



House of Commons
Education and Skills Committee

The Work of the Education and Skills Committee

**Eighth Special Report of Session
2006–07**

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The Education and Skills Committee

The Education and Skills Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Education and Skills and its associated public bodies.

Membership at time Special Report agreed

Mr Barry Sheerman MP (*Labour, Huddersfield*) (Chairman)
Mr Douglas Carswell MP (*Conservative, Harwich*)
Mr David Chaytor MP (*Labour, Bury North*)
Jeff Ennis MP (*Labour, Barnsley East & Mexborough*)
Paul Holmes MP (*Liberal Democrat, Chesterfield*)
Helen Jones MP (*Labour, Warrington North*)
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Mr Gordon Marsden MP (*Labour, Blackpool South*)
Mr Andrew Pelling MP (*Conservative, Croydon Central*)
Mr Graham Stuart MP (*Conservative, Beverley & Holderness*)
Stephen Williams MP (*Liberal Democrat, Bristol West*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at www.parliament.uk/edskills/

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are David Lloyd (Clerk), Sarah Thatcher, (Second Clerk), Nerys Roberts (Committee Specialist), Katie Phelan (Committee Assistant), Susan Ramsay (Committee Secretary), and John Kittle (Senior Office Clerk).

Contacts

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The Work of the Education and Skills Committee

1. Following the division of the Department for Education and Skills into the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills at the end of June this year it was clear that, in order to preserve the Departmental Committee structure of one committee for each Department of State, this Committee would need to be dissolved and two new Committees be put in its place. We had anticipated that this would happen by the end of July, but the decision of the House was that the new Committees would be put in place from the beginning of the 2007–08 Session.¹

2. Since the division of the DfES we have concentrated on finishing inquiries that we had already embarked on. We have agreed reports for our inquiries into Post-16 Skills² and on the future sustainability of the higher education sector,³ although we did not cover all the aspects of those issues that we would have done if time had allowed. In each of those reports we recommended that the Innovations, Universities and Skills Committee should continue the work that we had begun, and we repeat that recommendation here.

3. We have also been able to agree reports on our follow-up inquiry into Special Educational Needs,⁴ and our inquiry into Creative Partnerships and the Curriculum.⁵ The one inquiry that we have announced but on which we have not been able to begin work is on testing and assessment. We have received 46 memoranda for this inquiry, which are available on our website.⁶ It is a complex subject which affects all of primary, secondary and post-16 education, which we did not consider that we could do justice to in the time available given that we had not begun to take oral evidence when the Departmental changes were announced. It is clear that this is an issue which is overdue for consideration and which has already attracted a great deal of interest.⁷ **We recommend that our successors on the Children, Schools and Families Committee complete our inquiry into testing and assessment.**

4. We would like to thank all of those who have contributed to our inquiries during this Parliament, through oral and written evidence and by participating in visits and informal seminars. The great strength of select committee inquiries is that they are founded on what people tell us, based on research or their own experience, and we ask everyone with the

1 Votes and Proceedings, 25 July 2007.

2 Education and Skills Committee, Ninth Report of 2006–07, *Post-16 Skills*, HC 333-I, 2 August 2007.

3 Education and Skills Committee, Eighth Report of 2006–07, *The future sustainability of the higher education sector: international aspects*, HC 285-I, 5 August 2007.

4 Education and Skills Committee, Tenth Report of 2006–07, *Special Educational Needs: Assessment and Funding*, HC 1077, 25 October 2007.

5 Education and Skills Committee, Eleventh Report of 2006–07, *Creative Partnerships and the Curriculum*, HC 1034.

6 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmeduski/memo/test&ass/contents.htm>

7 See, for example, *Pressure to reform tests*, Times Educational Supplement, 21 September 2007, p1.

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interests of education at heart to continue to contribute to the inquiries of our two successor committees.

Reports from the Education and Skills Committee since 2001

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