people have the best possible start, all benefit from good schools and colleges wherever they live and standards are raised through high

quality, innovative teaching in every classroom. And we will give all young people the opportunity to excel by introducing rigorous vocational education and more quality apprenticeships.

Labour's better plan for education

- Protect the entire education budget in real terms, from the early years through to post-16 education and skills
- Deliver higher quality teaching by ensuring all teachers become qualified, keep their skills and knowledge up to date, and by introducing a new Master Teacher status
- Build a gold standard vocational route through education and into the workplace, with a Technical Baccalaureate, English and maths to 18 and an apprenticeship for every school leaver who gets the grades
- Tackle areas of underperformance, with new Directors of School Standards in every area to challenge poor standards and support schools to raise attainment
- Deliver smaller class sizes for five, six and seven year olds, paid for by ending the wasteful Free Schools programme

1. A good start for every child

The early years of a child's life are critical – this is the time children acquire the physical, emotional and cognitive skills that will set them up to succeed once they reach school and beyond. A child's language development at age two is a strong predictor of their reading ability in primary school and their later attainment. So a supportive, quality early education is an essential part of a high standard education system that delivers for every child.

Today however, a child's background still has a significant impact on the progress they make in the early years. Disadvantaged children are far more likely to be behind in their language skills by the time they reach school – at age five, low-income children lag behind their peers in vocabulary skills by an average of 16 months. This early attainment gap is difficult to close in later life and is therefore a key driver of educational inequality in England. Early intervention to give extra support to vulnerable or disadvantaged children is therefore an important part of an effective early years system. Successful early interventions are well targeted, delivered in high quality settings and by highly trained professionals.

Labour's Sure Start programme offered high quality childcare, early education and support to young families across the country. We have seen the running down of Sure Start centres over the last five years however, limiting the access children have to these services. There are 763 fewer centres than in 2010 and many others have been mothballed, with one in six remaining centres running shorter hours and one in ten offering fewer services. Undertaking the extreme cuts proposed by the Conservatives could lead to the loss of over 1000 more Sure Start centres over the next parliament.

For working parents, finding affordable, quality childcare is increasingly difficult. Over the last five years the cost of a part-time nursery place has risen by over 30 per cent – more than six times faster than wages. Rising costs and the reduction of available places is making life harder for working parents and limiting the early education young people from disadvantaged backgrounds receive.

Families with young children come into contact with a range of agencies and services in the first few months and

years of their child's life, including midwifery, GP's, health visiting and childcare and these services are often not joined up. Professionals working in these services and the families that use them would benefit from greater coordination and integration, particularly those parents who need additional support from a number of different agencies.

So we will reinvigorate the role of Sure Start centres, giving them a renewed remit to act as a base for universal family services including childcare. By ensuring Sure Start centres open their doors to local childcare providers, we will expand childcare provision by up to 50,000 extra places. This will occur alongside a focus on targeted interventions for children and families who need extra support, building on best practice seen in Manchester and elsewhere. We will also continue the Early Years Pupil Premium, working with early years settings to ensure it is used effectively. This focus on early years provision will help us close the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers and work towards all children, whatever their background, reading well at age 11 by 2025.

Labour will also increase access to good quality childcare. To help families cope with the cost of childcare we will expand free childcare for working parents of three and four year olds from 15 to 25 hours, paid for by increasing the bank levy. And to support parents with the logistical difficulties that come with juggling work and family life, we will also give parents the peace of mind that comes from reliable childcare that fits around their working day. We will guarantee parents of primary children access to wraparound childcare from 8am to 6pm through their primary school.

Labour will:

- Protect spending on the early years in real terms
- Restore the role of Sure Start as family hubs in the community, with an obligation to provide childcare and a focus on early intervention
- Extend free childcare from 15 to 25 hours for working parents of three and four year olds, paid for by an increase in the bank levy
- Give parents a legal guarantee of access to childcare from 8am to 6pm through their local primary school

2. Delivering high standards in every area

Where a child lives still determines the quality of education he or she receives. With 1.6 million children still being educated in schools that are less than 'good' this is a central challenge in English education today – tackling whole areas of stubborn underachievement.

The attainment of children differs greatly across the regions, particularly for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who are often badly served by our education system. In 2014 the number of young people eligible for free school meals who achieved five good GCSEs varied across the different regions by over 20 percentage points, compared with only six percentage points for their better off peers. This attainment gap also varies substantially within regions; in 2014 it was 33 percentage points in the South East, compared with 13 percentage points in Inner London. There are still too few good and outstanding schools in areas of deprivation and over the past two years the attainment gap has actually widened.

Many areas that were underperforming in 2010 are still struggling today; in fact many have got worse. And while we need to continue to improve education

in urban areas, we now also face a new challenge - raising standards in rural and provincial areas and our seaside towns which are falling behind. Simply changing the structure of schools, turning them into academies or setting up new Free Schools, has failed to deliver high standards. Free Schools are failing at a greater rate than other schools, one in five academies is underperforming and whole areas have been left to languish.

London is a case study we should learn from. The most striking improvements in attainment at GCSE have taken place in Inner London with examination results rising year on year, taking it from a position of the second lowest performing region in 2007 to the second highest performing in 2014 (behind Outer London). London has also demonstrated that a child's background does not need to determine their future with disadvantaged pupils in Inner London schools outperforming similar pupils in England.

London's success can to a large extent be attributed to the London Challenge school improvement programme introduced by the last Labour Government. This programme brought

focused leadership and expertise to London schools, ensured schools and teachers supported each other to improve and used data and intelligence to monitor standards. London Challenge also helped develop a culture of high ambition across London and introduced greater accountability for the performance of disadvantaged pupils. But rather than learning these lessons, over the course of this parliament we've seen Government policy that actively undermines the kind of local leadership, oversight and collaboration that helped make London such a success.

We now also face a crisis in primary school places, due to a failure to respond to need over the last five years. The Local Government Association is predicting that if current policy continues more than half of council areas will have more primary-age pupils than school places by 2017/18. Despite this growing crisis, and the difficulties many parents experience trying find a school place for their child, over the last five years money has been wasted setting up school in areas without a shortage of places. By 2012, £241 million had been spent opening new Free Schools in areas without a need for places and more has been spent since. As a result of this pressure on primary

places infant class sizes are soaring. There are now nearly 95,000 infant classes of over 30 pupils, a rise of 200 per cent since 2010.

Labour understands that simply changing a school's structure is not enough; raising standards requires local oversight of school performance, help for struggling schools and great teaching and leadership. Most of all it requires a shared local mission to turn things around. So we will end the centralisation of powers in education, giving all schools the freedoms to innovate currently only granted to some.

We will also introduce new Directors of School Standards, appointed locally and with a remit to tackle underperformance and respond to the views of parents. Building on the success of London Challenge, Directors of School Standards will build collaboration between schools, identify problems and intervene early to help fix them. To put an end to low expectations and chronic underperformance each local area will agree its own 'Standards Challenge' – an area-wide school improvement plan including a new public target for raising standards and attainment locally, for which the Director of School Standards will be accountable. We will continue the

Pupil Premium and work with schools to ensure it is spent effectively to narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers.

Directors of School Standards will also be responsible for commissioning new schools where there is a local shortage of places, encouraging innovative bids from established providers, good local authorities, parents, teachers and entrepreneurs. Labour will end the underperforming Free Schools programme and the wasteful practice of building schools in areas without a shortage of school places. This money will instead be spent where it is needed so Labour can deliver enough school places to cap infant classes at 30 pupils or under.

Everyone should play their part in local school improvement so we will require schools to collaborate to be considered 'outstanding'. Ofsted will inspect academy chains, just as they do local authorities, and include a role for peer review. The private sector also has a role to play, given private schools currently benefit from generous state subsidies which we believe they should do more to justify. So as a condition of receiving Business Rate Relief, private schools will

be required to form meaningful partnerships with state schools.

Labour will:

- Protect schools spending in real terms, so we can drive up standards
- Tackle areas of underachievement, with new Directors of School Standards to support local schools to improve and respond to the concerns of parents
- Deliver smaller class sizes for five, six and seven year-olds, paid for by ending the wasteful Free Schools programme
- Require private schools to partner with state schools, as a condition of receiving Business Rates Relief



3. Raising the quality of teaching in every classroom

High quality teaching is the most important factor in raising education standards. All the evidence suggests that if we improve teaching, in line with the highest performing countries, we will improve educational attainment. The OECD argues that “the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers”.

For pupils, the difference between good and bad teaching is significant. During one year with a very effective maths teacher, research suggests pupils gain up to 40 per cent more in their learning than they would with a poorly performing maths teacher. The effects of high quality teaching are especially significant for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds - for poor pupils the difference between a good teacher and a bad teacher is a whole year's learning.

Bringing the lowest-performing 10 per cent of teachers in the UK up to the average would greatly boost attainment and lead to a sharp improvement in the UK's international ranking - some estimate that in five years the UK's rank amongst OECD countries would increase ten places or more in reading and maths. The economic argument for improving the effectiveness of teachers is also strong. The Sutton Trust finds

that find that bringing a poorly performing teacher up to the average would increase the lifetime earnings of a single class of 30 pupils by £240,000 to £430,000.

In government, Labour successfully improved the quality of teaching in England leading Ofsted to hail the workforce as the best generation of teachers ever. While a great deal of excellent teaching exists today recent policy changes have undermined the quality of the teaching profession, most notably the decision to allow schools to hire unqualified teachers on a permanent basis. There are now over 17,000 unqualified teachers in English schools, teaching approximately 400,000 young people.

The standard of teaching varies sharply between and within schools - in England's most deprived areas over a third of secondary schools are delivering teaching classed as less than 'good'. Teachers need support to improve discipline in schools; we should not accept the current situation whereby pupils are losing up to an hour of learning a day due to low-level disruption in the classroom. Teachers are also reporting low levels of morale, increasing paperwork and bureaucracy due to a constant churn of new

initiatives, and high numbers are leaving the profession. Almost 50,000 teachers quit the profession last year, a ten year high which, together with a central government failure to properly manage new teacher supply, has created serious teacher shortages.

The loss of qualified teachers from the state sector, and particularly those of the highest quality or in the most challenging schools, is cause for concern. This is because teacher training incurs a cost to the state and to schools and because a key factor in the underperformance of many schools is the lack of teacher continuity and low retention rates. Schools in the most challenging circumstances experience the highest rates of staff turnover, contributing to a vicious circle of poor performance.

To attract and retain good teachers we need to ensure there are high quality opportunities for all teachers to progress in their careers and build their skills. Currently, the standard and uptake of professional development in teaching is poor however, with too few teachers in England experiencing the kind of development associated with improved results. In under performing schools there tends not to be capacity to support teachers to improve and

because a focus on teacher training often does not exist problems with standards can be entrenched, preventing these schools from improving at the rate they should.

Quality school leadership is essential if schools are to perform well. So in a highly autonomous school system it's increasingly important that headteachers have the necessary skills, experience and support to provide effective leadership. In recent years however we have gone from being a world leader on school leadership to not even requiring heads to hold any qualifications or training at all. A growing number of schools are also struggling to recruit new headteachers as high numbers are leaving the profession, with many citing low morale and the pressures of what is an increasingly high stakes role.

Labour will value and support the education workforce. We will work with the profession to build a system in which teachers are expected to continue to progress throughout their careers, good performance is rewarded, and underperformance and coasting are not tolerated. We will focus on improving teaching, by enabling teachers to gain the training and opportunities they need to deliver high quality education in every

classroom. We will celebrate and spread the excellence that is already present in many parts of the system so that it reaches those areas of the country currently falling behind.

We will begin by ensuring every teacher acquires qualified teacher status because parents deserve to know their children are being educated by teaching professionals. Once qualified, teachers will be encouraged to excel in a subject or pedagogy, with high performing teachers given the opportunity to attain a new 'Master Teacher' status. This builds on a similar model in Singapore, which has one of the best teaching workforces in the world, whereby successful teachers share their best practice within their school, area and even nationally. This will help us develop cadres of teachers highly skilled in particular subjects and teaching practices, for example teachers expert in delivering maths and English at the primary level. This will help tackle the systemic problem of children falling behind in these core skills at an early age.

Given the importance of quality continuing professional development for improving teaching, we will require teachers to update their knowledge and

skills on a rolling basis as a condition of remaining in the profession. Subject knowledge and teaching practice develop over time so this will help ensure all young people benefit from quality, up-to-date teaching. To improve school discipline we will strengthen the focus on behaviour management in Initial Teacher Training, so teachers are more confident controlling a class from day one. Labour will also support plans for a new profession-led College of Teaching, work with teachers on policy changes to limit the amount of paperwork and red tape teachers experience and continue our support for the successful Teach First charity. Labour also recognises the important work undertaken by school support staff and we will reinstate the School Support Staff Negotiating Body set up by the last Labour Government.

Labour understands that great schools require great leadership. So we will work with headteachers to create a new Leadership Institute to accredit gold standard headship qualifications, organise leadership training and help develop the school leaders of the future. We will also work with headteachers and business leaders to help broker mutually beneficial Leadership Partnerships, allowing leaders in

education and business to share skills and experience, strengthening the links between employers and schools.

Labour will:

- Ensure all teachers become qualified
- Raise standards through new Master Teachers, expert in their subject
- Require all teachers to build their skills throughout their careers, as a condition of remaining in the classroom.
- Improve school discipline by ensuring teachers are trained to control a class
- Support and improve school leadership with a new Leadership Institute and gold standard head teacher qualifications and training

4. Delivering skills and opportunities to every young person

Our schools and colleges need to change if we are to set all young people up for the future and build the high skill, high wage economy we need to succeed as a country. For too long our education system has been focused only on the traditional academic route through school and into university. But not enough attention has been paid to the options available to the 50 per cent of young people wishing to pursue a vocational or technical route into a career. These young people face a confusing mix of vocational courses, many of which fail to offer progression into good jobs or further study.

This situation is failing young people and holding back businesses that struggle to recruit the skills they need to succeed. The lack of a quality vocational and technical route through education is contributing to the serious skills gaps we now face in our economy. Based on current trends, nearly 60 per cent of firms are not confident they will have the highly skilled staff to meet their needs in the future. As a country we are also training less than half the number of engineers needed per year to meet future demand. This failure to match

skills supply and demand has resulted in young people being nearly three times more likely to be unemployed than the rest of the population.

England still suffers from a culture that views vocational education as second best. We see this in the failure to support and improve the performance of our further education colleges. Two thirds of 16 to 18 year olds study in colleges and, while there is a great deal of good provision, FE needs reform if all these young people are to gain the skills and knowledge needed for successful employment. This must include higher standards in English and maths. England is an outlier in terms of the numbers of young people studying these core skills - only 50 per cent of 16 to 19 year olds study maths post 16. Three quarters of employers believe action is needed to improve the literacy and numeracy of school leavers.

A good apprenticeship can change lives just as much as a degree but England still lags behind when it comes to their provision and quality. Despite a growing recognition of the importance of apprenticeships the right policy and action has not followed, and the number

of young people starting apprenticeships actually fell over the last year. Fewer than one in 10 employers in England offer apprenticeships, and two-thirds of apprenticeships are of a standard that would not be recognised in our competitor countries due to the re-badging of low level workplace training.

We are also failing to provide enough higher level training. The proportion of degree-level apprenticeships currently falls far short of what is needed, at just 2 per cent of all apprenticeships. Yet we know that more than a quarter (27 per

cent) of employed graduates earn less than the average hourly wage achieved by former apprentices, and in many other countries universities play a much stronger role in working with employers to innovate, train and grow. While for years there has been a consensus about the need to expand access to university, it also matters what type of provision universities are creating. Too many people are being pushed down a one-size-fits-all route, as the expansion of university has not done enough to increase the options for young people that want to specialise and train for a particular career.



A lack of advice and guidance is also restricting the access young people have to vocational and technical qualifications. In 2013, just a quarter of young people surveyed had been given information on starting an apprenticeship. To successfully plot a route through education and into employment, young people need quality careers advice to make the right choices but this is now missing from the vast majority of schools and colleges. Neglecting to support and guide young people through education is harming social mobility and limiting the opportunities young people have to choose courses that meet their needs and the needs of the labour market.

Labour believes that to compete in the world we must use the talents of all young people, not just a few. Central to Labour's plan to build a more balanced and fair economy is the need to create more high skill, high wage jobs, developing the skills that will be needed by industry in the future.

So Labour will deliver a clear, high quality vocational route through education, with a new gold-standard Technical Baccalaureate for 16 to 18 year olds, including a quality vocational qualification accredited by employers and work-based learning. And to deliver the core skills needed for work and further study, all young people will study English and maths to 18 regardless of



their prior achievement. These core subjects are needed for every career choice and are too important to be dropped at 16.

These measures will support young people to be apprenticeship-ready when they leave school, and those who get the grades will be guaranteed the right to a high quality apprenticeship. We also need to do more to support the higher level training young people can progress on to. So to meet this demand, Labour will also introduce new high level Technical Degrees, delivered by universities and employers.

In order to build our capacity to deliver a high quality vocational education we will incentivise higher standards in FE by transforming the highest performing colleges into new 'Institutes of Technical Education' (ITEs). These will be the colleges with excellent English and maths provision, a record of delivering high quality specialist education and training and strong links to employers. ITEs will have a core mission to deliver the Tech Bacc and the higher level skills demanded by industry.

Young people will be signposted along this new vocational route via quality careers advice and guidance. Labour will guarantee young people independent and face-to-face advice, delivered by careers professionals trained to give information and guidance on academic and vocational qualifications. This will support more young people to make the right choices about their future, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds who can lack the networks and prior information often used to access opportunities and progress.

Labour will:

- Deliver a new gold-standard Technical Baccalaureate for 16 to 18 year olds
- Ensure all young people study English and maths to 18
- Raise standards in FE, with new Institutes of Technical Education
- Guarantee all young people face-to-face careers advice
- Give every young person that gets the grades has the right to a high quality apprenticeship
- Introduce new Technical Degrees delivered by universities and employers

5. Equipping every young person for the future

We need to do more to prepare young people to be active citizens of our country, to take advantage of the opportunities of the modern world and to cope with its challenges. The increasingly narrow curriculum promoted over the last five years is failing to develop the skills, knowledge and personal attributes young people need to excel.

More needs to be done to embed character education across school curricula and deliver opportunities for young people to access the workplace skills and experiences that help them make a successful transition from school to work. Recent policy changes have neglected broader skills, character, and creativity in education, such as the removal of the duty on schools to organise work experience for students aged between 14 and 16. This side-lining of workplace skills comes at exactly the time when employers are asking for more from school leavers than just qualifications – nearly 80 per cent of employers rate the attitudes young people hold as the most important factor they consider when recruiting new staff.

Building character traits such as resilience, creativity and the ability to work well with others also relies on the

good provision of extra-curricular activities. However, this varies greatly across the country with many young people, particularly in disadvantaged areas, still being denied access to the pre-and-after-school clubs, holiday and weekend activities that can help build confidence and skills and lift aspiration. Giving young people the opportunities to build their talents and stretch their abilities in a particular sport, creative activity or subject is important for ensuring we maximise the potential of every young person. Currently, these opportunities are often restricted to young people in private education or those in high performing areas.

Social media, smart phones and new technology offer many positive opportunities for young people, allowing them to communicate more easily and have more knowledge about the world at their fingertips. However new technology also means that the pressures of advertising, negative stereotyping and access to explicit images and content affect many more young people. Children are frequently dealing with the effects of this alone, due to a lack of support and awareness in schools. Parents can often also struggle to know how best to support and advise their children on these issues.

Mental health problems are on the rise in young people - one in ten face mental health challenges and incidences of online bullying, low self-esteem and violence in relationships are also increasingly reported. The prevalence of these damaging experiences amongst young people has therefore led to widespread calls for better sex and relationships education (SRE) in schools. This would help equip young people with the resilience and knowledge they need to stay safe and healthy and navigate their way through the downsides of new technology. The overwhelming majority of students (90 per cent) of students support statutory SRE, reflecting their desire for more support and guidance.

So Labour will ensure all young people receive a broad education that places a premium on skills, character and creativity alongside academic and vocational qualifications. We will ensure schools deliver two hours of sport a week to their students so they benefit from physical exercise, competitive activity and working in teams. Our plans for extended schooling in primary schools will also deliver more pre-and-after-school clubs and cultural, academic and sporting activities in local areas to help raise the attainment and aspirations of pupils.

Labour will give 16 and 17 year-olds the right to vote. To coincide with this we will update the Citizenship curriculum so young people are better prepared to participate in society and the democratic process. And to ensure young people build the skills and experiences that can help them succeed in employment, we will also ensure all young people undertake compulsory work experience between the ages of 14 and 16 so they are better prepared to make the transition from school to work. We will also halt plans to decouple AS and A-levels. To go ahead with the decoupling of A-levels would limit the opportunities young people have to study a broad range of subjects between 16 and 18. It would also undermine social mobility because AS-levels provide encouragement for capable but under-confident students to apply to good universities and continue their studies through to full A-levels.

To equip our young people with the knowledge they need to stay safe and healthy we will introduce age-appropriate sex and relationship education in all schools and ensure teachers are better trained to identify mental health issues. Labour will also work to ensure that vulnerable children are supported and able to succeed. We will continue our support for Frontline

and its innovative approach to training social workers and increase support for children in kinship (or ‘family and friends’) care and their families, a group too often overlooked and undervalued. We will give the most vulnerable children in kinship care priority in school admissions so they are supported to get a great education and work with local authorities to ensure kinship carers have more access to the support networks that help them feel less isolated.

Labour will:

- Ensure all schools deliver age-appropriate sex and relationships education
- Update and strengthen the Citizenship curriculum
- Introduce compulsory work experience for 14 to 16 year-olds
- Give kinship carers access to support and give vulnerable children in kinship care priority in school admissions
- Give teachers better training in mental health awareness



Conclusion

Labour has a better plan for education. We understand that if we are to make the most of the wealth of talent that exists in every community, we need to give every child a chance.

So Labour will deliver higher standards and opportunities to all our young people. We will raise standards in schools and colleges in every area, improve teaching quality in every classroom and deliver gold standard vocational opportunities to every young person.

This will require us to be challenging of our schools and colleges and to change a culture that has side-lined vocational and technical education for too long. By working in partnership with parents, young people and with the ambitious, skilled and hardworking education workforce that exists across the country, we can deliver this. In doing so, we will raise attainment, improve life chances and set the next generation up to succeed in the strong economy and society that Labour will build for the future.

Acknowledgements

Over the past four and a half years Labour has worked closely with the education and children's community to develop our Better Plan for Education.

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