

- **What the purpose of education for children of all ages in England should be:**

Education is a universal human right under the United Nations declaration of the Rights of the Child. It was defined in Article 1(a) of [UNESCO's 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms](#).

The article states that education implies:

"the entire process of social life by means of which individuals and social groups learn to develop consciously within, and for the benefit of, the national and international communities, the whole of their personal capabilities, attitudes, aptitudes and knowledge."<sup>[8]</sup>

The [European Court of Human Rights](#) also defined education in a narrow sense as "teaching or instructions... in particular to the transmission of knowledge and to intellectual development" and in a wider sense as "the whole process whereby, in any society, adults endeavour to transmit their beliefs, culture and other values to the young."<sup>[8]</sup>

It would be expected that areas covered included:

Basic skills: literacy, numeracy etc. Intellectual development through problem solving, game playing, the arts, sports and leadership opportunities.

Socialisation: friendships; relationships; speaking and listening skills developed through interaction with peers and adults.

Knowledge, and an understanding of the nature of knowledge i.e. that it is not 'fixed'. The development of an understanding of how to find and gather information, how to be discriminating and selective.

Values, moral and ethical education, preparing young people and other learners to be responsible citizens able to care for themselves and others.

Productive member of society; positive contribution to civilisation.

- **What measures should be used to evaluate the quality of education against this purpose:**

Progress in skills should be tracked and measured against a regularly reviewed bench mark. Public examinations and national testing are highly contentious areas for debate but both are inevitably going to be a part of the system. Teachers should, however, be more trusted in the process of assessment.

- **How well the current education system performs against these measures**

The increased diversity of the school eco-system (academies, free schools, grammar school 'annexes, specialist post 16 providers etc) makes it difficult to achieve equity and comparability between providers. The systems for extracting accountability are complex and beyond the understanding of many parents and other stakeholders, for example the roles of Local Authorities, OFSTED, the Regional Schools Commissioners and the Education Funding Agency (as recently discussed at the Education Select Committee).

The current system is too dependent upon quantitative measures and is insufficiently focused upon the 'whole child'.

Over reliance on academic outcomes, particularly when based upon attainment, means that the other attributes of a good education are missed or devalued

As a Local Authority we fully support the drive to raise standards for all children and young people, particularly those from a disadvantaged background. However, we are witnessing an increasing reluctance from some of our schools to admit some of our vulnerable children. Equally, there is evidence to suggest that the narrowing of the curriculum at Keystage 4 has led to an increase in the numbers of children and young people who find it difficult to access an appropriate education. This has led to a rise in the number of exclusions of pupils from our schools.