**SEND: Crisis in English School’s Funding and Provision. What Should Be Done? Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) cuts and the failure of mainstream schools to carry out their statutory responsibility to include students with SEND, including those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Issues, is fast becoming a national disgrace.**

**The Education Select Committee (July 2018) examining the unprecedented growth in exclusions, unlawful off-rolling and demand for Alternative Provision said**:-“**An unfortunate and unintended consequence of the Government’s strong focus on school standards has led to school environments and practices that have resulted in disadvantaged children being disproportionately excluded, which includes a curriculum with a lack of focus on developing pupils’ social and economic capital. There appears to be a lack of moral accountability on the part of many schools and no incentive to, or deterrent to not, retain pupils who could be classed as difficult or challenging”....**

**“Off-rolling is in part driven by school policies created by the Department for Education. The Department cannot wash its hands of the issue, just as schools cannot wash their hands of their pupils...The Government should issue guidance to all schools reminding them of their responsibilities to children under treaty obligations and ensure that their behaviour policies are in line with these responsibilities...The Government and Ofsted should introduce an inclusion measure or criteria that sits within schools to incentivise schools to be more inclusive”. There is also an unprecedented growth in parents home educating their children.**

**The lack of inclusiveness is witnessed by the number of school students being educated in special schools, rising from 86,000 in 2006 to 115,000 in 2018. In 2015/16, 6,685 pupils were permanently excluded from school, with 339,360 fixed period exclusions. This was a 40% increase from the previous year. Last year, 48,000 pupils were educated in alternative provision and outside special and mainstream schools. Children in care, children in need, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and children in poverty are all more likely to be excluded than their peers. Pupils with Special Educational Needs are almost seven times more likely to be permanently excluded than pupils with no SEN. 2000 children with SEND have no educational provision at all.**

**A cut of 8% in real terms between 2015 and 2020 has just been increased by the Government’s refusal to pay for the full 3.5% pay award, recommended by the Pay Review Board. Schools will have to find at least 1%. As pay is a very substantial part of school budgets, this effectively takes the reduction up to 9%. On top of this, Local Authority Higher Needs Budgets are massively overspent and leading to unlawful reductions in funding for those with Education Health and Care Plans. Despite secondary pupil numbers rising by 54,485 from 2014 to 2018, the number of teaching assistants (TAs) has been cut by 6,100. Parents are challenging this and have already halted reductions in Bristol with a Judicial Review. Surrey and Hackney parents are awaiting their day in court. The Government must be made to fund SEND to meet the needs of those with a Plan and the far larger number who require School Support. A National Association of Head Teachers survey of 600 primary head teachers showed 94% found it harder to resource SEND than 2 years ago and only 2% said top up funding was sufficient to meet Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Disability discrimination against students and staff is increasing.**

**Campaign for more SEND funding locally, to put pressure on the Government to increase it overall. On 21st November participate in a National Day of Action to get equality for disabled students and staff in our colleges and schools. Organise activities and protests in every educational establishment. https://neu.org.uk/funding**

**Help ensure Labour has strong policy on developing an Inclusive National Education Service Early Years, Education and Training Policy.**

**Support the Reference Back from Islington North (p.18) of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Section as “it does not support the 2017 manifesto commitment to the development of a National Education Service based on inclusivity and to take a principled position on Inclusive Education, in line with full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This Section should confirm that the National Education System, in line with International Human Rights Treaties, needs to be based on a principle of Inclusive Education, with sufficient funding and staff training to make this a reality. Despite mentioning discussion, the Policy Paper makes no commitment on this important principle”.**

**The 2017 Manifesto committed to developing a National Education Service based on inclusivity and for schools “ we will deliver a strategy for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) based on inclusivity, and embed SEND more substantially into training for teachers and non-teaching staff, so that staff, children and their parents are properly supported”. The Manifesto also committed to signing into UK Law the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This means developing an inclusive education system and removing the current reservations, interpretations and obstacles to implementation of Article 24 –Education. THE POLICY PAPER IS SILENT ON ALL OF THESE COMMITMENTS.**

**Adopting this principle would commit the Labour Party to developing an inclusive education system for disabled children, young people and learners throughout life. Implementing this means developing the capacity, over time, to meet the wide diversity of needs, in a restructured education system, in line with international human rights treaties.**

**Restrictions on funding are not the only barrier to the development of an inclusive education system. Changing attitudes and practices are crucial to creating a more person centred, accepting, happy and inclusive National Education System. The current high stakes testing, exam factory ethos created by Government policies and enforced by OFSTED, will need to be replaced by measures that encourage the progress of all learners in developing academic, vocational, social skills and understanding. This will require:**

* **A proactive approach to promoting Disability Equality and Human Rights;**
* **A more positive approach to putting reasonable adjustments in place;**
* **A more differentiated approach to behaviour polices taking account of SEMH differences;**
* **Challenging all forms of bullying and name calling, valuing difference;**
* **A diverse broader curriculum and assessment system based on each student’s progress;**
* **Greater emphasis on creativity including Art, Music, Dance and Drama;**
* **Adequate training on inclusion and specific training on meeting particular needs;**
* **Effective inclusive accountability measures for every learner’s progress;**
* **A programme to remove physical, curricula and information barriers;**
* **Restore maintaince grant for students post-16 and the Disabled Students’ Allowance.**

**Some measures can be implemented now, but for a principled and inclusive National Education Service we need a Labour Government.**

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