

1. What should our schools be focusing on in order to prepare young people for the future?
 - Schools are currently in turmoil. So much change has been implemented in the last few years that teachers are exhausted and constantly trying to keep up. We have lost the time when teachers are familiar with the curriculum and have time and energy to develop added extras. It is time to leave the system alone for 5 years and allow schools and teachers to find their bearings.
 - In addition to making sure youngsters have the basics for earning a living it should be about helping young people know about themselves; what are their strengths and what do they enjoy. Life is so much more than about earning a living. Schools introduce young people to the things that move us from surviving to living that are not to do with earning a living (for most of us); art, drama, music, sport, literature etc. Today it is really hard for young people to find a job even with plenty of qualifications and they need other things in their life. If we teach them that school is only about getting a job then many of them feel they have failed right at the beginning.
 - The government talk of competing with the far east in academic achievement but seemed to have missed the point that our society does not choose to live in that very competitive and pressured way. I do not want my children to do nothing but study. I do not want them to have failed in life if they do not meet the highest academic standards.
 - Primary schools should be focusing on the 3 Rs within a broad curriculum that introduces children to a wide range of subjects. So much time is now spent on preparing for exams that children are not having fun and not learning that learning itself is fun.
 - As law now dictates young people must stay in education until 18 we need to do better in providing a range of learning situations. A-levels are fine for those who are academic and college courses are available for those who want a more vocational approach. Apprenticeships are really hit and miss. Very hard to find and limited in range. Some are very poor quality teaching. Much talk and little action is my impression. My son would have considered, and still would consider, an apprenticeship after his A-levels but the range of higher level apprenticeships is almost non-existent.
 - The principle that until you have reached the level of GCSE level C in English you should continue to study English is a good one. In reality it has been implemented in such a way that if you can't jump the hurdle you may not study anything at all. I have children who struggled to reach level C and yet are very bright and capable in many other ways. There are many young people who are capable of studying sciences, maths, engineering at a high level who are prevented from doing this because they have not got level C in English. Forcing youngsters to tread water studying at GCSE equivalent level again just because they do not have English while at the same time making English level C harder to achieve does not make sense. They cannot get a job or study at a level that interests them and soon give up altogether. These young people could have studied science A-levels and continued to study English alongside. That would make sense both for the individual and would provide society with a more educated resource for the work place.
 - We need to find a way to improve our language teaching. We need to teach languages at primary school and learn from how languages are taught on the

continent. By the time our young people are in secondary school they are too concerned about looking silly.

2. Should schools play a role in developing skills, or should subject knowledge be prioritised?
 - We do not need extremes. There clearly needs to be a balance where both skills and knowledge are taught. School is about helping young people to learn a range of skills and learn about a range of subjects.
3. Who should be responsible for ensuring that young people develop soft, financial and entrepreneurial skills?
 - As a school governor for a secondary school I observed that schools and teachers are fully stretched. There is clearly an opportunity to develop these skills in school but something then has to give. We have been adding new areas to the curriculum to the extent that schools look for 10 or 20 mins to include the latest requirement.
4. Do education providers have the resources to prepare young people for the workforce?
 - Our local secondary schools are under serious financial pressure. The most obvious outward sign has been that 6th form teaching hours have decreased.
5. To help the APPG create a practical set of approaches and recommendations:
 1. What examples are there of schools and colleges preparing young people well for the workforce?
 2. What examples are there of employer-led initiatives that have had an impact?