

Save School Science

Campaign for
Science and
Engineering
in the UK



The pressure group, Save British Science, was founded in 1986 in response to massive cuts in university research. The group renamed itself Campaign for Science & Engineering (CaSE) in 2005, having vigorously pursued a range of issues to improve the scientific health of the UK. By this time, with a doubling of the science budget, science was generally judged to have been saved.

Over the last few years, however, the alarming situation in secondary science education has become increasingly apparent and threatens UK science to a similar extent as the funding shortages of the 1980s, but without a simple solution. CaSE has prioritised work in this area and, while it will not rename to do so, it really is time to Save School Science.

Every child should have the right to be taught separate chemistry, physics and biology GCSEs in their own school by specialist teachers.

The consequent increases in numbers and performance at science A level would revive undergraduate numbers in the physical sciences and alleviate the current and projected skills shortage.

Science graduates underpin the knowledge economy, are essential in

the financial sector, and are needed to feed back into the system as specialist teachers. On a global scale, our greatest problems, such as climate change, terrorism, and over-population, cannot be solved without science.

Yet, a third of GCSE physics teachers do not even have an A level in the subject and most schools offer only combined science GCSEs. New science initiatives may excite students, but they often return to ill-equipped schools without the appropriate teachers or options.

We call upon the Government to recognise the gravity of the situation and to take radical action to improve it. Unfortunately, current schemes to raise the number of specialist physics and chemistry teachers have yielded just a fraction of those needed.

Steps to be considered include:

- Set physics and chemistry targets for teacher training courses
- Offer financial incentives for general science or biology teachers retraining to teach chemistry and physics
- Encourage headteachers to increase remuneration and provide cover for teachers retraining by including presence of specialist teachers in the schools accountability framework

- Increase teacher retention by providing more support staff and technicians who themselves experience better remuneration and career progression
- Improve the work environment with properly equipped laboratories that will also help motivate students
- Ensure that university science departments are well-funded so they can produce the graduates needed to enter the teaching profession

Urgent action must be taken now.

Please visit the CaSE website, www.sciencecampaign.org.uk, for more information on the full range of our activities, to join the campaign or to find out how to participate in the following upcoming events:

October 8th

Opinion Forum on Under-Represented Groups in Science

October 17th

Science and Education" Annual Lecture by David Willetts, MP

February 1st

Cutting Edge Collaborations conference on how to succeed in the academic-industrial interface

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