

# **The political agenda and key government policies**

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## Overview

- The current policy landscape.
- Current issues.
- Opportunities and challenges.

## The political agenda and key government policies

### **The current landscape**

- No announcements?
- No bureaucracy? Freeze on communications
- No central initiatives?
- Deluge of consultations.
- No regulation – permissive legislation?
- Accountability and funding streams driving practice.
- Education forum, meetings with officials and ministers- who is being listened to?
- Noticeable change in media profile and emphasis.
- Children and Families part of DfE definitely lower priority.

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### Consultations

- A Consultation on School Funding Reform: Proposals for a Fairer System
- Implementation of the 2010-11 Review of Education Capital (The James Review)
- Proposed changes to the teacher disciplinary and induction regulations following the abolition of the General Teaching Council for England
- Review of Personal, Social, Health and Economics (PSHE) Education
- Consultation on Proposed Increases to Contributions for Members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme
- Auxiliary Aids for Children with Disabilities
- Proposed changes to allow qualified teachers from further education and from the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to become permanent teachers in English schools
- Revised Statutory Guidance on the Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services
- Study Programmes for 16-19 year olds
- 16-19 Funding Formula Review
- Removing the statutory duty to deliver work related learning at Key Stage 4

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### **Implications for ASCL members**

- Little experience of change of government
- Accustomed to top down policy but with lots of warning, information, guidance (DCSF)
- Complete change of policy in all areas but lack of information
- Freeze on communications at DfE
- Disappearance of guidance and support systems (QCDA, Specialist school networks, local networks etc)
- Government consulting on detail but not on policy
- Uncertainty over future requirements

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### **Whitehall –who is interested in education?**

- DfE
- BIS – Skills, apprenticeships, HE/FE issues
- Cabinet Office – Social mobility unit
- No 10 – policy unit
- The Treasury – economic growth review.
- Opposition
- Parliamentarians in general
- The Select Committee
- .....and the Daily Mail!

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### **The greatest challenges for school leaders**

- Staff morale , the pensions dispute, succession planning
- Pay freeze / pay & conditions issues.
- Budgets – are SLTs prepared for what is coming.
- Post riot England
- Social mobility – Access to HE
- Information advice and guidance
- Accountability / Floor standards
- Curriculum
- Academy transfer issues
- Government messaging

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### **Messages about our education service**

- Behaviour is extremely poor and needs to be sorted out by government, army officers or male teachers.
- Truancy is rife.
- The curriculum is not fit for purpose.
- E Bacc subjects are more important.
- Exams have been dumbed down.
- The quality of teachers being recruited into the profession is not good enough
- Teacher training is based on 'outdated theory' rather than best practice.
- Almost every other country has a better education system than ours.

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### **Confident schools**

- **Exam results safe.**
- **Oversubscribed**
- **Well to do catchment**
- **Very good, recent Ofsted report**
- **Parents supportive**
- **Stable staffing**
- **Unions low profile.**

### **Constrained schools**

- **Close to floor targets.**
- **Free school opening down the road.**
- **Surplus places**
- **Challenging catchment**
- **Ofsted could come any time**
- **Staffing /union issues**

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### **Confident schools**

- Can choose to ignore government policy.
- Curriculum designed according to long term vision of leadership.
- Able to relax about accountability measures
- Unlikely to be at risk if inspected.
- Teaching can be innovative and creative.

### **Constrained schools**

- Reactive to government policy.
- Curriculum dominated by external demands. E Bacc etc. leads to curriculum changes.
- Can never relax about accountability measures.
- Focused on Ofsted framework
- Teaching to the test – constrained by C/D borderline

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### **What are the Conservatives doing?**

- Academies / Free schools/ Studio schools/ UTCs
- Focus on academic knowledge – influencing subject take up .
- Restoring discipline
- Rigour – changes to examination system
- Accountability - data
- Deficit reduction
- Raising the bar – intervention in ‘underperforming’, ‘failing’ and ‘coasting’ schools
- ITT/CPD/Teaching schools

## What are the Liberal Democrats doing?

- Is the Lib Dem involvement in the coalition presenting an alternative view?
- Leading on social mobility, access to HE.
- SEN
- Sarah Teather speech to conference:  
‘Labour didn’t only waste money – they wasted the chance to make a difference for our pupils’
- ‘Doubling of pupil premium’
- Summer schools initiative £50m

## **What is the opposition doing?**

- Policy review – ASCL represented
- Thinking about 2015
- ‘We are where we are.’ Dangers of another ‘zero-based’ approach.
- Building consensus – an education constitution?
- Strong local system
- Masters level profession / chartered teachers?
- UCAS system for apprenticeships
- Relevant curriculum. Alternatives to Ebacc (Modbac)

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### **Pensions**

- Treasury leading.
- Our survey
- Meetings with ministers / SoS
- Letter to PM
- October lobby
- United front by all education unions
- Sector specific negotiations have started on our terms.
- Local govt scheme subject to separate negotiations.
- Industrial action still an option but strong mandate from ASCL members to wait until negotiations flounder.

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### ASCL Council 14 October 2011

Council authorises the general secretary to call a ballot of members for appropriate industrial action, including strike action, if pension negotiations fail

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## **Three key aspects of the dispute:**

- Valuation
- Information
- Negotiation

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### **Key planks of union position**

- The government has not produced a valuation of the current scheme and has only recently begun to produce information on the cost envelope for the proposals. The unions have been present for every negotiation, but discussion has been held back by the absence of that information. This has fuelled confrontation.
- The government has not made the case that the TPS is unsustainable and its refusal to value the scheme creates the opposite impression: it is in fact affordable and the cuts are merely a tax on public workers to pay for the mistakes of others.
- We are willing to play our role in the recovery, as tax payers like everyone else. We are ready for negotiations but they must be genuine ones. We are calling on the government to avoid an unnecessary confrontation by providing a valuation of the current scheme and negotiating rather than imposing a cost ceiling.

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### **Key messages:**

The profession has united to make it clear that:

- Public sector pensions are affordable
- The proposed cuts will not benefit the taxpayer
- The proposed cuts are unfair on public sector workers
- People will leave the teaching profession or not join it in the first place
- The headteacher recruitment shortage will turn into a crisis
- Further information on campaign at:  
[www.decentpensions.org.uk](http://www.decentpensions.org.uk)

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### **Academies / Free schools / UTCs**

- 50% of secondary schools likely to be academies by March
- 320 sponsored academies.
- 24 free schools open, 55 more approved for 2012/13
- 13 UTCs by September 2012
- 4 Studio schools
- One 16-19 free school approved
- Applications cloaked in secrecy.
- Rumour but no hard information about budgets / transitional funding.

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### **Academy conversion**

- Applications being treated with some flexibility:
- Attainment and progress of pupils. Above the floor?
- Budget. Has the school got a significant deficit?
- Schools below 50% will be encouraged to work with other schools.
- Example of flexibility - a school with an obvious rising trend or an Ofsted report which points to strong leadership and capacity to improve may well be allowed to become an Academy even if the raw results low.
- Current criteria at <http://bit.ly/pSn4tJ>

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### **Academy issues**

- Conversion believed to drive up standards
- ‘Due diligence’ – conversion process
- ‘Forced academisation’
- Academies below the floor and ‘stuck’
- Jumping before you are pushed
- If you have just reached the floor standard in 2011
- Local initiatives versus chains
- ASCL dialogue with classroom unions.
- Facilities time and representation
- TUC agreement and guidance
- Industrial action in opposition to academy transfer
- Governance- opportunities for converters? Another review

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### **Leading more than one school**

- Absence of a legal/regulatory framework
- Clarity of roles/ models
- Inspection
- Strategic versus operational roles
- Different skill set?
- Relationship with Staff and stakeholders inc. Governors
- Appropriate governance models
- Reputational risks
- Academy chains
- ASCL seminar and future actions

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### **Accountability**

- Floor standards
- Increased access to data.
- Accuracy of data. Drawn from Edubase
- Financial data
- Destinations data
- New focus of Ofsted in school and FE sectors
- Schools below 50% encouraged to work with another school if they want to become academies.
- Accountability driving curriculum
- Focus on qualifications with unintended consequences.
- Strengthening Ofqual
- Accountability of Free Schools and academy chains
- External / internal accountability- telling your own story

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### **Getting to the crux of the issue - BEW**

*‘Main uses of statutory assessment data:*

- *Holding schools accountable for the standard of attainment and progress made by their pupils and groups of pupils;*
- *Informing parents and secondary schools about the performance of individual pupils;*
- *Enabling benchmarking between schools as well as monitoring performance locally and nationally.*

*We acknowledge that statutory assessment data will also be used for a range of secondary uses. We would like to be clear that these are not the principal uses for which the system has been designed.’*

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### **The role of local authorities**

- Meltdown?
- Uncertainty about role and very under-developed discussion.
- Major cutbacks in front line provision. Eg. Wigan £66m reduction.
- Youth Services
- Extended Schools
- Strategic planning of places / Admissions
- SEN
- Facilities time.

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### **ALB review – The new Executive Agencies**

- The Teaching Agency responsible for ensuring the supply of high quality teachers and training, and for teacher regulation
- Standards and testing agency will oversee statutory tests and assessments for children up to age 14.
- The Education Funding Agency will take over responsibility from the Young People's Learning Agency for the funding of young people's education and training - including the increasing number of Academies.
- National College for School Leadership

## **GTCE succession issues**

- Regulation – no interim sanctions, only prohibition orders.
- Duty to consider referral could put heads in difficult position.
- Database – key information, qualifications, induction etc.
- Professional standards.
- Code of conduct subsumed into teaching standards.
- Questions about progression.
- TLA

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### **ITT ‘Training our next generation of teachers’**

- Golden handshakes replaced by bursaries
- High, medium and low priority specialisms and class of degree determine level of bursary..
- Raising bar for entry –aiming at high performing graduates.
- Teach First recruitment model
- Making it easier to apply for teacher training- single system.
- Tests of interpersonal skills.
- No more IT test
- Literacy, numeracy tests before being accepted on training.
- GTP no longer supernumerary.
- More school based but change of heart on HEI involvement

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### **Social mobility**

- Coalition strategy paper '*Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility*'.
- Government emphasis on university entry.
- Fairness
- Pupil Premium
- Parental choice
- Free schools / UTCs
- Surplus places
- Progression routes
- Apprenticeships

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### Information, Advice and Guidance

- New legislation removing CEG requirement.
- Responsibility for providing Careers guidance for years 9-11 devolved to schools. Consultation due about extending.
- Statutory guidance due
- Schools choose what they want and pay from their own budgets.
- All Age Service →→ →→ A National Careers Service.
- Focus on Adults.
- BIS driving forward.
- On-line website.
- Telephone advice service. 0800100 900
- 200 sites mainly based in FE colleges to deliver adult guidance.
- A 'strong market of providers' .
- Destination measures at end of KS4 and 5.
- The 'Quality in Careers' Standard

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### **Employer Education Task Force**

- Speakers for Schools <http://www.speakers4schools.org/>
- Inspiring the Future <http://www.inspiringthefuture.org/>
- Employment based training to degree level eg. KPMG
- Increasing involvement of employers
- Careers guidance (with TSL)
- Work experience
- CBI
- Employability skills
- Definition of a school leaver
- Messages about Science

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### HE issues

#### 1. Access

- Aim Higher – some alternative schemes beginning to develop e.g. Access HE
- Access agreements
- Incorporating disadvantage into assessment of applications.

#### 2. Finance

- Independent Task Force on Student Finance aiming to "*highlight the facts, not the myths*".
- 14<sup>th</sup> November Student Finance Day
- 'School finance tour' visiting **all** schools by January

#### 3. Admissions process

- Applications with results / admissions process review
- AAB offers – lots of questions
- Effect on school year?

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### **Children and Families policy**

- Tim Loughton is the Minister
- ‘Positive about Youth’ Narrative and 18 discussion papers  
<http://bit.ly/oDHkuF>
- Extended schools??? School day?
- No 10 interest in NEETs
- Social Policy review
- Intervention – most dysfunctional families
- Participation. Is there a strategy?
- National Citizen Service
- Looked after children
- SEN pilots

## **The opportunities**

- Freedom and autonomy (?).
- Partnership and collaboration.
- CPD – teaching schools.
- Opportunities for system leadership.
- Defining the profession in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Proactively influencing policy.

## **The challenges for ASCL**

- Public policy agenda
- Review of local and regional structure
- Review of council and democratic structure
- New website
- Active involvement of members

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