

# Breakdown class divisions in society



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Give a brief description of the effects of changes to educational legislation since 1944. Explain how the changes reflected government education policies and identify current educational priorities”.

... The purpose of this assignment is to summarise education legislation from 1944 to present day and relate this to changes in government policy.

There were many changes in education from 1944 to the modern day National Curriculum that we use today.

In 1944 The Education Act was introduced that made education available to everyone up to the age of fifteen. The Education Act is more commonly referred to as ‘ The Butler Act’ as it was founded by Richard Austen Butler (Rab Butler), a conservative politician. Butler’s 1944 Education Act was an attempt to create the structure for the post-war British education system.

The Butler act also introduced the tri-partite system of education. The tri-partite system tested children at the age of eleven (11 plus examination), and depending on their level of aptitude they would then attend a technical college, a secondary modern or a grammar school.

The more academic students attended grammar schools, technically minded students attended technical colleges and the rest attended secondary moderns.

The act also created a network of support services for schools to which included health care treatment, school transport and school meals for 5 – 15 year olds which were overseen by the newly created post of Minister of Education.

The Labour Government when they came into power in 1965 decided to introduce 'Comprehensive Schooling' education (Circular 10/65). Labour preferred this system of schooling over the Conservative 'Selective Method'.

They had three main aims:

To save money and improve facilities.

To breakdown class divisions in society with all sorts of pupils mixing in the same school.

To raise the abilities of the majority of students who had been failing in secondary modern schools.

At the next election in 1970, the new Conservative education minister Margaret Thatcher withdrew the 'Circular 10/65'. The priority of the Conservative government was to smash the L. E. A. control over the local schools. The replacement 'Circular 10/70' allowed each authority to decide its own policy for secondary education. As a result of these changes education standards in secondary schools varied and the methods employed to teach were wide-ranging. Primary schools remained largely unchanged and stable with the exception of the debate over the '11 plus examination'.

'The Education Reform (ERA)' in 1988 is one of the most influential changes to legislation that is still in place today, and this was the most important act since the Butler act in 1944. It was established by the Conservative Government and saw a number of key changes to the rules and regulations.

The 1988 education act also introduced the National Curriculum. The National Curriculum was introduced to ensure that schools taught a certain range of subjects. The first National Curriculum consisted of ten subjects. These were divided into two categories. The three core subjects were English, Maths and Science, and together with seven other foundation subjects created the basis of the National Curriculum. Compulsory National tests (SATS) were introduced at 7, 11 and 14 on core subjects. The results are published annually in league tables (along with GCSE/A levels and truancy statistics).

The 1988 act also allowed the building of City Technology Colleges. They were independent and not run by the LEA's. The government's new strategy introduced the new Local Management of Schools (LMS) policy which reduced the control over schools by letting them 'opt-out' of L. E. A. control.

The 1992, OFSTED (The Office for Standards in Education) was formed as part of the major overhaul and centralisation of the school system begun by the Education Reform Act 1988, which introduced the National Curriculum, extensive testing in schools and the publication of league tables. OFSTED inspections were school inspections every 6 years.

In 1997 'The New Labour Government' came into power, it was predicted that 'New Labour' would reverse most of the changes implemented by the previous government but that never occurred. Instead they continued with the Conservatives initiatives and further developed them with the 'The Education Act 2002'. This act introduced the foundation stage for primary nursery and reception year groups.

The latest act to be implemented is the 'The Education and Inspection Bill 2006' which was passed in March 2006 by the Labour Government. The main areas of change in education are as follows:

Foundation (Trust) Schools.

School admissions policies to be changed to allow parents to select schools of their choice.

Changes to the National Curriculum to include new diplomas to replace current A-Levels to be implemented by 2013.

Changes to school travel to allow greater access to a variety of schools rather than local ones.

School food and drink provided for children in education and childcare settings.

The United Kingdom general election of 2010 was held on Thursday 6th May 2010. A coalition government was set up by the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats (The last coalition government was during World War 2). The immediate changes that took place were to rename and reshape The Department for Education ' DFE' (Previously called Department for Children, Schools and Families ' DCFS'). The government reverted the departments responsibilities back to education and children's services only. The following day Rt Hon Michael Gove was confirmed as the new Secretary of State for Education.

At present some policy changes decided by the previous government have been put on hold, reversed or abolished until the new government decides on its priorities. The future changes to the new primary national curriculum which were put forward by Sir Jim Rose to be implemented from September 2011 have been shelved, the government stating that it does not intend to proceed with the new primary curriculum. Instead they are committed to giving schools more freedom from unnecessary prescription and bureaucracy. They have always made clear their intention to make changes to the National Curriculum that will ensure ‘ a relentless focus on the basics and give teachers more flexibility than the proposed new primary curriculum offered’.

Another casualty includes ‘ Building Schools for the Future’ (BSF) project which is now canceled. Rt Hon Michael Gove said ‘ in the light of the public finances, it would have been irresponsible to carry on regardless with an inflexible and needlessly complex programme’.

The coalition has set out some of its new priorities since coming to power which include the expansion of academies throughout the education system in England. Academies are schools that are directly funded by central government and are independent of local government control.

Rt Hon Michael Gove unveiled the governments new proposed ‘ Free Schools’. Free Schools are all-ability state-funded schools set up in response to parental demand. These new schools will be academies, which are publicly funded independent schools, free from local authority control. They will enjoy the same freedoms as traditional academies, which include setting their own

pay and conditions for staff, freedom from following the National Curriculum and the ability to change the lengths of their terms and school days. All Free Schools will be accountable like other state schools via inspections and tests. Under the new plans it will become much easier for charities, universities, businesses, educational groups, teachers and groups of parents to get involved and start new schools. Ministers are working right across Government to remove the red tape which can prevent new schools from setting up from planning laws, to the Department's own school premises rules.

In my opinion, since the introduction of the 1944 Education Act, there have been some negative and positive points. For example the 1944 Butler act, after reflecting on it, you could clearly observe that it was typically biased towards to the middle / upper class families. Lower class families more often than not would end in secondary moderns achieving little or nothing. Having said this, the positive points outweighed the negative greatly as it was the start towards the National Curriculum that we have today.

I believe that the 1988 Education reform act was the keystone to greatly improving the standards of education that children receive in today's society. This is because before the act, the standard of education students received was highly based on class status. Teachers also taught a range of subjects that they wished to teach as there were no set subjects so what you could be taught varied across the country. This led to many students leaving school with limited knowledge.

Now, however, with the introduction of the National Curriculum, National Testing and OFSTED inspections and many other reforms after it, most students now leave school with a ample knowledge and understanding, as well as many transferable skills, such as the ability to analyse and discuss, which they can then take onto university or work and develop in the future.

For the time being we will have to wait while the new government decides on its educational priorities until then we can speculate and wait.

By Keith Lyons