



Press release: 23rd July 2010

Academies Bill “risks leaving pupils unprepared for modern life”

The Government has argued that Academies should not be required to teach science and maths according to the National Curriculum.

The new Academies Bill, currently being debated by Parliament, removes the requirement that such schools would have to teach the national curriculum in science, mathematics, information technology, and English.

Imran Khan, the Director of the Campaign for Science and Engineering, said:

“Not requiring schools to follow the national curriculum for science and maths seriously risks leaving pupils unprepared for modern life.”

“Over 9 in 10 businesses employ people with skills in science, technology, engineering and maths - but two thirds of all employers report difficulty in recruiting enough of these workers.”

“The UK is only going to get less competitive in low-skills jobs, so it’s vital that schools teach science and maths to a high standard.”

“Michael Gove’s department is announcing a major curriculum review. At the same time, it’s saying academies won’t be required to follow the revised curriculum at all. That kind of government is neither joined-up nor cost-cutting.”

Opposition MPs tabled an amendment to reintroduce the requirement, but the Minister for Schools, Nick Gibb MP, rejected it, saying;

“The freedoms in the academy system allow school leaders and teachers to be innovative ... by tailoring the curriculum to the needs of their students... We trust teachers to use their professional judgment. They are the people who are best-placed to make such decisions. We want more freedom and flexibility for schools, not less.”

The Academies Bill is expected to pass into law next week.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

The relevant debate in the Commons can be found here:

<http://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2010-07-21a.379.3&s=nick+gibb#g500.1>

The Government announced that the new model funding agreement will require schools to teach science and maths as part of a ‘broad and balanced curriculum’. They have not given a definition of what a ‘broad and balanced curriculum is’, or how it would be audited.

Information on the curriculum review can be found here:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/curriculum#c1> and here

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/7764724/Coalition-pledge-on-slimmed-down-national-curriculum.html>

A CaSE briefing on science in schools can be found here:

<http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/documents/2009/triplesciencebr2009.pdf>

CaSE is the Campaign for Science and Engineering; www.sciencecampaign.org.uk. It is an independent group which advocates for policies improving the science and engineering health of the UK.

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