

Campaign for Real Education [CRE]

www.cre.org.uk

“Freedom to teach, freedom to learn, freedom to choose”

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Newsletter

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01. Editorial

At the time of writing this editorial, pupils are sitting public examinations. Those with special educational needs and disabilities such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or ADHD can ask for extra time. Provided the request is supported by a teacher qualified in special needs assessment, the application is usually granted.

The support that follows commonly includes 25 per cent extra time, which allows, for example, thirty extra minutes for a 2-hour exam. Other assistance may include: a scribe, a reader, the use of a laptop, the provision of a separate room, rest breaks. All of this extra help is fair and legitimate for genuine cases of disability.

It is grossly unfair and dishonest, however, when schools and parents seek to benefit pupils through fake claims of disability or of special needs.

Attaining good exam results for their child is a great incentive for pushy parents to game the system and become exam cheats. Nor is it unusual for schools and teachers to be compliant or, even, to encourage such cheating since they, too, are judged by exam results.

Data obtained from the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation [Ofqual] provide shocking evidence of how the support system for those with genuine disabilities is now being abused to benefit those with the sharpest elbows. Readers may recall the head of Ofqual once told *The Sunday Times* that, 'all our kids are brilliant' [*Sunday Times*, Aug 13, 2017]. The 'special needs' fraud may now be helping to create the impression that this is, indeed, the case.

Back in 2012, 135,200 pupils qualified for extra exam time. This rose to 256,710 in 2020, pre-Covid. By 2022 the number was 334,375, a staggering rise of almost two and a half times across a decade. This statistical evidence for likely malpractice could scarcely be clearer.

And, according to the data extracted from Ofqual, it is children in private schools, who are benefitting most from any malpractice. In 2019, 27 per cent of private school pupils received examination dispensations for 'special needs' as against 17 per cent of state school pupils.

This rose to 30.6 per cent and 19.4 respectively in 2020 although, in the end, the exams for that year were cancelled because of Covid. Grades were, instead, based on teacher assessments. When exams returned in 2022 dispensations for private school pupils had risen to 35.8 per cent as against 22.7 per cent for state school pupils.

Having one's child classified as 'special needs' bring benefits not only to older pupils during exam time. For younger children, too, it brings with it the advantage of extra

classroom support on a day-to-day basis. Small wonder that the majority of staff in schools are no longer teachers. Amongst school support staff, the number of classroom assistants, many of whom work with children identified as having 'special needs', has risen to 275,000. [For its impact and importance see *Teacher Strikes* article in this Newsletter].

Pupils who genuinely do have 'special needs' are, of course, being adversely affected by the explosion in the number of those now being placed in this category. Provision for them is likely to be much diluted.

The honest majority of pupils with non-pushy parents, often from under-privileged backgrounds, are also being penalised. They slog away, week in, week out, without extra help in the classroom and without extra time in their exams.

Honesty pays few dividends in our schools these days. Anecdotal evidence has emerged indicating that pupils seeking the benefits of 'special needs' status are even being tutored to generate fake evidence when tested.

One pupil noted the ease with which pupils in her class, for example, can have themselves diagnosed as dyslexic by deliberately reversing letters, writing, for example, *tac* instead of *cat*. Some pupils are also savvy enough to know that not completing a school test can be sufficient 'proof' that they have 'processing problems' and, therefore, qualify for extra time in public exams.

Another story that has come to us from an authoritative source is that in one highly regarded school, a group of thirty secondary school pupils who transparently did not have any 'special needs', were called into a room and asked to answer some questions. They were, then, awarded extra time in their exams even though neither they, nor their parents, had any awareness of a 'special needs' impediment.

All of this is this is an educational and social scandal that favours pushy 'haves' over non-pushy 'have-nots'. If the government is serious about its 'levelling-up' agenda it needs to wake up to what is going behind the closed doors of our schools and examination halls.

Various forms of cheating and malpractice are becoming normalised within the examination and assessment systems across the UK, not only in England. It extends, even, to our participation in tests that provide international comparisons such as the OECD's PISA assessments.

A study led by Professor John Jerrim at University College London Social Research Institute in 2021 concluded that there are "serious flaws" in the way educational performance in the PISA tests is measured by the UK Government. Amongst several damning indictments, he points out that: *In the UK, around 40% of students are not included in the PISA data. This is amongst the highest anywhere in the world.* He

adds that: *In England and Wales, there is clear evidence that some lower-achieving pupils have been systematically excluded. While what has happened in Scotland is, frankly, a bit of a mess.* In relation to Scotland, further discussion of this issue can be found below in the article entitled *Scotland's National Discussion on education*.

Nor are primary school SATs exams exempt from the current cheating pandemic. In 2020 the *Independent* reported that 793 cases of 'maladministration', probable cheating, had been investigated in 2018 – a rise of 50 per cent in two years. The Department for Education, however, employs only four people as investigators, none of whom is qualified as a teacher.

The National Association of Primary Education, to its credit, described the Department's response as a 'half-heated approach to doling out punishment to those who are caught.'

On behalf of the Campaign for Real Education and that majority of children who are currently being disadvantaged by the cheats, I shall be passing on our concerns to the Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan. She needs to act and she needs to act now.

Chris McGovern
Chairman

02. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS]

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS] recently published its latest research report on the attainment of ten-year old pupils across fifty seven education systems around the world.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1156633/PIRLS_2021_-_national_report_for_England_May_2023.pdf

England performed impressively well, being placed fourth amongst the forty three countries with whom it could be compared. This was a rise of four places in its position on the previous round of tests in 2016, although two countries that outperformed us last time, the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland, were unable to provide comparable data on this occasion because of COVID-19 disruption. Neither Scotland nor Wales participate in the tests. England now trail behind only Singapore, Hong Kong and Russia on this assessment. The media, unsurprisingly, was in celebratory mood as headlines such as these make clear:

Children in England are best readers in the western world - The Times

Children in England ranked fourth for reading - BBC

England moves into top five in international rankings for reading - Independent

Pirls: England's reading rise a triumph for education policy - TES

Education minister Nick Gibb was praised, justifiably, for his promotion of synthetic phonics in our primary schools. Credit too, though, should go to the late Nick Seaton, founding chairman of the Campaign for Real Education. Back in 1987, he was the first to campaign vigorously for the restoration of phonics in the teaching of reading. This followed the sacking of Croydon's Senior Educational Psychologist, the late Dr. Martin Turner. Dr Turner's 'crime' was to blow the whistle on a fall in reading standards that coincided with the demise in teaching phonics.

Nor should the contribution made by former headteacher and CRE committee member, Irina Tyk, be overlooked. Her Butterfly reading course was amongst the first to revive the teaching of synthetic phonics in the classroom. It is, also, at the heart of the work done by Real Action, an educational charity that runs Saturday morning classes under the leadership of CRE vice-chairman, Katie Ivens.

Although progress in raising standards of literacy now seems apparent, there is little room for complacency, and not only because of the poor levels of literacy amongst many adults. Within the teaching establishment there is still resistance to the

teaching of phonics and denial of its benefits. Their use in literacy lessons is far from being whole-heartedly embraced and this may be reflected in caveats about England's performance that are set out in the PIRLS report, including these:

- England's average overall reading performance has not changed significantly compared to most previous PIRLS cycles, including PIRLS 2016. By contrast, most education systems in PIRLS 2021 experienced significant drops in overall performance since 2016, but this may reflect the fact that many systems collected data for PIRLS during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- England and 5 other education systems delayed data collection for 12 months as a result of COVID-19. The majority of participating education systems continued with data collection as originally planned, and others delayed by 6 months but tested older pupils at the beginning of their fifth year of formal schooling. This means that direct statistical comparisons to some education systems are not possible to make in this cycle of PIRLS because of the complexities introduced by comparing across different ages of pupils and varying impact of COVID-19.
- Girls still outperform boys by 10 points on average in PIRLS 2021, but this is lower than in previous cycles.
- The gap between the lowest-scoring and highest-scoring pupils in England has also reduced over time. In the long term, looking across all cycles of PIRLS, this seems to be the result of increases in performance amongst the lowest-attainers, while high-attainers' average score has remained relatively stable.
- Fewer pupils in England reported that they enjoy reading than in previous cycles.
- Almost half of pupils who participated in PIRLS 2021 in England report experiencing bullying at least monthly at school. Across all participating education systems, pupils who report experiencing bullying more frequently had lower average performance in PIRLS 2021.

Our campaign to restore phonics in the teaching of reading has been longstanding. It dates back to the formation of The Campaign for Real Education in the 1980s. Too often, though, we have been the voice of a Cassandra in discussion of educational reform. Although we are invariably proved right, at the time they are given, our warnings are ignored or rebutted by the educational establishment.

The restoration of phonics teaching is too late for a couple of generations of children. Poor standards of literacy amongst many of today's parents is a consequence of the

slow learning curve of successive governments with regard to the importance of phonics. Better late, however, than never.

We shall learn more about standards of literacy, alongside standards in mathematics and science, from the next round of assessment results from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA]. They are due for publication in December 2023 and will cover the performance of 15-year-olds from around eighty countries.

03. Did Northern Ireland Do Better Than England in the PIRLS Reading Tests?

The BBC's Northern Ireland news page reported the good news story about the PIRLS reading test results somewhat differently from how it reported the results for England:

The reading performance of primary school children in Northern Ireland has been ranked fifth in the world in a major international assessment. Only pupils in Singapore, Ireland, Hong Kong and Russia achieved higher scores than children here.

On the English news page, however, it stated;

Primary school children in England have ranked fourth in the international rankings for reading.

Why the difference? Only the BBC page for England provided an explanation:

The 2021 testing round assessed nearly 400,000 pupils in 57 countries. But 14 of those - including Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland - delayed testing to the start of the next school year because of disruption caused by the Covid pandemic, meaning the students taking part were older.

Northern Ireland, with its grammar schools, consistently outperforms England at GCSE and A-Level. Quite possibly, it would have done so on the latest PIRLS tests as it has done previous cycles of the assessment; not least, because it has to prepare primary school children for the 11+ exam. Neither Wales nor Scotland currently participate in the tests but Scotland intends to join next time around.

04. Ofsted

The tragic death of a headteacher following Ofsted's downgrading of her school to 'inadequate' has brought much condemnation of the inspection system.

Within the teaching profession and beyond it has been claimed that Ofsted is punitive rather than helpful. Until the coroner reports, however, we shall not know the extent to which, if at all, the Ofsted inspection may have contributed to this headteacher's death.

In the emotional heat of the current debate it has been easy to overlook that fact that the main purpose of the inspection system is to oversee and safeguard the best interests of children.

The National Education Union has called for the abolition of Ofsted. Its joint general secretary told her recent national conference that it should be replaced by a system that is 'supportive, effective and fair.' Such criticism need to be placed in the context of a substantial proportion of inspectors being, themselves, practising teachers. In addition, Ofsted's own statistics state that, Eighty-eight per cent of all schools are good or outstanding.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/state-funded-schools-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2022/main-findings-state-funded-schools-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2022>

This evidence suggests that rather than being punitive, Ofsted errs on the side of being too generous in its assessment of school performance. Schools are inclined to make much of Ofsted praise on their websites and on the school sign boards that greet visitors and passers-by.

A reform of Ofsted may be necessary. The adequacy, for example, of the short and single word summaries currently deployed - 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate' – certainly needs to be reviewed. A future Labour government has pledged to undertake such a review.

Reform, however, must prioritise the best interests of children and their parents rather than any self-serving interests of the profession. An independent inspection service is fundamental to any successful education system.

05. The Mysterious Case of Professor Biggar and the Harry Potter Publisher

Earlier this year, there was a delay in the publication of *Colonialism: A Moral Reckoning* by Nigel Biggar CBE. To avoid the promotion of contentious material, it seems, Bloomsbury decided against releasing the book, even though they had commissioned it. Biggar was paid off. The recently retired Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at the University of Oxford, who concluded in his book that the British Empire was not all bad, described his 'cancellation' as capitulation to 'the woke left'.

He had a point. According to [a report in the Times](#), Bloomsbury, publishers of the Harry Potter series, were initially very enthusiastic, describing the work as being of 'major importance'. Biggar's editor informed him by email that he was 'speechless' with enthusiasm. Quite an accolade!

Things turned sour, however, when a follow-up email from Bloomsbury's head of special interest informed Biggar that 'conditions are not currently favourable to publication'. From there, matters went steadily downhill. In Bloomsbury's opinion, 'limbo' was the best place for the book and, by implication, for its author.

In his *Divine Comedy* Dante Alighieri (c 1265-1321) describes the abode of Limbo as an alternative to Hell for those who are virtuous but unbaptised. In woke theology Biggar falls into that category. Confinement in Limbo, though, has some poetic merit. In Bloomsbury's defence, it is a rather benign punishment for 'heresy'. And Biggar would be in good company. Dante's Limbo includes the Homer, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and even the chivalrous Saladin.

It seems that Biggar, however, had no desire to be so confined, saying: 'If every publisher behaved like Bloomsbury did with me, then important books that challenge received ideas that may be deeply mistaken won't get published. And fallacious ideas will dominate our public discourse, as indeed they have been for some time on our history.'

The good news was that another publisher, Collins, came to the rescue. Woke witchfinders and inquisitional heresy-hunters, though, were not disappointed.

Biggar's book, for example, did not unconditionally condemn colonial interference, from time to time, in local culture. A good example of such interference is the prohibition the British Empire placed on the practice of sati or suttee in parts of India and Nepal. This involved the burning of a widow on her deceased husband's funeral pyre. Faced by protests against the ban in Sindh province (modern-day Pakistan), the imperial British Governor Charles Napier met religious leaders. He conceded to their complaints about British interference in local culture. This was his response,

quoted in Jeremy Paxman's pre-woke book, *Empire*: 'Be it so. This burning of widows is your custom; prepare the funeral pile. But my nation has also a custom. When men burn women alive, we hang them, and confiscate all their property. My carpenters shall therefore erect gibbets on which to hang all concerned when the widow is consumed. Let us all act according to national customs!'

Paxman was allowed to quote such British imperialist heresy in 2011 when his book was published by Penguin to accompany a BBC TV series. It is unlikely that he would get away with it today.

06. Scotland's National Discussion on Education

The once renowned Scottish school system now lags well behind the best education systems in the world. Its scores in maths and in science on the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] of 15 year-olds fell sharply in 2015 and fell further to a record low in 2018 when the most recent tests were administered. The base line for comparison is 2006.

Scotland's score for reading improved a little in 2018 but it is still placed only slightly above the OECD average amongst around eighty participant countries. Within the UK, Scotland trails both England and Northern Ireland on the PISA tests.

In contrast to Scotland's declining performance in maths and science on the PISA tests, pupil attainment in Scotland's own national qualifications has shown a rise in standards.

Not only is Scotland's performance comparatively poor on the PISA tests, but doubts have also been cast on the integrity of test administration both in Scotland and in other parts of the UK. A report by Professor John Jerrim of the Social Research Unit at University College London states that around 9 percent of Scottish pupils who were originally drawn for the PISA test sample were later declared 'ineligible'. The average ineligibility rate across most other OECD countries is less than 2 percent. Across the UK in general:

... around 40% of students are not included in the PISA data. This is amongst the highest anywhere in the world.

Professor Jerrim found that low achieving pupils were underrepresented in the tests not only in Scotland but also in England and Wales. He concluded:

In England and Wales, there is clear evidence that some lower-achieving pupils have been systematically excluded. While what has happened in Scotland is, frankly, a bit of a mess.

He also noted that:

Scotland changed the PISA test date in 2018 to later in the school year. This meant that half the sample were in a later school year (S5) than in previous editions of the test. Yet this was not commented upon by either the Scottish government or by the OECD.

www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2021/apr/governments-education-statistics-seriously-flawed

In 2021 an independent review of the Scottish education system by the OECD was damning. For all its praiseworthy aspirations, the country's Curriculum for Excellence [CfE], along with the examination agency and the inspection system were judged, in essence, to be failing. The review made twelve recommendations for improvement. The Scottish government says it accepts them.

On May 31st, of this year it published the key finding of its own report: All Learners in Scotland Matter: Our National Discussion. This Discussion reached 38,000 people, including 26,000 pupils and students.

Its key findings present the usual platitudes but promise little in terms of concrete and effective action. They state: *the views and needs of children and young people, parents, carers, families and communities should be listened to, heard, respected, represented, engaged, and valued a regular curriculum review process should be established the future education system should capitalise upon and harness the abilities, skills, and talents of all children and young people in Scotland*

www.gov.scot/news/guiding-vision-for-education-unveiled/

The response of Education Secretary Jenny Gilruth was equally anaemic:

The National Discussion has prompted around 38,000 people across Scotland to make their voices heard about the future of education. The engagement was wide-ranging and encompassed views that can too often be overlooked.

The central message of the report, that all learners in Scotland matter, will now be the guiding vision that underpins our programme of education reform. I am grateful to everyone who took part, including the schools, community groups, local authorities and third sector organisations that hosted events. This vision is the starting point as we look to the future. The challenge for all of us in Scottish education now is to work together to make this vision a reality.

School standards in Scotland are, mostly, in free fall. The country cannot afford any more false steps that give comfort to zealots of woke ideology at the cost of destroying the life chances of many of its children. An educational renaissance is needed and it is incumbent on its political leaders to bring this about.

07. Teacher Strikes

There is a simple solution to the current row and strike action by teachers over pay and workload. It is a solution that does not require any extra spending and, what is more, it could well lead to an uplift in pupil attainment.

This solution derives from an inconvenient and little recognised fact about our schools - the majority of staff are not teachers. This is made clear in the government's most recent statistics for the school workforce. They relate to November 2021. Out of a total workforce of 968,079 only 465,526 [48 per cent] are teachers.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-workforce>

So, who are the 502,553 non-teachers? They are 'support staff', including 275,812 who are teaching assistants.

Many of these non-teachers play an important, even vital, role in the running of a school; not least the secretarial, catering and caretaker staff. Do we, though, need more support staff than frontline teachers?

The solution to the question of teachers' pay surely lies in reducing the number of 'support staff' and, in particular, in reducing the number of classroom assistants. This would have the added advantage of putting an end to some ineffective teaching methods because without these teaching assistants such methods would no longer be sustainable.

Enter any UK primary school classroom and you are likely to see children sitting around tables. Many will have their backs to the teacher. This arrangement is commonly justified in terms of it being a 'child-centred' approach to education. It is based, in part, on collaborative learning from round-the-table 'discussion'. Across the country it is sustained by an army of teaching assistants. The role of the teacher is to be, as a Local Authority education official once told me, 'the process manager of the learning process.'

Enter any classroom in the Asia Pacific super-star education systems such as Singapore, South Korea, Shanghai or Taiwan and you are likely to see pupils sat in rows, facing the teacher. The teaching methodology employed will mostly be 'teacher-led' and somewhat didactic. Our educational establishment is inclined to regard such teaching as old-fashioned, uninspiring, and boring. 'We want happy children, not robots,' is the common refrain. How ironic, then, that we in the UK recently topped an international league table for unhappy children.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(20\)30481-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(20)30481-8/fulltext)

For what it worth, from my own 35 years of school teaching, at all ages and abilities in both maintained and independent sectors, children are most happy when they are making progress. So, imaginatively presented, even teaching that incorporates aspects of rote learning can be an enjoyable experience for children. Really!

Too many of our pupils are continuing to make insufficient progress, especially in basic skills, even if record-breaking exam results would have us believe otherwise. Failure at school is a sure recipe for lifelong unhappiness and social alienation. Small wonder our prisons and institutions for young offenders are so full of the semi-literate or illiterate and the semi-numerate or innumerate.

Many parents know instinctively that their children need at least an element of time-honoured, traditional teaching. They are paying for their children to attend the ever-popular, Japanese-style, out-of-school, Kumon clubs for maths and literacy, at the end of the school day. Even government is now becoming more open-minded with regard to teaching methods that work. A mathematics teacher exchange with China aims to encourage teachers in English schools to learn from East Asian practices.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/773320/MTE_main_report.pdf

In the 19th century we used to send Christian missionaries to China. They are now returning the favour by sending educational missionaries to us.

It is a sad truth is that overloading our schools with teaching assistants, not uncommonly with two in a single class, can be an impediment to effective teaching. It allows for, even imposes, a child-centred, round-the-table, teaching methodology that is much less effective than the whole-class teaching, with all children facing the front, that is the norm in the Asia-Pacific and, indeed, in parts of Europe where educational standards are high.

In recent years the relative decline of educational attainment in Finland has been associated with a move towards more child-centred learning. Classroom assistants can play an important role in school classrooms, especially in giving support to individual children. A switch back to more effective, whole class teaching methods, however, would require only half the number. The savings made would fund a very generous pay offer for good teachers – based on merit.

In other words, we can fund a teacher pay rise within the existing budget for schools and, at the same time, improve the quality of teaching. UK governments should be asking themselves why schooling in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland is so expensive but so much less successful than in poorer countries of the Asia Pacific, such as Vietnam and in former Soviet-bloc countries in Europe such as Estonia and Poland.

Would teachers accept a fifty per cent cut in the number of teaching assistants 'supporting' them in return for a pay rise that is substantial enough to recruit, motivate and retain the best? They should certainly be asked. In any case, local authorities and academy trusts already have much discretion over pay scales. For government, of course, a 'within budget' solution to the pay dispute should be a 'no-brainer'. And the pupils would make more progress, too.

08. Teacher Recruitment From Overseas

Only once in the last decade has the government met its target for secondary school teacher recruitment in England. At its worst, there was an 87 percent shortfall last year in physics teacher recruitment and in modern foreign languages the shortfall was 66 percent. The number of trainee primary school teachers is, also, now in serious decline.

Rather than thoroughly investigating and effectively dealing with the underlying causes of the crisis, the government has decided on a 'sticking plaster' solution in order to address the immediate problem. More teachers are to be recruited from overseas, particularly from countries that have historical links to Britain and who have a command of the English language. They will need to have a least one year's teaching experience.

This strategy was first announced in a White Paper of March last year. Implementation is now underway with relocation grants of £10,000 for those able to teach shortage subject areas. Bursaries and scholarships will also be available. In addition, recognition of overseas' degrees and teacher qualifications will be easier.

According to The Times newspaper, countries targeted for recruitment include Ghana, India, Singapore, Jamaica, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/extra-10k-to-woo-more-teachers-from-abroad-96pdkchwm>

Teachers from overseas already make a valuable contribution to our schools. Last school year around four hundred non-Europeans were recruited. A moral issue is raised, of course, as it is with the recruitment of doctors and nurses from overseas. Should we deprive poorer countries of their most educated workers in order to compensate for our own failures in education and recruitment?

Nor should we assume that the new recruits from overseas will be able to cope with the Woke ethos and classroom disorder so common in many of our schools. Sam Akaki, founder of 'African Solutions to the African Migration Crisis' addressed this

issue when he wrote to the CRE after listening to the chairman being interviewed on LBC Radio:

Re. Your LBC comment about the folly of importing teachers from Africa

... I could not agree more with your comment on LBC today, when you warned about the culture shock which is awaiting any African teacher who is expecting to come and make a fortune lying on a bed of roses in British schools.

First, used to living with extended families and friends, or renting cheap houses while teaching in their native Africa; they will find that the expected high salary in the UK is barely enough to cover the high cost of housing, domestic bills, food leave alone saving to make regular remittances to support their families back home.

Secondly, they will find some British children so unruly and even violent that these imported teachers might resort to applying violence (God forbid), which is the default method of instilling discipline in non-compliant pupils in many parts Africa. For example, in my native Uganda early this year, a [teacher beats pupil to death](#).

At the same time, thanks to the institutional corruption, any teacher recruited to come to the UK will have to be either connected to a highly placed government official, or able to bribe such officials to “support” their application.

Even worse, wittingly or otherwise; the British authorities are opening a floodgate to migrants to the UK. For example, each of successful applicant for a teaching job in the UK will invariably inflate the number of their dependent children with relatives with a view to giving them an assured licence for settlement in the UK, adding even more pressure on public services. The net impact would be more damage to our community cohesion, once the envy of the world.

What would be my preferred alternatives? Incentivise the existing, as well as prospective British, teachers offering them better conditions of service including better pay, protection against unruly pupils, interfering parents and political correctness.

Sam Akaki

[Twitter [@african_crisis](#)]

09. A Time of Despair? Three Cases to Ponder

Case 1: Michael Flynn, a 52 year-old primary school teacher with 22 years teaching experience, has lost his job at Twydall Primary School in Gillingham, Kent. He says that he was sacked after making a Facebook appeal on May 23rd to the parents of four jobs, to get in touch.

They tried to steal his pushbike from the front garden of his home. When challenged by his wife, a full-time carer of her disabled daughter, they threatened to stab her and to bring others who would the rape her and murder the family.

Mr Flynn's Facebook appeal read as follows:

Four kids tried to steal a pushbike from my front garden. When challenged they were verbally abusive and threatening to my wife. A chase ensued, one kid lost his shoes in the conflict.

If this is your son, you may want to contact me before I contact the police. Twydall is a small place and I will find him sooner or later. So, if you want to sort this out calmly, I suggest the parents PM me or I will sort this out my way.

The jobs returned the next day with the apparent intention of throwing through the window a large rock that they were carrying. They ran off when Mr. Flynn appeared.

Twydall Primary School have said that they have parted ways because of safeguarding issues and that their policies and procedures align with guidance from the Department for Education.

Mr. Flynn commented: "I have stolen nothing and I've threatened no one. I am the victim of a crime, yet I am being punished ... I loved teaching and this is certainly not the way I wanted to end my career."

The CRE's position is that these days, too often, it is delinquent children who are in charge of our schools and our streets these days. It is very much in the public interest that the reasons for the decision to dismiss Mr. Flynn are open to public scrutiny.

Case 2: 18 year-old Bacari-Bronze O'Garro, aka Mizzy, has learnt much from his schooling and doubtless, from elsewhere. In particular, he has learnt that social behaviour is a 'free-for-all', that rules mean nothing and, as he informed TV presenter, Piers Morgan, 'UK laws are weak'. How right he is!

He has been able to get away with example-setting behaviour for his host of social media followers that will spawn many imitators.

Amongst the 'pranks' he videos and promotes on TikTok for entertainment are his randomly entering private homes without permission, leap frogging an orthodox Jewish man on the street, taking a dog from an elderly lady, riding a bicycle through Sainsburys, riding on the roof of a bus, and so on and so on. His behaviour even extends to confronting women on the street and asking them, "Do you want to die?"

All of this is done for a laugh, of course. "I wouldn't call it terrorising, I'll just call it having fun," he told Morgan. The judicial process appears to be more or less helpless. Mizzy was given a small fine and ordered to refrain from similar actions in the future. The next day he was back action and re-arrested. Copycat behaviour is now spreading.

The prospect of teaching versions of Mizzy and his mates, aided and abetted as they are by poor discipline in many schools, helps to explain why so many teachers are quitting the profession.

Case 3: Joshua Sutcliffe, 33, was once a maths teacher. As a Christian he believes in only two genders - male and female. It seems that this belief is no longer acceptable within the teaching profession, however devoutly held.

The Teaching Regulation Agency [TRA] has decided that Mr. Sutcliffe fell short of acceptable practice when, in 2017, he misgendered a pupil whilst teaching at the Cherwell School in Oxford. He was also charged with expressing views against gay marriage when questioned by a pupil.

The TRA has upheld the school's decision at the time to suspend him after he appeared on ITV's This Morning. He never returned to Cherwell School and had claimed constructive dismissal and discrimination.

A similar fate awaited Mr. Sutcliffe when he took up a position at St. Aloysius's College, a boys' school in London. A complaint was made against him for showing pupils a video that was alleged to have included 'inappropriate' comments.

There were also complaints about his claiming that men are insufficiently masculine these days. The TRA upheld these complaints, too, and have now banned Mr. Sutcliffe from teaching, indefinitely.

At the time of writing, government had still not published its promised guidance to schools on matters of gender. The case of Mr. Sutcliffe raises important issues about freedom of speech and freedom of religious belief within the school environment. Clarification is urgently required. Schools as well as individual teachers are being badly let down.

10. Sex Education: Welsh Government, Not Parents, Knows What Is Best for Children

A parent group in Wales has lost the first round of a legal case against the Welsh government's new relationships and sexuality education [RSE] curriculum.

The parents object to what they see as an over-emphasis on LGBTQ+ and woke themes at the expense of traditional ideas of family life. They seek the right to withdraw their children from these lessons.

The CRE has long supported the right of parents to withdraw their children from sex education lessons and in England, within certain boundaries, parents do have that right.

Concern amongst parents in Wales may increase in the light of the Welsh government's recent Agenda pamphlet for all schools. It states that biological sex "is not just 'male' and 'female' and tells teachers that this must be respected in the choice of pronoun used to address a child.

Teachers are also advised that children as young as seven might be a mixed berry gender fluid muffin.

A leaflet from the campaign group, Public Child Protection Wales (PCPW), claims that the new RSE curriculum could introduce young children to "self-stimulation, masturbation, bondage and anal sex".

The Welsh government is in strong denial of such claims and points to the endorsement of the curriculum by the NSPCC and from the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

There is clearly a division of opinion and some schools in Wales are coming into conflict with parents. The CRE's position is that it is important for children to understand the need to treat others how they themselves would wish to be treated.

This is the 'Golden Rule' of most of the major religions. It is what children need, most of all, to learn. In primary school, at least, it is probably all they need to learn if they are to have a 'childhood' free of being burdened by adult angst anxiety and neurosis.

11. No Comment

Politics should be taught in primary schools, Alastair Campbell ... told an audience at the Hay festival.

The Guardian 25th May 2023

The schools minister has been told that the key stage 2 Sats reading paper that reportedly left pupils in tears was not more difficult than previous years' assessments.

TES 2nd June 2023

Two-thirds of kids say they were taught that sex was 'assigned' to them at birth.

Daily Mail, 15th. May 2023

70 countries criminalise same-sex relationships.

Taken from Stonewall's International Work and ILGA World (2020)

Shock as 97% of Kenyan nurses fail English tests for UK Jobs

Business Insider Africa 29th Oct 2021

Free speech fears as Scottish universities back guidance suggesting academic freedom is racist.

Scottish Daily Express, 2nd June 2023

China's 11.6m graduates face a jobs market with no jobs.

The Guardian 1st June 2023

'Woke' US schools scarier than North Korea, says defector.

The Daily Telegraph 23rd March 2023