



The Centre
for Education
& Youth

**A Decade in
the Making:**
What next for
young people
in England?



We would like to thank Teach First, Cambridge Assessment and the YHA for generously supporting this publication.



The Centre for Education and Youth is a ‘think and action-tank’. We believe society should ensure all children and young people receive the support they need to make a fulfilling transition to adulthood. We provide the evidence and support policy makers and practitioners need to support young people.

We use our timely and rigorous research to get under the skin of issues affecting young people in order to shape the public debate, advise the sector and campaign on topical issues. We have a particular interest in issues affecting marginalised young people.

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We have a history to be proud of, a trusted brand and a loyal membership. We are a youth organisation, but we serve all ages – providing adventures, opportunities and employment. We own and maintain properties of local significance and protect access to heritage. We are not primarily an environmental organisation, but we are well placed to contribute to the protection of the natural world. We are not a mental health organisation, but residencies, physical activity, being outdoors and culture all lead to greater wellbeing. We are not a hotel chain, but we must maintain the highest standards for overnight stays, food and customer service. We work with nearly 500 000 young people every year and our YHA Strategy 2020 looks to increase our reach and impact. We are looking for both input and new partnerships to help us with ambitious goals and you can read more www.yha.org.uk

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Foreword:

Mary Myatt, Chair of The Centre for Education and Youth



Mary is an education adviser, writer and speaker. She trained as an RE teacher and taught English, history, maths and Latin in Ipswich. A former local authority

adviser and inspector, she works in schools talking to pupils, teachers and leaders about learning, leadership and the curriculum. She has authored a number of books on education including “High Challenge Low Threat” which has been described as “a cult must-have for education professionals”

It is important to mark milestones by way of tribute to the work done and by pausing to imagine what might come next.

We have much to be proud of from our time as LKMco. We have spent ten years as a ‘think and action-tank’, working to identify the underlying barriers standing in the way of positive educational experiences and fulfilling prospects for all young people, particularly those who are marginalised. It was our research that pushed the issue of teacher recruitment and retention up the agenda and which went on to shape many of the solutions currently being implemented. We know - thanks to a back catalogue of eight years of social impact reports, that as a result of our support, dozens of organisations have changed

the way they work, or secured funding to expand their work with young people. Meanwhile, as Amanda Spielman herself notes, a culture of evidence based scrutiny and engagement with research has grown up in the last decade which we have played a big role in developing, as our track record of media coverage and topical, evidence-based blogs shows.

The Centre for Education and Youth will continue to probe the underlying causes of disadvantage. It will continue to ask important questions of those holding the levers of power, both within and beyond the sector, whilst always offering credible alternatives. It will continue to propose better structures that enable professionals working with young people to do their jobs more effectively. It will continue to use timely and rigorous research to get under the skin of issues affecting young people in order to shape the public debate, advise the sector and campaign on topical issues.

Most of all, The Centre for Education and Youth will continue to make the case that the next decade must be better than the last. This publication marks the first step in us plotting that path forward.

We are delighted that so many have contributed to this publication and we hope that many more of you will join us in the decade to come, whether by reading our work, participating in our research, commissioning our support or funding our impact.



Introduction:

Loic Menzies and Anna Trethewey, Chief Executive and Executive Director of the Centre for Education and Youth

On the surface, the short essays in this collection appear to be very different.

Some focus on technology, others on youth clubs, others still on policy and accountability. Perhaps that is not surprising given that our work has always bridged the gaps between the various groups and influences that shape young people's transition to adulthood.

However, look below the surface, and a number of key themes come to the fore.

The Chief inspector of schools Amanda Spielman kicks things off. She shares her reasons to be cheerful, reflecting on errors the sector has made in the past and presenting a hopeful vision of where recent changes might lead us. Importantly, she introduces the theme of a more holistic education - a theme that re-emerges throughout this collection.

If Nadia Paczuska, a head teacher in Lowestoft who “celebrates the acknowledgement that schools cannot simply be exam factories” is anything to go by, the changes Amanda refers to will be welcomed by many in the profession. However, according to the MP Emma Hardy, there is a long way to go and the green shoots of more meaningful accountability are far from secure. Moreover, as Nadia and Russell Hobby point out, success will depend on addressing under-funding and securing and retaining the teachers our young people need. As Russell argues, teachers are not just needed to staff

The green shoots of more meaningful accountability are far from secure



our schools, they are needed to pave the way for social justice and empowerment.

Questions of empowerment and social justice lie at the heart of several other contributors' visions for the next decade too. For Anita Kerwin-Nye, the voices and actions of people and communities hold the potential to rebalance power and create a more inclusive future for our young people. Yetunde Kehinde's rousing piece suggests her and her peers will need little encouragement in order to grab that gauntlet, but as Luke Billingham, a community and youth worker points out, this cannot happen in a 'faddish' way, since well-intentioned initiatives too often end up riding rough-shod over the very people they claim to empower.

Several other contributors point to alternative levers for shifting power. Tim Oates argues that research and evidence can guide us to empowerment through knowledge, and he is not alone in calling for the evidence informed policy and practice that our own organisation exists to foster. For Laura McInerney - who helped build the foundations of The Centre for Education and Youth, it is parents who will lead the charge in reshaping education provision, but for Geoff Barton, it is professionals like school leaders who need to stand up, stop being victims and claim their professional autonomy and authority.

Throughout their pieces, it is encouraging to see contributors to this report touch on many of the themes and principles behind our work. Amanda highlights the need to look at issues that sit below the radar, something we have always done, both by staffing our team with former teachers and youth workers and by engaging closely with sector professionals and the young people they work with. Touchstone topics from the last decade of our work also come to the fore in several pieces in this collection, including teacher recruitment and retention, accountability, the need of a vibrant third sector that goes beyond what schools can provide, and the oft-misunderstood role of aspirations.

LKMco played a central role in the big debates that defined the sector over the past ten years

LKMco played a central role in the big debates that defined the sector over the past ten years. We did not always get our way, but we know that at a policy level, we not only nudged things in a better direction than they might have gone otherwise, but we also shaped concrete changes. Meanwhile on the ground, dozens of organisations and thousands of practitioners have supported millions of young people in new and more evidence-informed ways thanks to the support we have provided.

As the Centre for Education and Youth, our commitment now is to make the next decade a better and fairer one, ensuring that society helps all children and young people make a fulfilling transition to adulthood.

Amanda Spielman: *Reasons to be cheerful about education*



Amanda Spielman has been Ofsted Chief Inspector since January 2017. Between 2011 and 2016, Amanda was chair of Ofqual, the qualifications regulator. From 2005

she was a founding member of the leadership team at Ark Schools, where she became Research and Policy Director and an education adviser to Ark, the education charity. She previously spent more than fifteen years in strategy consulting, finance and investment and is a council member at Brunel University London. She has previously served on the boards of organisations including the Institute of Education, STEMNET and the Wales Millennium Centre, and has been a governor of two schools.

On the day we learned who our new Prime Minister would be, I was speaking at an education event.

I found myself reflecting on encouraging trends in education over the past decade, many of which get far less celebration that they should.

First of all, we are seeing a whole different level of teacher engagement in discussion and development of every aspect of education itself. The renewed conversations about curriculum are just one aspect of a remarkable burgeoning of intellectual and practical

interest, fuelled by online opportunities but also translating into many blogs, events, publications, friendships and creative partnerships.

And a big part of this engagement is an interest in research and evidence. More and more people want to see ideas tested and to be sure that what they take into classrooms has the greatest chance of success. Increasingly teachers are recognising that what matters is not just whether activity x has educational value or not: every child's time at school is finite, so we owe it to children to design an education that makes the best use of that time.

“Data measures cannot bear the whole weight of defining quality of education... we understand what goes wrong when too much weight hangs on results... the human perspective is also necessary”

Then there is the recognition that while educational measurement usefully serves many purposes, data measures cannot bear the whole weight of defining quality of education. Twenty years on from those early performance tables, we understand what goes wrong when too much weight hangs on results (and yes, as always, I acknowledge that Ofsted

has been part of this). We all now recognise that educational success is a multifaceted construct, which can never be entirely captured through data measures: the human perspective is also necessary.

We are also increasingly willing to make the difficult stuff discussable, and orthodoxies challengeable. Problems that have existed under the radar for years are acknowledged and discussed. The distortions of education around coursework that went undiscussed for years are just one; children coming off school rolls for the wrong reasons are another. We increasingly recognise that there are real threats to integrity in education, and that the best way to address them is to discuss them openly, without lobbing virtual grenades. There are still areas where strong vested interests do their best to shut down open discussion, but these seem to be getting fewer, and I believe we can sustain this direction.

Finally, and building on all these trends, I believe we continue to embrace high aspirations for all our children, and in an increasingly grounded way, which makes them more realisable. It is not just 'you ought to be aiming for the Moon', but 'you ought to be aiming for the Moon, which means accomplishing a number of stages, and here is how we can do our best to make it possible for you to work your way successfully through each stage'. This is ultimately how we do our best for all children, but most of all for those who for whatever reason have a difficult journey to make.

In sum, while big challenges remain, and there is and will always be room for improvement on all our parts, I see much to be cheerful and optimistic about: and above all, our teachers and everyone who works in schools.



Nadia Paczuska: *Collaboration across and beyond schools*



Nadia is Headteacher of Phoenix St Peter Academy in Lowestoft. She moved from London to Suffolk in 2016 to lead a struggling school as part of the

Government's Talented Leaders Programme. Nadia is committed to addressing social disadvantage through school leadership and closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and their more privileged peers.

I have been teaching for 22 years and in that time I have seen innumerable policy changes.

However, the one constant has been that there have always been, and always will be children who urgently need to learn. For me, remembering that has always been a priority - we owe our pupils more than just an ability to 'ride the policy waves'.

Ten years ago I was working as a year 6 teacher in London primary school. The school was a 'satisfactory' local authority school. Ten years on I am head teacher of a school in a coastal town that 'requires improvement'. Both schools serve high numbers of disadvantaged pupils and both schools face significant challenges but I experienced them in different policy settings.

Changes which have impacted on my recent

experience include shifting into a MAT, getting used to a radically different curriculum and accountability framework, coping with significant funding decreases and managing ever greater recruitment and retention challenges. Somehow my team has managed, but I long for a time when it is more than 'managing', a time when all our children can thrive.

"I long for a time when it's more than 'managing', a time when all our children can thrive"

I love what I do and feel sure that the profession will always attract hard working people who will devote themselves to doing their best for children's learning. I have a strong, committed team who teach with bleeding hearts and believe anything is possible. But we need to recruit more people, make the profession more attractive to a wider range of people and create new routes into teaching. People talk about raising the status of teaching, but teaching already has status and can be hugely fulfilling. I tell my team how cool they are every single morning, because they are. Teaching is a superpower and we should be shouting this from the rooftops to prospective teachers, including people from all walks of life.

Although I work for a successful MAT, I recognise that not all of them are and can see that decentralisation of services has created

uneven provision. I accept the MAT structure is one I will be working in until I cannot work anymore. A return to the local authority model is unlikely, but we need to make the current model effective.

It is important that school leaders can contribute to shaping education policy, and organisations like The Centre for Education and Youth, which listen to head teachers and respond to the challenges individual schools and communities face, are much needed.

I welcome recent changes to the inspection framework and celebrate the acknowledgement that schools cannot simply be exam factories. It may sound naive but I hope to move to a place of greater integrity. I hope we can start discussing the real issues facing young people. And by that I mean all young people. I look forward to a system that embraces multiagency working again, in which schools work together despite being run by different MATs and I hope we can create a system that acknowledges the deep challenges some communities face, recognising this by giving them the resources they need in order

to achieve great results.

In order to do this, MAT leaders will need to work with head teachers to identify and address major issues and also collaborate with each other to build a structure that works. Meanwhile, at a national level we need a sharper approach on training, recruitment and retention (look at the Territorial Army, their adverts make me want to go and be a soldier!). Recruiting committed people will secure stability.

Crucially we also need an intelligent response to the widening achievement gap between rich and poor. The best way would be to end private schooling and parental choice and make every school a good school. It can be done. Holland is a good example, but we may be a few years off that yet.

It is time to redefine success in education. Social circumstances cannot continue to create obstacles to achievement. Until we change that we cannot provide a world class education in the UK.

“Teaching is a superpower and we should be shouting this from the rooftops”



Emma Hardy MP: *A system we can work with, rather than against*



Emma is Labour MP for Hull West and Hessle and a member of the House of Commons' Education Select Committee. She completed a PGCE at the University of

Leeds in 2004 and taught for over ten years before becoming a full-time organiser for the National Union of Teachers. She campaigned as Deputy General Secretary of the Socialist Educational Association as well as organising and hosting the Northern Rocks education conferences in Leeds.

network states, “Although it’s impossible to attribute the rising rates of exclusions to the new national curriculum and assessment arrangements, the rise does coincide with these changes... Our members tell us that a push for a hundred percent Ebacc entry has led to a narrowing of the curriculum, and therefore disengagement from some of the most vulnerable learners.”¹

“Ofsted’s new inspection handbook has pushed back against the narrowing of the curriculum”

The controversy over Gove’s legacy continues.

In one corner stand those who supported him and who continue to highlight the “increased number of good and outstanding schools”. In the other stand those who highlight the increasing number of children no longer able to fit into the mainstream school system, the forgotten children, the children with special needs and disabilities, and the ever increasing number of children who are ‘off rolled’ because of an unforgiving school accountability system bent on punishing schools that genuinely try to be inclusive.

As Tom Middlehurst of the SSAT schools

But there are green shoots of change. Ofsted’s new inspection handbook has pushed back against the narrowing of the curriculum by insisting schools need to be “broad and balanced.” The inspectorate has repeatedly stated that schools will not be judged solely on results and instead be judged more holistically. They argue this will, “*de-intensify the inspection focus on performance data and place more emphasis on the substance of education and what matters most to learners and practitioners.*”²

However these green shoots could easily be killed off. So long as Nick Gibb remains as Schools Minister it is impossible to believe there will be a real change of direction, or a

1 - <https://www.ssatuk.co.uk/blog/timpson-review-is-largely-welcome-but-raises-serious-concerns/>

2 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/education-inspection-framework-2019-inspecting-the-substance-of-education/education-inspection-framework-2019-inspecting-the-substance-of-education>

“The attainment bar might continue to rise and an ever-narrower curriculum would be the price to pay - all in pursuit of a politicised definition of ‘knowledge’”

recognition that the last decade’s reforms have been anything other than a roaring success. Instead, I fear we could end up with more of the same; the attainment bar might continue to rise and an ever-narrower curriculum would be the price to pay - all in pursuit of a politicised definition of ‘knowledge.’ Meanwhile, continued underfunding of education risks resulting in ever-more children being home educated, more pupils being ‘off rolled’ and spiralling demand for specialist SEND provision.

A better future for education and young people is possible. When Edward Timpson gave evidence to us at the Education Select Committee he suggested a different way of measuring achievement for children who are returning to mainstream after being expelled. This was not just about academic results. Instead it would take into account a wider range of achievements. Like me, he acknowledged that the *“new Ofsted framework is moving in that direction”* but recognised that it was an argument that still needed winning and that *although many schools try to do the best by every child, too often they have to act “despite the current accountability measures rather than because of it.”*³

Over the next decade I therefore hope we will devise an accountability system that enables all children to show progression in a wide variety of fields. I would like all our schools to be shaped around the individual rather than the whims of government, and for our schools to have the resources required to meet every child’s needs.

Only then will all our children and young people thrive in, and beyond our schools, wherever they are in the country.

3 - <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/education-committee/accountability-hearings/oral/103503.html>

Russell Hobby: *Education and the redistribution of power*



Russell joined Teach First as Chief Executive in September 2017 building on more than 15 years developing and promoting leadership in schools.

Prior to joining Teach First Russell was General Secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), which represents over 29,000 school leaders in the UK and before that worked as a management consultant, founding Hay Group's education practice. Russell is a trustee of Bounce Forward and the Brilliant Club.

It feels like we live in difficult times – and that is particularly the case for young people.

Right now, we risk losing their confidence that tomorrow can be better than today.

Underpinning this unravelling is, I think, a basic failure of justice.

We have not worked hard enough to ensure that every young person has a stake in the future. If you do not feel that you will benefit from change in some way, then change is not an opportunity, it is a threat. If the future does not belong to you, why would you work hard to build it or protect it?

Does technology connect you to kindred spirits or force you into a zero hour contract?

Does globalisation reduce the size of your grocery bill or the size of your pay packet? Does the infrastructure always go to the towns down south?

For some young people, the tomorrow they are offered just does not seem very inspiring, so what does it mean for young people to have a stake in the future?

It means the power to make their own choices. To take a shot at the opportunities out there, and claim their benefits. To see how to navigate from where they are to where they want to be. To have the skills and knowledge they need.

Education can provide that stake in the future. Education is the difference between spectating and performing, between alienation and taking part. It tips the balance from threat to opportunity. A great education for everyone is the foundation of a just society, and only a just society can rediscover its common ground.

Despite the dedication of so many fantastic teachers, not everybody gets access to that great education. In fact, it is a bitter irony that those who already start with less, are too often

“Education is the difference between spectating and performing, between alienation and taking part”

deprived of the means to more, since the outcomes of education are too often carved up along the lines of wealth, class, race and privilege. Teachers are here to change that.

But justice does not come from charity. It comes from the redistribution of power. Teachers are not saviours. They do not rescue young people from their circumstances. Nor should they lead them away from their communities.

They give young people the power to change their own circumstances as they see fit. They give choices, options, a map of the future ahead. So let the next ten years be the decade of the teacher. Let's make it an attractive profession once more for our most talented graduates and career switchers. This means paying people properly but it also means treating them properly.

When we have got people in we need to equip them to succeed with high quality training throughout their careers and the resources and curricula to put that training into effect.

“Justice does not come from charity. It comes from the redistribution of power.”

Teachers are not saviours. They do not rescue young people from their circumstances”

There is nothing original or profound in these suggestions yet we seem to neglect them. Perhaps because they are less dramatic and harder work, than sweeping structural reforms.

Put simply, investment in teachers and schools is the best investment we can make in young people over the next ten years. Teachers redistribute power, giving young people a choice, a chance and a stake in the next decade.



Anita Kerwin-Nye: *It's time to challenge the power structures*



Anita is a charity leader, author and expert in education, access and inclusion. She is a long-time advocate of enrichment activity, in and out the classroom

and joined YHA in 2018 as Director of Strategy & Engagement, having founded The Communication Trust and Whole School SEND. Anita runs AKN Consulting and founded Every Child Should. Anita lived the gig economy before it was a thing; became a social entrepreneur before it became fashionable; and, was a flexible worker ahead of it becoming a legal right. She can be found on Twitter being provocative, pushy, positive and progressive in, broadly, equal measures.

My work has always taken place in the space between charities and schools, where I am preoccupied with the question of access.

Why is it that those who stand to benefit the most from enrichment - from a broader range of life experiences and 'the extra-curricular' - are often those with least access to such opportunities? This problem now extends into schools themselves where some children and young people are pushed out of the education system and where school choice is, in practice, only an option for the most able. So, as we look to the ten years ahead, what might a rethinking of civil society mean for access to education and youth work? Five

changes are needed to improve outcomes for all, rather than just those best able to navigate the system.

“Why is it that those who stand to benefit the most from enrichment are often those with least access to such opportunities?”

1. Put user voice and power in governance

The top twenty charities take the most charity funding – a model we can see emerging in schools. But the charity sector is learning the risks of leaving users behind and getting too large. Charity governance is far from perfect as we have seen in a number of high profile cases, but there is a shift coming. After decades of assuming professionalisation of the charity sector meant trustees from business, charities are starting to recognise the importance of user voice and power in governance. Many of the challenges in education and youth work have come from the failure to value the voices of those that organisations exist to serve.

2. Engage with a new model for campaigning

Social media connects those who were previously isolated. Increasingly, communities are creating their own solutions independent of (or despite) government structures and traditional charities. This growing lobby is challenging the existing power bases of astro-turfers and privately funded lobbyists.

Parents of children with disabilities have led the pressure on government – even to the point of legal action. Communities are demanding to be represented in governance systems. Young people are leading the lobby on the environment. Engaging with them – hearing their stories – is a must for those of us who believe in equity.

3. Know the import of local power and community assets

Over the next ten years we have to support the potential and rise of the local; local like Moulescoomb Community Forest Garden and Wildlife Project in Brighton who connect local schools to nature. Working on a shoestring providing holiday play and connecting generations. Linking to the community owned pub The Bevy that provides work experiences to the local secondary school and provides access to arts and culture.

Larger organisations including the public sector and funders need to respond with support that provides resources, reduces red-tape and builds with partnerships.

4. Value schools as community assets

Schools remain the biggest resource for education and youth work. But going forward we need to reimagine schools as being at centre of their community. Yes, keep some

of the focus on data that has helped drive some outcome improvement. But we need to balance this with an honesty that there are lies, damn lies, statistics and school data! Yes, move from the ‘bigotry of low expectations’ – but accept the real impact of adverse childhood experiences. Let’s admit that ‘EBacc and Russell Group Crammers’ are fine as a choice but let’s celebrate and reward schools that are broad, rounded and inclusive. Covert selection and narrow curriculum will always lead to best grades if that is what we value most but other schools still make the academic cut – they just take the harder path.

5. Build universal provision

Over the next decade we will no doubt build on our understanding of effective targeted provision but we also need to remember the importance of universal services. We need to rebuild a universal entitlement for all young people, services that are not about addressing a deficit but are about enrichment, community cohesion and self-development. This balance is a core part of our strategy at YHA – we want to use our resource to support the young people who could benefit the most, but we also recognise that the real power comes in the mix of generations, cultures and backgrounds that takes place in every one of our hostels.

There have been many positive developments over the last ten years – and the work of bodies like The Centre for Education and Youth has prompted new discussions, partnerships and solutions. But we are at a tipping point in the renewal of civil society and we now need to disrupt existing power bases.

The question is, are we brave enough to reimagine a new way?

“Let’s celebrate and reward schools that are broad, rounded and inclusive and that understand their role as assets for the all”

Yetunde Kehinde: *Stand up and advocate*



Yetunde is a student at the London Academy of Excellence who describes herself as “a goal oriented young activist”. As an ambassador for an environmental

charity, she seeks to further her voice and broadcast her concerns nationally and internationally. She is looking to pursue her interest in Geography in Higher Education and, eventually to travel, explore the world and go from there.

Over the last ten years I have seen increasing access to better education.

There are a lot of schools pushing the agenda when it comes to young people's potential and there are access projects for all young people which create a more even playing field. Many projects particularly target black and minority ethnic groups in a really positive way, showing us our potential and developing our talents by making sure we have access to the best information. Just yesterday I was at an event with Cambridge University's Black and Minority Ethnic network. They try to make university a more positive experience and addressed lots of our questions about highly selective universities and I am going to another in September in Oxford.

However, on the other hand, I have not necessarily seen improvements in livelihoods in

my community and there are definitely places that are overlooked. Abbey Wood, where I live is just not as developed as some other areas and I see the issue of knife crime in many parts of London when people are socialising with the wrong people and getting into trouble without people's parents necessarily knowing. My school is like a shining star that shows me anything is possible, but I have to travel a long way to get to it and the standard of education can be inadequate, resulting in poor pass rates and diminished prospects when it comes to higher education.

“My school is like a shining star that shows me anything is possible, but I have to travel a long way to get to it”

If all communities are to get better opportunities then it is crucial for us to have more youth centres dotted around the country. Not everyone has a family they can talk to and lots of young people need a hub where they can socialise rather than being at home depressed on their phones. Youth Clubs can also provide things that might not be available in people's schools like extra tuition, support and mentoring. First and foremost, this would improve their social skills but it would also really improve people's happiness and wellbeing, taking them out of their norm and giving them a place where they can talk about the issues they are facing.

If we are going to make these changes in the next decade, it is young people who need to be involved. If you want something to change then, if you are the one being affected, it is essential for you to be the one who goes out and advocates rather than relying on others to make changes years down the line. It all needs to start with young people and the other people who are affected otherwise things get overlooked. There are great examples of young people leading petitions on platforms like change.org and these can be quite powerful. You cannot just continue on without putting your hand up and being seen. You need to get these issues acknowledged.

The first step is to find others who will support your ideas and plans because a collective voice is so much more powerful. That is what creates a collective proposition.

Over the next ten years, those with power need to encourage these types of actions by listening carefully and spotting people with potential, finding out what they are thinking and helping them. It was really refreshing to see so many young people being nominated as #iWill ambassadors and that recognition all started with the person who nominated them.

In the future I want to travel the world, there is so much to explore internationally and I want to learn about global issues including conservation.

“Sometimes you need to be the one to go out and advocate rather than relying on others to make changes years down the line. It all needs to start with young people”



Luke Billingham: *More relationships, deeper change and fewer fads*



Luke Billingham is a youth and community worker at Hackney Quest, a long-running youth and community centre in Hackney, where he is involved in mentoring,

exclusion prevention, youth voice and community development projects. Luke is also Head of Strategy at Reach Children's Hub, an innovative new charity providing cradle-to-career support for children and young people in Feltham, South-West London, and is a trustee of Haven Distribution, the books-to-prisoners charity.

The places and people that give me hope are those that provide the best conditions for individuals and communities to achieve mental, social and material wellbeing.

Youth and community centres nationwide (those that we still have) provide a second home and a shedload of love. Our best schools are not only committed to fostering their students' passion for learning, but they also provide a warm, inclusive environment, informed by a rich understanding of attachment, relationship-building and trauma. This is all paired with a gargantuan quantity of mutual respect.

There are individual professionals in our schools, hospitals, charities, prisons, social

care systems, and mental health services who beautifully transform people's sense of themselves, and genuinely reorient their lives. These can be places where people are not afraid to talk about love and hope, and mention them far more than referral forms and risk.

The Wellbeing Centre in Pentonville Prison is the most striking example of this that I have seen; providing warmth and care within the harshest possible context. Places like these are all the more valuable at a time when far too many services and institutions are either closing down, or have become so punitive and transactional that they serve to diminish and belittle rather than support and encourage.

I am also given hope by the community groups, activists and politicians who are fighting for deep, broad-ranging structural changes. These structural changes are necessary if we are to rectify the grotesque inequality, poverty and marginalisation that blights our society.

As we step into the next decade, we need more places to nurture our most vulnerable young people, and more radical change to reduce the hardship and demoralisation that are at

“Structural changes are necessary if we are to rectify the grotesque inequality, poverty and marginalisation that blights our society”

the root of most social problems. The former without the latter would just be sticking plasters on a gaping wound; the latter without the former would be a cold kind of revolution.

Alongside this, we need to avoid falling into the trap of fads. Unfortunately these are infecting the world of community work and charities. Much like fads such as 'flipped learning' rarely had the desired effect in schools, in the community sector we are now finding that innovative, important ideas are becoming bastardised, to the point that they are devoid of meaning. At worst, ideas that aim to empower have the opposite effect in practice.

'Co-production' can mean cajoling 'service-users' and stealing their ideas for free. 'Systems change' can mean hours of chat with a lot of post-it notes and very little insight, and 'recognising the value of lived experience' can

result in young people being asked to re-live their trauma on stage for a privileged audience, again, for free.

The point is not that we need fewer good ideas, or that they should never become too popular, but that the precision and rigour of our thinking and our self-reflection should increase in tandem with the power and influence of the concepts we're wielding.

Over the next ten years, I therefore hope we will implement new ideas in meaningful, rigorous, and authentic ways - grounding them in front-line experience and professional expertise, and I hope that support and resources are finally directed towards the deep-rooted relationships and societal change that should always be community sector's twin focus.



Tim Oates CBE: *Follow the research, follow the evidence*



Tim Oates joined Cambridge Assessment in May 2006 to spearhead the rapidly growing Assessment Research and Development division. His work

has included advising on a pan-European 8-level qualifications framework and chairing the UK government's national curriculum review. Tim was awarded CBE in the 2015 New Year's Honours for services to education.

Education is an area full of prognostications about the future - many of them empty and hollow.

The oft-heard ‘...children do not need to remember anything anymore, they can just look it up..’ runs counter to what we know about brain structure and the processes of cognition. Young people who do not build up knowledge and understanding in their long term memory will simply fail at higher order complex tasks. Those without cognitive resources immediately ‘to hand’ from long term memory will be overwhelmed by the demands of tasks which require integration of knowledge, complex discrimination and so on.

The people who talk of this ‘no need to remember things’ notion should pay more attention to the structure of knowledge. Too often they fail to grasp what human knowledge consists of. We may forget facts - like the name of the first president of Iceland or the boiling

“In thinking about the future of general education, we had better base policy and practice on the right theories”

point of mercury - but human knowledge and understanding consists of conceptual arrays far more complex than those associated with discrete facts. Immediate extrapolation from a curve on a graph; excluding possible alternative explanations; diagnosing problems; all of these require the person to have extensive cognitive resources.

All the evidence of the UK longitudinal surveys and the work of cognitive scientists like Kurt Fisher and Sarah Jane Blakemore suggests that the cognitive resources possessed by the individual explain high performance, good professional progression and better life outcomes. So in thinking about the future of general education, we had better base policy and practice on the right theories.

Much like the ‘no need to remember’ fallacy, the idea of ‘each child following their own curriculum’ surfaces time and time again during talk of the future. An appealing sense of schooling as personal consumption - your choice of content, your choice of pace - runs counter to evidence from high performing systems which have enhanced both attainment and equity in a sustained and impressive way.

Leading often to an unmanageable escalation in teacher load, this 'each child on their own path' model of differentiation hints at the correct assumption that every child has to construct their own understanding of physical laws, concepts of power and authority, of the unconscious and so on, but loses a grip of the importance of guided construction of that knowledge. This can also undermine opportunities for the social learning that results from groups of children tackling the same ideas at the same time. Worst of all, there is clear evidence that when children follow their preferences in learning, it can exacerbate systematic disadvantage, not attenuate it.

For sure, technology will feature hugely, and it is a topic on which most conversations about the future of education are based. But the models which underpin it need to build on the

“There is clear evidence that when children follow their preferences in learning, it can exacerbate systematic disadvantage, not attenuate it”

robust body of evidence we have about human learning, not ignore it.

And that is the thing - the future of education is what we make it. I therefore hope that over the next ten years we will shape it using the right models and principles. In fact, it should be beyond 'hope' - it should be an evidence-based, prudent process.



Laura McInerney: Customised Schools



Laura McInerney is the Guardian's education columnist and co-founder of the daily survey tool, Teacher Tapp. Formerly a teacher for six years in East London, she was

the Centre for Education and Youth's first ever regular blogger before being taken to court by the education secretary for asking difficult questions about free schools. This only encouraged her, and so she switched into journalism full-time and went on to become the editor of Schools Week.



My child-raising friends' jaws hit the ground when they are told they will not get any meaningful choice when it comes to their child's school.

In a world where our shopping can arrive in less than two hours; where apps teach us Swahili, or coding, or maths; where someone will pick up our laundry and deliver it back home; or we can have personalised workouts barked at us via in-home speakers, the lack of choice when it comes to school can seem incongruous. Parents, they can only provide a preference and then they are told they must deliver their offsprings to school at 9am and pick them up at 3.30pm. No customisation. No upgrade package. No drop-at-home service. For them, this is an outrage.

While our customer service expectations are changing, so, too, are labour markets. Weekend

**“No customisation.
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is an outrage”**

work, evening shifts, working from home: all are now far more common. Flexible work means ‘always work’ for many. If you work for a company with offices in Shanghai or California there is no reason, beyond social decency and a desire for family time, that you can not take a conference call at either end of the day. (And who is concerned about such things when a wage, and thereby a mortgage, is on the line?) Both shifts are likely to have a profound effect on schools over the next decade. First, if parents expect to speak to Amazon at all hours of the day, why would they not expect

to communicate with their child's teacher whenever they want? After all, they leave messages for colleagues in other countries or who work evenings - why not for Mrs Smith from Year 2?

“There is a gap in the market for private providers”

Secondly, as parents are forced into work patterns that differ to their children's, there is a gap in the market for private providers to take advantage. A low-cost school offering its school hours across four days a week, thereby allowing parents to take their children away for long weekends, would sweep up among the management classes who regularly work away from home four days-a-week, but are freed on Fridays. A state school running classes from Wednesday to Sunday might clean up in areas where tourist trade demands many parents work weekends.

A school that combines online learning with in-school learning, in a way that enables children to take holidays flexibly, and provides parents with clear real-time data on their child's learning, is likely to take the ultimate prize.

How quickly can this happen? What format will it take? And will the state fund it or will it be a gradual drip-feed from the private sector? I do not know. But the likelihood that we get to 2030 without a shift in at least a part of our schooling sector seems deeply unlikely. If an additional seven per cent of parents moved into the private sector, that would mean the sector's numbers had doubled. It would cause a serious problem for state schools. We should not underestimate the possibility this could happen.

Over the next ten years, there is a good chance the status quo will at least begin to break down. And when change comes, it may come quickly.

Geoff Barton: *We need to stop being victims*



Geoff is General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, representing 19,500 educational leaders across the UK. Prior to this, he was an

English teacher and headteacher.

As Tess in Tess of the d'Urbervilles says, "Once a victim, always a victim! That's the law, isn't it?"

I think of those words often. I am weary of those of us who work in education too often being presented as, and perhaps too often feeling, that we are the victim profession, with too many things done to us rather than by us – conditions of service, the curriculum, control of professional qualifications.

At some point – if we are to recruit better, retain better, and tell a better story of what we do – we need to stop being the victim in all of this.

My hope is that in the coming few years, we can all regain our professional self-confidence and talk more proudly of why teaching matters so much.

Here is what I mean: education in the UK is far better than we generally allow ourselves to say publicly or even tell ourselves privately. Many children and young people get a very good

deal from their schools and colleges; most of them go on to be successful, well-adjusted and productive citizens. This does not just happen by accident. It happens because of what we teach them, how we treat them, and the values we instil.

Since I stepped out of running a school, and instead visit many schools and colleges across the UK, I see this far more powerfully, I see great, morally-driven, and generally understated, leadership at work.

“Education in the UK is far better than we generally allow ourselves to say publicly or even tell ourselves privately”

That said, a worrying number of pupils do not benefit as they need to, and many of them live in fragmented communities. In some of these areas, education has for too long been seen as irrelevant or part of the problem rather than part of the solution, so of course we have got work to do there. Part of that involves giving the ‘Forgotten Third’ - who after twelve years of education get a grade 3 or lower in GCSE English or maths – something that gives them the dignity of a qualification.

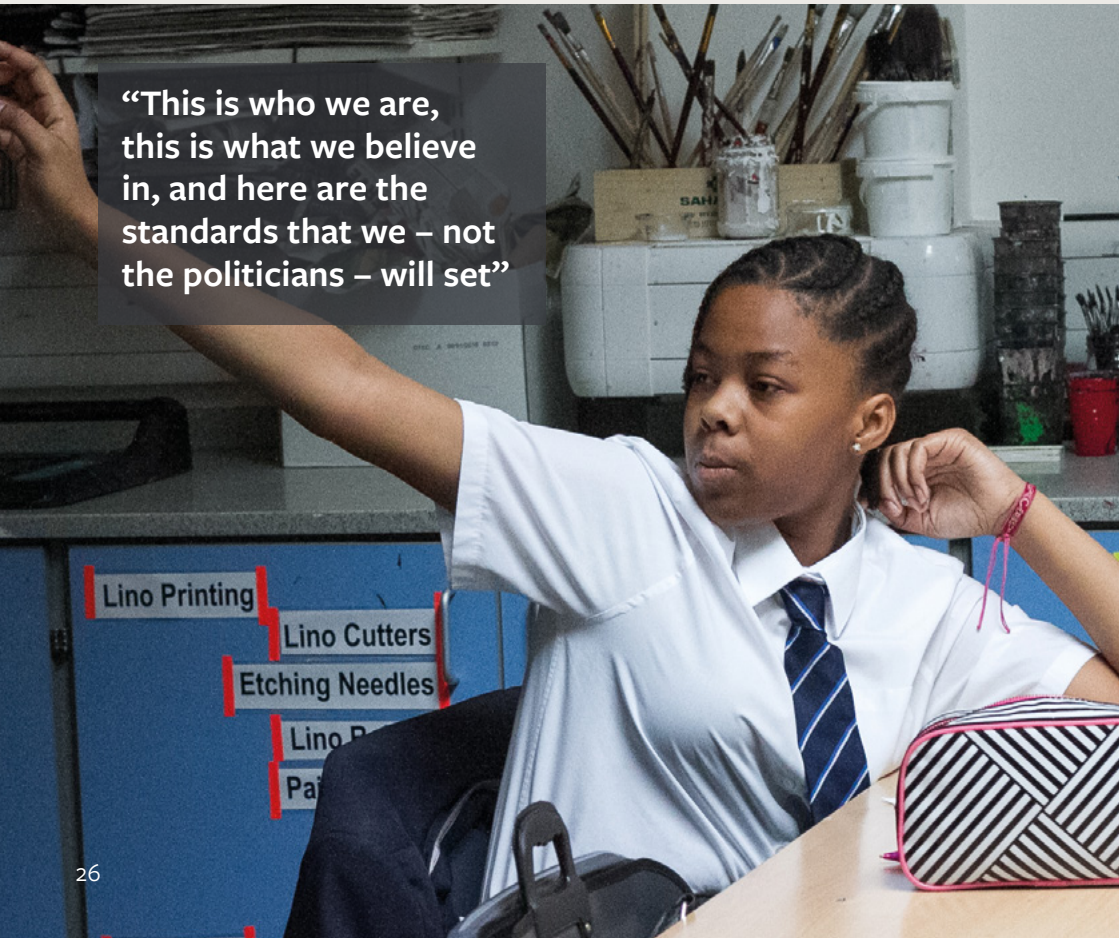
Then there is the need for us to realign ourselves with parents when it comes to what education is actually for. The current

accountability system – narrowly mechanistic, data-driven, reductive – describes education in the language of ‘measures’, ‘performance’, ‘chains’ and ‘accountability’. This fails to resonate with the real stuff of what we deal with. It is surely better for us to talk about ‘children’ and ‘learning’ and ‘pedagogy’ and ‘leadership’ – language that describes what our core business is and what we are happy to be held accountable, because after all, it is what we get up every morning to do.

One more thing – and it is perhaps the key to everything above. If teaching is to step up and be recognised as a profession alongside others, then our professional body, the Chartered

College of Teaching, needs to be given real responsibility, in other words, the trust that is granted to other such organisations. It needs to become the voice of the profession, the conscience of the profession and the natural home for the national qualifications of standards for teaching, subject and senior leadership. In doing so, the profession stands up and says: this is who we are, this is what we believe in, and here are the standards that we – not the politicians – will set.

Once a victim, always a victim: it is time to show that such 19th century fatalism no longer applies to the teaching profession.



**“This is who we are,
this is what we believe
in, and here are the
standards that we – not
the politicians – will set”**

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Conclusion:

The work we do visiting young people and those who work with them in schools, homeless centres, and youth clubs around the country makes it impossible not to recognise the challenges highlighted by contributors to this collection.

There is no doubt that our society will struggle to ensure all children and young people make a fulfilling transition to adulthood whilst educational attainment remains stratified by family background and community context, and whilst the opportunities children can access continue to differ so dramatically - as Yetunde so eloquently points out with reference to her “shining star” of a school.

Yet the young people and practitioners whom we met as we criss-cross the country inspire hope. In Newcastle recently we heard from young people who were homeless when they first participated in our research, but who are now charging ahead with their lives, thanks to a combination of their own determination and the dedicated support of committed professionals. Our recent work on Youth Social Action showed innumerable examples of young people’s dedication to creating positive change in their communities, reflecting the long-standing popularity of volunteering amongst 16-24 year olds. Meanwhile, we know that better policy has succeeded in cutting child poverty in the past and that it could do once again in the future.

The challenges young people face are complex, and it is therefore no surprise that the solutions are far from simple.

To realise the visions that contributors to this report have set out we need to engage with, and welcome this complexity. The complexity of defining and measuring educational success; the complexity of recruiting and training practitioners with the extraordinary talent needed to bring the best out in young people; the complexity of ensuring young people, their parents and their teachers have the power and autonomy needed to change the future.

As will be clear to the reader, the authors included in this collection disagree on the answers to these important questions – which is part of the reason we asked them to contribute. Over the next ten years it will be our job - and our pleasure, to orchestrate this debate, inserting the evidence and research that is needed, and telling the human stories behind the facts and figures.

When navigation is complex, you need a good map and we very much look forward to providing it.

We hope that you might join us, whether by reading our work, subscribing to our newsletter, contributing to our research, commissioning a project, or funding us to grow our impact.

Please get in touch and let’s discuss how we can work together to make the next decade a really good one for young people.

hello@cfey.org



The Centre for Education and Youth is a 'think and action-tank'. We believe society should ensure all children and young people receive the support they need to make a fulfilling transition to adulthood.

We provide the evidence and support policy makers and practitioners need to support young people.

We use our timely and rigorous research to get under the skin of issues affecting young people in order to shape the public debate, advise the sector and campaign on topical issues. We have a particular interest in issues affecting marginalised young people.



hello@cfey.org

+44 203 4882765

@TheCfEY

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