

## APPG for Education Inquiry

### 1. What should our schools be focusing on in order to prepare young people for the future?

Schools should be developing their curricula with preparation for adult working life as the central aim. The recent current narrow focus on attainment (largely in English and Maths) has skewed the value given to the notion of a broad and balanced curriculum. A curriculum framework should be developed which encompasses a broad set of outcomes that define the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes that young people need to become active, healthy participants in a rapidly changing and complex world. Within this broad set of outcomes would be those related to the world of work.

Too often those elements which are directly related to adult working life appear as enrichment or as a bolt on activity and there is little integration of work-related learning into the core subject curriculum. Teachers and senior leaders are often unaware of the range of career opportunities available in their local area with too much focus on next steps rather than looking at the ultimate goal and the pathways towards it.

Too much of what is taught in schools is delivered without reference to its relevance to the world of work with success in exams and the achievement of thresholds presented as an end in themselves.

From an early age (primary school) YP should be encouraged to relate their learning to their future adult life and have opportunities to learn about the local economy from direct exposure to work environments and employees. There needs to be a progressive framework (of learning outcomes) across all key stages to support teachers in planning, developing, mapping and assessing YPs work readiness.

Learning about learning should be an explicit element of the curriculum. In the world today it is vital that YP understand themselves and their learning styles and preferences and have the opportunities to develop skills of critical enquiry, problem solving and team work whilst being encouraged to apply knowledge and understanding and skills to new situations. Whether YP ultimately follow an 'academic' or 'vocational' route they should all as an entitlement experience work-related learning as an embedded element of their curriculum.

During their education YP should be encouraged to work and learn in a variety of ways and in a variety of settings. This would include periods spent with employers through which they would get real experience of work and a feel for what types of work they might be most suited to.

### 2. Should schools play a role in developing skills, or should subject knowledge be prioritised?

The skills versus knowledge debate is a false dichotomy. In reality they cannot and should not be separated. Both are equally important and both should be developed together. Whether someone becomes a brain surgeon or a car mechanic they will need to develop a range of skills (requiring a high degree of dexterity) and the ability to apply their knowledge and skills to problem solve in new situations.

Schools have a role to play in both. Both should be prioritised

### 3. Who should be responsible for ensuring that young people develop soft, financial and entrepreneurial skills?

Schools should be developing these as part of the curriculum but it is likely that they will be most effectively delivered where schools have developed strong links with local businesses who can support the teaching and learning in these areas.

4. Do education providers have the resources to prepare young people for the workforce?

Education providers could do much more within the current resources were the curriculum more focused on work related learning. However the most effective preparation for the workforce is likely to be based upon strong sustained partnerships between schools and local businesses. Developing and sustaining effective education- business relationships needs to be resourced.

5. To help the APPG create a practical set of approaches and recommendations:

- a. What examples are there of schools and colleges preparing young people well for the workforce?

In the London Borough of Hounslow we have for example:

West Thames College – with an excellent apprenticeship offer and employability integrated within all post 16 Study Programmes.

Gumley House Convent School – With a clear education vision focused on preparing YP for life in a global economy. A dedicated member of staff supports teachers and YP by developing links and opportunities with global companies and applications to universities outside the UK.

Logic Studio School – An innovative 14-18 school in Feltham opening in September with a curriculum focused on preparing YP for the world of work in the local area (at 16, 18 or post graduation). Strong links with employers being developed to support YP in a number of ways including delivering industry standard ICT qualifications and up to 6 weeks work experience in year 12.

- b. What examples are there of employer-led initiatives that have had an impact?

In Hounslow we have 2 project search sites. Project search is hosted by an employer and enables YP with LDD to undertake a 1 year supported internship that leads to employment. Employment outcomes for YP (compared to the outcomes normally experienced by LLDD) are excellent. This is an excellent model of learning that could benefit a wider group of YP.

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