

Campaign for Real Education

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

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Newsletter

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Editorial

The completion of another school year is, traditionally, a time for reflection on what has been achieved. In truth, though, we are in ‘déjà vu’ and ‘Groundhog Day’ territory. Little has changed. Whilst the call for improvement in educational attainment is persistent amongst employers, the educational establishment overflows with self-congratulation. Schools, in its view, are starved of funding but doing a great job in difficult circumstances.

Self-delusion has, for years, been an abiding characteristic of our educational performance. It is most dangerously apparent in this widespread belief that schools are under-funded.

If more spending could raise the performance of schools, we would already be world-beaters. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, between 1953 and 2009 the UK increased educational expenditure by around 900 percent in real terms. (<https://www.ifs.org.uk/bns/bn43.pdf>) There has been a modest per-head decrease of under 10 per cent since but, along with the US, we remain amongst the world’s big spenders on education.

Politicians should be asking why our schooling has become so expensive. It is extraordinary that, in comparative terms, we achieved a great more when we spent a great deal less. According to the OECD we are the only country in the developed world in which grandparents out-perform their grandchildren in the basic employment skills of literacy and numeracy.

And, remarkably, on the international OECD PISA tests, our 15-year-olds trail some way behind their peers in Vietnam even though we spend close to eight times as much per head. Those Asia-Pacific states, such as Singapore and South Korea, which out-spend Vietnam but spend less than us, are up to three years ahead of their peers in the UK.

The time has surely arrived for an independent Royal Commission of enquiry into the performance of our schools. Why are teachers outnumbered in schools by support and ancillary staff? Why do grade boundaries have to be manipulated for public examinations to allow a mark in the range of 15-20 per cent to be officially classified as a ‘good’ pass – good enough, ultimately, to get you into the professions? Why are around 20 per cent of pupils leaving school without a standard of literacy and numeracy that makes them readily employable? And, most important of all, why is the return on massive school spending so poor?

Our political class needs to have a few home truths spelt out for it. The educational establishment, the Blob, lives off its ability to panic parents into believing education failure is all down to money. It does not want them to know that it is really down to the teaching methods.

Rather than the largely teacher-led classrooms of the most successful school systems around the world, we have moved to so-called ‘child-centred’ teaching; almost totally so in primary schools. This involves lots of group work with children sitting around tables, often with their backs to the teacher, rather than ‘facing the front’.

International comparisons show that child-centred learning is mostly less successful than the ‘whole-class’ teacher-led approach. It is, in addition, a catalyst for poor behaviour – a major reason why so many of our teachers leave the profession prematurely. Most damaging of all, perhaps, is the fact that child-centred group work ‘teaching’ depends on a hugely expensive army of classroom assistants. It is a methodology that has an insatiable appetite for cash.

For children with disabilities, the support of a classroom assistant is necessary and important. A majority of pupils, though, would be better taught if their lessons were largely teacher-led. Ironically, the best way to improve our schools would be to do away with half of the support staff. Not only would this force teachers to deploy a traditional teacher-led pedagogy, it would release funds to reward good teachers with a substantial pay rise.

Boris Johnson has promised that, if he becomes prime minister, he will inject more cash into schools. He would be wise to seek the funding via the pathway of cheaper and more productive teaching methods.

The government should make teachers this offer:

- Use easier and much more effective ‘whole-class’ teaching methods.
- Agree to dispense with half of classroom assistants. They will no longer be needed.
- Benefit from significant pay increases if you are good at the job
- Enjoy the greater success of your pupils, calmer classrooms, happier parents and catch-up time with educational ‘super-stars’ such as Singapore.

Chris McGovern

Starbank School and our ‘no-blame’ culture

‘Starbank School pupil leaves lessons early for fear of being beaten up on way home,’ reported the Birmingham Mail on July 1st. It was followed a few hours later by this update: ‘Fresh strikes at Starbank school in Yardley over knife crime and violence.’

The national media has been stacking up reports on Starbank School, too, with headlines such as these:

‘Brawl filmed in Starbank school corridor on Fight Thursday’ Times 29th June

‘Starbank school teachers strike over violence fears’. BBC News website 27th June

‘Every day is HELL: Pupil, 13, at out-of-control Birmingham school says she’s forced to leave class early over fears violent bullies will attack her.’ (Daily Mail 2nd July)

According to Ofsted latest report (2012) the school is “outstanding” in every area.

<https://www.starbankschool.co.uk>.

A monitoring Ofsted visit last year effectively confirmed the 2012 report’s finding by stating that it had no concerns.

Pupil behaviour, though, it seems, is so bad that teachers have been downing tools and going on strike. What on earth is going on? A clue might be found in the school’s embrace of a ‘no-blame’ approach to pupil behaviour being marketed by a company called Pivotal Education. Behaviour Specialists. A Division of CPI. Notwithstanding budget pressures the school has bought in, literally, to the company’s training programme on managing poorly-behaved children.

Pivotal has recognised, it appears, that classroom disruption is not all bad news. There is money to be made from it. The breakdown of pupil behaviour in many schools provides an outstanding business opportunity. Sadly, the medicine it is offering is highly unlikely to solve the problem. It may even make matters worse

because it appears to be based on the fashionable notion of a 'no-blame' culture. No matter how badly pupils behave, it is not really their fault.

This allows for what is these days known as a 'restorative' response to bullying, thuggery and general disruption. In other words, a bit of a 'chinwag' will sort things out. The naughty little blighters will soon repent and come around if you treat them as equals. Pivotal spells this out in its sales pitch:

"We don't believe the 5% of the most troubled learners are 'behaviour problems'; they need a different approach. . . There is no 'them and us' culture. Universal micro scripts are used to intervene with poor behaviour. . . adults and learners have structured restorative conversations."

And there is especially good news for senior management in schools. There is a real incentive to spend precious school funds on the Pivotal training packages. How about this for an inducement?

"Learners are never passed up the hierarchy. We have innovative approaches to ensure teachers at the classroom level remain in charge of the incident. The Pivotal Approach can help reduce detentions, segregation rooms, physical restraints or punitive punishments."

In other words, school bosses will not need to get too involved. A burden of responsibility will be lifted from their shoulders. They will no longer have to take the blame for not backing their staff. The Pivotal approach to pupil behaviour management will ensure it is all, or mostly, down to the teacher - the poor bloody classroom infantry. Around two thirds of new teachers are now quitting the job within with five years. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nickmorrison/2019/06/27/number-of-teachers-quitting-the-classroom-after-just-one-year-hits-all-time-high/#7bd97e9a60e5>

The no-blame approach to discipline has been around for a while. Pivotal is now getting in on the act and is providing it with an appealing 'best-practice' wrapping that is quasi-religious. The Five Pillars of Islam are insultingly transformed into these 'Five Pillars of Pivotal Practice'.

Many schools do need to tackle poor pupil behaviour more effectively. Their task is not made easier by pressures to promote a no-blame ethos. Even the word 'naughty' is now being outlawed in many nurseries as too judgmental and damaging.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/06/26/end-naughty-step-nurseries-say-no-longer-use-term-due-negative/>

Why is it that the best performing education systems around the world are also those where pupil behaviour is scarcely an issue? Pupils who are well taught and make progress within a culture that makes clear the difference between 'right' and 'wrong', are generally happy pupils and are rarely disruptive. Unhappiness emerges when teaching is inadequate, progress is poor and the lines between 'right' and 'wrong' are blurred.

A 'no-blame' culture? You must be joking! Ask the children!

GCSE and the Snowflake Generation

WHAT do you think of this question from the latest GCSE maths exam? 'There are 84 calories in 100g of banana. There are 87 calories in 100g of yogurt. Priti has 60g of banana and 150g of yogurt for breakfast. Work out the total number of calories in this breakfast.'

Does this reflect a gross error of judgement? Should it be banned?

Some pupils think so. They want to outlaw such questions on the grounds that they are upsetting to youngsters with eating disorders.

One candidate, Poppy-Willow, tweeted: 'Can I ask what on earth you were thinking by having a question around counting calories?'

'Your exams are primarily taken by 15-20-year-olds, who are also the age group most likely to suffer from eating disorder.'

Another said: 'It just brought back so many bad memories for me that I was about to cry.'

A third confessed that the question ‘put me into a panic where I had to leave the room for about five minutes and a teaching assistant calmed me down’.

A spokesman for the eating disorder charity Beat told the Telegraph that such questions can ‘cause significant distress’ and should be not be used. The exam board, Pearson Edexcel, defended its question but assured pupils that they may complain if they felt ‘triggered’ by having to count calories: ‘We encourage any student who thinks that this question may have impacted their performance to get in contact with us via the school.’

This is code for promising a ‘mark-allowance’ and a possible grade-boost in deserving cases.

The CRE is not in any way unsympathetic to young people with mental health issues. Anorexia is a particularly distressing condition for both the sufferer and the family. Many people, especially teenagers, are living in the shadow of some form of stress or trauma. But is mollycoddling and being over-protective helpful? We fear not.

Examination papers which seek to be sensitive and accommodating run the risk of ceasing to be examination papers at all. The content of exam papers should surely be determined by the requirements of the subject, not by the perceived needs of candidates.

A movement towards addressing candidate sensitivities, though, is certainly growing. The AQA board, for example, has been under fire recently. It felt the need to apologise for its choice of an ‘unseen’ literary passage in a section of its English GCSE paper. The excerpt came from H E Bates’s 1935 story *The Mill*. Although not mentioned in the passage used for the exam, a rape and pregnancy is part of the unfolding narrative.

This caused outrage and consternation amongst some candidates. There were calls for such exam questions to come with a trigger warning. ‘Some people I know were actually disturbed and worried by the extract,’ tweeted Alana Kingsley, a pupil from Lowestoft, Suffolk. Another, Hadiatou Barry, declared that she was ‘horrified’ and tweeted: ‘This exam may have very well acted as a trigger for underlying mental health issues which could have possible [sic] effected [sic] and undermined their performance within the exam.’

Predictably the exam board immediately hoisted the white flag, apologised and announced that it would ‘never want to upset anyone’.

This year’s GCSE biology (Edexcel) also upset our PC-alert younger generation.

Candidates were asked to identify the ‘gender’ shown by a set of chromosomes and to explain how ‘gender’ is inherited from parents. Shock horror! How dare examiners confuse ‘gender’ with ‘sex’? The former is, after all, deemed to be no more than a social construct. In UK 2019, gender is chosen, not bestowed! A ‘gender expert’, Professor Cordelia Fine, complained that ‘200 years of feminism has been trying to untie the link between sex and gender, arguing that the former doesn’t and shouldn’t dictate the latter’.

In many other countries around the world, of course, different and often contrary rules of definition apply.

Where is this latest evolution of the public examination system taking us? There is plenty of nastiness, for example, in Shakespeare. Should exam candidates be warned that the Bard wrote about rape, incest and mutilation in *Titus Andronicus*? And what about GCSE French? Should it carry a trigger warning about what French people celebrate in their most glorious national anthem? In translation it includes these lines:

In the countryside, do you hear/The roaring of these fierce soldiers?/They come right to our arms/To slit the throats of our sons, our friends . . . May impure blood/Water our fields.

And which examiner in future will dare mention Winston Churchill in a question without a PC trigger warning on his views on race and Empire . . . and alcohol? The great man also had a word or two to say about ‘appeasement’ and where that leads. Examiners and their regulators should take note.

First the USA and then the UK

FEW things are more damaging to society than a pernicious idea whose time has come. It has been true, for example, of Marxism, of fascism, of anti-Semitism and of various incarnations of religious fundamentalism. To a large extent, it was true of McCarthyism in 50s America. Today’s destructive idea whose time has

arrived for tyrannising and subjecting Western society is, surely, the notion of ‘equality of outcome’ for us all.

This is the mantra for our 21st century model of a socially-engineered society. It bestows instant and unparalleled moral superiority on its adherents. These are found most noticeably amongst our liberal intellectual elite who, in the guise of politicians, educators and media commentators, act as enforcers of the mantra.

An initiative for schools in New York, ‘Courageous Conversations’, requires that the mantra of ‘equality of outcome’ be acted on through the unequal treatment of white and black pupils. Children are no longer to be treated as individuals but as members of a racial group. The assumption is that white kids are all inherently privileged whilst their black classmates are all underprivileged. The guiding principle is that an ‘implicit bias’ against blacks is ingrained in the psyche of whites and must be countered by a mandatory ‘equality of outcome’ programme.

Twenty-three million dollars has already been committed to the project. New York mayor Bill de Blasio stands shoulder-to-shoulder with his city’s educational establishment in promoting the mantra.

Last year a training session for school superintendents focused on the question: ‘What lived experience inspires you as a leader to fight for equity?’ A Jewish superintendent answered the question by describing the horrifying racism experienced by her grandparents in a Nazi concentration camp. ‘This is my core value as an educator,’ she told her fellow educators.

She informed the New York Post what happened next:

‘At the break, I stood up and, to my surprise, I was verbally attacked by a black superintendent in front of my colleagues. She said, “This is not about being Jewish! It’s about black and brown boys of color only. You better check yourself”.’

The Jewish educator said she was traumatised and that it ‘was like 1939 all over again’.

The United States may be a young country but it has much to teach us about what is coming in British schooling. ‘First the USA and then the UK’ is a well-known adage and one we would be unwise to ignore, especially in relation to education. Indeed, positive discrimination, albeit more on social than on racial grounds, is already defining university admissions policy here.

In parts of the United States the notion of ‘meritocracy’ is already being seen as old-fashioned and so ‘last century’. It turns out that the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibited only one type of segregation in schools. Discrimination that favours ‘victims’ – aka Blacks and Hispanics – is to be applauded and is now being enshrined in law.

Racial minorities deserve better than to be classified as pre-determined ‘victims’. The ‘American dream’ was built on aspiration, self-help and individual enterprise. An American nightmare is now replacing it, based on concepts of dependency, victimhood and addiction to state aid. But only for racial minorities. Sadly, the march towards ‘equality of outcome’ does not extend to the under-privileged white working class.

Britain is heading along the same pathway as the US. It is no coincidence that both countries spend more per head on schooling than most countries and, yet, perform comparatively poorly on the OECD attainment tests for 15-year-olds. ‘Equality of outcome’ is much easier to achieve by dumbing down and impoverishing everyone. And where will that lead us?

‘Screaming for lower standards’

The problem facing kids in too many British State schools is that they are force-fed a non-stop diet of slavery and deprivation. In contrast, the posh kids at Eton and Harrow get Shakespeare and Milton and they get to know the name of the gentleman on top of the column in Trafalgar Square. They learn to be proud of their country, whereas our youngsters learn only bitterness. That’s no way to get on in life. By the way, did you know that Nelson had a great love for Barbados and that he had a black crew member alongside him when he died?

This is the gist of what a leader of the black community in Lewisham, south-east London, told the CRE a couple of decades ago. He identified a contagion of political correctness in his local schools where there was a majority of pupils who are now termed BAME – black, Asian and minority ethnic. He lamented the curriculum impoverishment and dumbing-down that was intended to make lessons more relevant for these children. Educationally, he felt that they were being under-nourished and patronised. Ironically, these days, it is the white working class, especially boys, who are at the bottom of the attainment heap. Asians, especially Chinese, are at the top and most black children have overtaken most whites.

The contagion of political correctness has spread throughout the school system. The dice are loaded in favour of, not against, BAME pupils and, indeed, other minorities. And it is now the universities that are being fully infected by the academically debilitating PC virus. This much is evident from [a report](#) produced by [Universities UK](#) (UUK) and the National Union of Students (NUS).

According to the report, 81 per cent of white students attained a first or a 2:1 in 2017-18 compared with 68 per cent of BAME students. Baroness Amos, director of SOAS and ‘co-leader’ of the report, summed up its conclusions: ‘Our universities are racially and culturally diverse, compared to many other sectors, but we are failing a generation of students [if we don’t act now to reduce the BAME attainment gap.](#)’

This conclusion, though, needs to be seen in the context of the 2016 Sutton Trust findings on GCSE results amongst different racial groups at age 16 – the cohort of young people now at university. It was headlined:

[White working class boys have lowest GCSE Grades as disadvantaged Bangladeshi, African and Chinese pupils show dramatically improved results](#)

What the Amos report does not address is the sad fact that the vast majority of the white working class, especially boys, fall by the wayside long before BAME students and mostly more advantaged whites turn up at university.

In the light of a report from the National Education Opportunity Network in February this year, even the *Guardian* felt it necessary to report: [‘More than half of universities in England have fewer than 5 per cent of white working-class students in their intakes.’](#)

This scandalous state of affairs does not fit the narrative of BAME students doing less well in our education system than white students.

An educational diet, especially via ‘history’ lessons, that is heavy on slavery and deprivation, now the norm across most schools, feeds into this guilt-ridden over-concentration on minorities in Britain at the expense of majorities. In recent years, universities have taken their lead from schools and are now going along the same pathway.

Atonement for the sins of Empire has become a defining characteristic of our institutions of higher education. Universities are competing with each other to [appear more morally virtuous](#). Submission to the Amos report’s demands is expected and demanded. Vice-chancellors are ‘asked’ to sign an online pledge to work with students.

Amatey Doku, NUS Vice President and Baroness Amos’s ‘co-leader’ of the UUK/NUS report, makes clear what is required: ‘From decolonising the curriculum to more culturally competent support services, many students and students’ unions have been fighting and campaigning for action in this area for years and this report highlights good practice, and clear practical steps for universities to take to begin to respond to many of the concerns raised.

[‘This report must be taken seriously by all senior leaders in the higher education sector and I look forward to seeing proactive steps taken to eradicate these unjust gaps in attainment once and for all.’](#)

In other words, make your curriculum more relevant to BAME students. Why all this fuss about Shakespeare and Shelley, George Eliot and T S Eliot when there are plenty of BAME writers out there? Who cares if this leads to a dumbing down of content? [It is the attainment ‘gap’ in degree grades between BAME students and whites that matters.](#)

That is a nice-looking uni you are in charge of, Mr Vice-Chancellor. What a shame it would be if anything nasty happened to it. Just sign this BAME pledge right here. Think of it as a type of fire insurance. Know what I mean?

Where are we heading? Education minister Lord Agnew has just let the cat out of the bag. In relation to university admissions he informed an education conference at Brighton College this week that the voices ‘screaming for lowering standards’ in higher education were ‘relentless’.

He said: ‘Why are we letting kids go to university with three Es at A-levels? I mean, why? It’s lunacy.

‘But unfortunately there’s a body of people out there because they then never have to pick up the tab for the results of that kind of madness, that’s the problem.

‘And so, as a government you just have to suck it up basically and just keep plodding forward and that’s what we do.’

And beyond the admissions process to university, your Lordship, matters are even worse. Have a chat with the noble Baroness, Lady Amos. She will put you right!

Teaching Methodologies – traditional v ‘progressive’

WHICH of these two teaching methodologies is more conducive to good behaviour, and thence to good teaching, in the classroom?

1. Traditional teaching that is teacher-led with all pupils facing the front;
2. Modern ‘progressive’ child-centred learning based on group work with the teacher acting as a ‘facilitator’.

According to the government’s ‘Behaviour Tsar’, Tom Bennett, traditional whole-class teaching is the clear winner. It seems that pupils sitting in groups, learning through ‘exploration’, many with their backs to the teacher, are more inclined to misbehave. Who would have thought that? Certainly not the schools and teacher-training institutions that have been promoting the child-centred approach as ‘best practice’ for years.

Nor has Ofsted ever really grasped that ‘teacher-centred’ beats ‘child-centred’. As Daisy Christodoulou noted in her *Seven Myths About Education* (2014), ‘Ofsted require teachers to give children the control of the classroom, just as Dewey, Rousseau and Freire suggest.’ She clinched her case by showing that Ofsted school reports invariably reserve ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ judgements on teaching to those who deployed the child-centred approach.

Now, our Behaviour Tsar has come up with much the same conclusion as Christodoulou. He has told the Daily Telegraph that for many children, progressive teaching techniques are a ‘very good way to maximising misbehaviour’.

For this ‘statement of the bleedin’ obvious’ he has bagged a £10million jackpot. Yes, three years on from his appointment, Tom the ex-Soho bouncer has cracked it. Unlike anyone else within government or within the educational establishment, the Tsar has worked out that many kids ‘need really clear boundaries and they need to be taught good behaviour, too’.

Tom is spot on with this conclusion, but who amongst the teaching profession is going to believe the heresy that he has expounded to the Telegraph?

‘Progressivism rests on the idea that [all] children want to behave and they want to learn, the teacher needs to step back and allow the child to explore their natural curiosity, which will motivate them and get them engaged . . . But this relies on an “overly optimistic view” of human nature.’

Bennett is required to use his £10million windfall to convert the teaching profession to his way of thinking. Changing the mindset of a brainwashed teaching force will be a monumental task.

Undermining or debunking the ‘faith’ of those who live off our education system is akin to the tasks faced by Copernicus or Galileo when they challenged ecclesiastical ‘truths’. Belief and allegiance to current educational theology, constructed as it is on child-centred progressivism, is every bit as narrow, intolerant and fanatical as any religious extremism.

It has become almost impossible for the teaching profession to conceive of any way of looking at the world other than through its own narrowly focused lens. After decades of brainwashing, the profession’s hearts and

minds are not going to change overnight. It is some years, now, since an iron curtain descended on and enclosed our education system.

In the end, rational argument and incontrovertible evidence is the most potent weapon that Tom Bennett will possess in order to combat the Blob's irrationality and fanaticism. His starting point should be to send to every school and teacher training establishment in the country a copy of head teacher Irina Tyk's seminal insight.

It comes free of the ten million pounds that is about to spent by the government on the same issue and is certainly ten million times better than anything ever issued by the education department on teaching methodology.

Norman Stone (1941-2019)

THE historian Norman Stone died on June 19 at the age of 78. The obituaries have now been written, and our liberal intellectual elite have been squaring accounts with him and exacting retribution.

The Guardian's obituary on Stone is illustrative of how, these days, even intelligent minds, especially within universities, often close when having to confront 'truths' that do not fit with their own prejudices.

Stone, a former Professor of Modern History at Oxford, ticked all the boxes of political incorrectness and moral inferiority. In a spirit typical of a vengeful and spiteful 'intelligentsia', and without a hint of irony, the deceased is accused of outdoing anyone else on the Right for 'malice and rudeness'.

The Guardian obituary spells this out in unequivocal terms by quoting, without a context, Stone's comments on:

. . . feminists ("rancid"), Oxford dons ("a dreadful collection of deadbeats, dead wood and has-beens"), students ("smelly and inattentive"), David Cameron and John Major ("transitional nobodies"), Edward Heath ("a flabby-faced coward") and many more.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/jun/25/norman-stone-obituary>

Expressions of sanctimonious and self-righteous anger amongst many of our university dons cannot, of course, entirely ignore Stone's intellect. He was 'undoubtedly clever', the Guardian obituary admits, but only in the context of 'character flaws'. These boiled down to his love of alcohol and, even worse, and above all else, his role as one-time adviser-cum-confidant to Margaret Thatcher. His more recent support for the Turkish government's stance on the fate of its once substantial Armenian population and Hungary's clampdown on unrestricted immigration have also been used to condemn him.

The Guardian's obituary goes on to warn readers that 'any serious member of the [history] profession' will tell you that Stone was never a 'leading historian'. This is, demonstrably, not true. Stone, after all, was a winner of the Wolfson History Prize – the historians' Olympic gold. So why the release of this venom now that he has died?

It turns out, unsurprisingly, that the Guardian had commissioned another leading historian, Sir Richard Evans, to write the obituary and to deliver the verdict on Stone. The CRE Chairman crossed swords with Evans on the BBC's Moral Maze programme some years ago. They were debating the merits or otherwise of the national curriculum for history in our schools. Evans lined himself up firmly on the side of those within the teaching profession who had been accused by education secretary Michael Gove of 'trashing our past'.

Evans is an outstanding historian but he revealed a surprising lack of understanding of what goes on in the classroom. He appeared to be completely 'taken-in' by those who have presided over and promoted the collapse of historical knowledge amongst schoolchildren. This was scarcely his territory. Still, the educational establishment, the Blob, had little difficulty in trouncing Gove and ensuring that the new national curriculum for history makes the teaching of any specific event and/or personality from British history 'non-statutory'.

Does Evans ever ask himself how he could have got it all so wrong? It is Jack the Ripper who is Top of the Pops in history lesson teaching topics these days! And whilst, once upon a time, Evans was splitting hairs

over German plebiscites and the like, Norman Stone was one of the few historians who spotted what was going on schools and, what is more, he put his head above the parapet in trying to do something about it.

He chose to put himself on a platform with the CRE at Ruskin College, Oxford, in the late 1980s and debate school history in front of an audience of hostile and mostly Left-wing teachers. Faced with calls for the content of school history learning to be determined by race, gender and diversity. Norman Stone being truly shocked. 'Tell me, what is the racial dimension to the story of Magna Carta?' he enquired of his audience before being hissed and booed.

Not only was Norman Stone a great historian, he also had guts. As he demonstrated at Ruskin College, he was prepared to stand up against fashionable orthodoxies without fear or favour. He was not alone but he was exceptional. Another Oxford don, the late Raphael Samuel, was the most Left of all Left-wingers at the time but he, too, saw how in those early days of the curriculum revolution in schools debate was being stifled and suppressed. He dedicated a series of lectures to CRE members. He knew how important it was to have open and free debate.

So, yes, there are some decent people, however few, right across the political and educational spectrum. Norman Stone was one of them and it is outrageous that so many of our intellectual elite can find little but fault, flaws and failure in his life.

Professor Niall Ferguson, another eminent historian and one-time student of Norman Stone, has recently written:

'Of all the "media dons" who flourished in the 1980s, Norman was the most wickedly clever, and the academic Left hated him as much for the cleverness as for the wickedness. But Norman exulted in its disapproval. He once told me, "I wear my enemies like medals". And that is how I shall always remember him: Guinness in one hand, Nietzsche in the other, cigarette balanced on lower lip — and the heads of Oxford's dullest dons dangling from ribbons on his barrel chest.'

<http://www.niallferguson.com/journalism/miscellany/norman-stone-served-up-wise-words-to-thatcher-and-guinness-and-nietzsche-to>

Norman Stone is a very great loss. How terribly sad that, in his hour of passing, any generosity of spirit is so lacking amongst so many in our universities.

No Comment

England is the worst in the world for cyberbullying of students [school pupils], a global survey has found.

Daily Telegraph 20th June 2019

Four out of five Ofsted-rated outstanding schools were downgraded when re-inspected last year as fears grown that some are trading on ageing reputations

Daily Mail 14th June 2019

Currently, children only study a small section of history and it is often a biased perspective

Dawn Butler, Shadow Women and Equalities Secretary, Guardian 3rd July 2019.

Like many rich Americans, I used to think educational investment could heal the country's ills – but I was wrong. Fighting inequality must come first.

Nick Hanauer, The Atlantic Magazine, July 2019 issue.

All teachers are Sendcos [special educational needs coordinators] now

TES 2ND July 2019