



CaSE Press Release: Immediate 18th November 2009

Children, Schools and Families Bill must address inequalities in science education

The Children, Schools and Families Bill was announced in today's Queen's Speech. The Campaign for Science & Engineering calls on politicians to ensure that the Bill includes a statutory duty for all schools to offer interested and able students three separate biology, physics and chemistry GCSEs (triple science).

Dr Hilary Leever, Assistant Director of CaSE, commented: "Current targets and entitlements have failed to make sure that schools offer triple science. The Children, Schools and Families Bill must go further by including a statutory duty that ensures that all schools offer interested and able students triple science. The government has a legislative opportunity to deal with the current inequality in science education."

In the *Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014: Next Steps*, the Government set a target for all pupils achieving at least level 6 at Key Stage 3 to be entitled to study triple science GCSE by September 2008. So far only 32% of maintained schools entered students into triple science.

Only 2% of children eligible for free school meals studied triple science in 2007. While independent schools accounted for 9% of all GCSE entries they made up 18% of entries into triple science and while grammar schools accounted for 6.5% of all entries they made up 17% of those in triple science.

In June 2009, the White Paper *Your Child; Your Schools; Our Future* proposed a pupil guarantee of triple science GCSE for *all* of the highest achieving students, by 2014.

Dr Hilary Leever said: "It is not clear how the pupil guarantee will work. Evidence suggests that a statutory duty will be necessary for it to be successful. Taking triple science gives students the best preparation for science A levels and the wealth of opportunities that they bring. It is totally unreasonable that some students cannot study triple science simply because of which school they go to."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. Contact: Dr Hilary Leever, Assistant Director, hilary@sciencecampaign.org.uk, 020 7679 4995, 07905 304702.
2. Triple science is linked with science A level uptake and performance see: *Success in science, Ofsted, June 2008*; *Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014: Next Steps – 2006 budget*; *Specialist Science Schools, Smithers & Robinson, Centre for Education and Employment Research, January 2009*.
3. Campaign for Science & Engineering (CaSE) is a policy advocate for science and engineering in the UK. CaSE is supported by its members, which includes individuals, corporations, universities and learned societies. Further information on CaSE can be found on our website: <http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk>
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