

**Patron**

Fiona Millar

**Chair**

David Chaytor MP

**Secretary**

Margaret Tulloch

**Treasurer**

Malcolm Horne,

Gen Sec SEA

## Education and Inspections Bill published for debate

Published on the last day of February, the Bill is due to have its second reading, i.e. the first debate on it, on March 15.

Certainly some Labour MPs will vote against at second reading, how many is uncertain. The Liberal Democrats have said they will vote against and the Tories for. So the Bill is likely to get a second reading. This will start the process of committee stages and reports in both Houses, likely to end in July. The list of demands of the group of MPs who proposed an alternative White Paper has not been met in full so it remains to be seen what position these MPs take.

On admissions the Bill does meet some of the concerns of *Comprehensive Future*:

- Admission authorities will have to act in accordance with a revised Code of Practice.
- Admission Forums will be given stronger powers of scrutiny of local admission arrangements.
- Banding, other than banding which bands only across those applying, will be allowed.
- Interviewing is prohibited.

However, the much vaunted promise of putting no selection on the face of the Bill merely, as expected, repeats the provision of the School Standards and Framework Act. Existing selection on ability and aptitude will continue.

*Comprehensive Future* will be lobbying all MPs for amendments to end all selection and bring in other changes to ensure fair admissions. This Bill gives us the best opportunity we have had for a long time to bring about an end to selection.

### Comprehensive Future and its website relaunched

A parliamentary seminar addressed by three party spokespersons, Jacqui Smith, Edward Davey and Nick Gibb, on March 7 marked our transition to an all party organisation. We need to massively increase our support. We are sure many parents, school staff, governors and councillors share our aims. Please encourage everyone you know of all parties or no political persuasion to join *Comprehensive Future*. Please copy the form on this newsletter. If you would like membership forms for distribution please let us know. Our website [www.comprehensivefuture.org.uk](http://www.comprehensivefuture.org.uk) has a form to download.

Our website has been extensively reworked. It now has many new sections, including our policy in detail, frequently asked questions on admissions and a new briefing paper on selection and social segregation. A forum for your views will be available shortly.

### Can the Education Bill deliver a good local school for every child?

Details are enclosed of a conference on Saturday March 25 at the Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London on the theme *A good local school for every child – Will the Education Bill deliver? Comprehensive Future* is one of 10 education organisations supporting the conference. Speakers include our Chair David Chaytor and our patron Fiona Millar. *Comprehensive Future* is running a workshop on fair admissions. Please come to what promises to be an excellent day. Attendance will be free, but with a voluntary contribution of £10. See the leaflet for details of how to book.

# A history of comprehensive education

A new book *Comprehensive Education: evolution, achievements and new directions* has just been published. Derived from papers delivered to a conference series at the University of Oxford, it provides a history of comprehensive education and addresses key questions:

- What are the effects of selection, overt and covert?
- Do comprehensive systems produce better results than selective systems?
- Does variety, diversity and choice – as it currently operates – enlarge and equalise opportunity or create disparity, and disadvantage those who have no choice? Does choice really exist?
- Why and how has Labour protected secondary modern and grammar schools?
- What is comprehensive education: what does it really mean?

- Are federations and collegiates the way forward?
- Have faith schools a place in the comprehensive system?
- If we're essentially concerned with what students learn isn't it time to rethink the curriculum which sells short the most able and is rejected by the least able?

Contributors are Tim Brighouse, John Dunford, Tony Edwards, Ken Fogelman, David Gillborn, Stephen Gorrard, Mark Hewlett, David Jesson, Harry Judge, Roy Hattersley, Niall McCafferty, David Miliband, Richard Pring, Ian and Sandy Shagen, Sally Tomlinson, Margaret Tulloch, Anne West and Geoff Whitty.

The book costs £20.00, inc postage and packing, and is available from CSCS at Moulton College, Moulton, Northampton NN3 7RR Tel: 01604 492337, fax: 01604 492524, email: [cscs@rmpc](mailto:cscs@rmpc). Cheques payable to CSCS.

## Research reveals covert selection

Professor Anne West of the London School of Economics has done research for the Greater London Authority on the admission arrangements of secondary schools in London.

The 19 grammar schools in London were excluded from the research. Of the rest she found that, overall, about a quarter of secondary schools used at least one potentially selective admissions criterion (e.g. aptitude/ability, child of an employee, child of former pupil, pastoral factors, compassionate factors, interviews/meetings).

This was found to be more prevalent in voluntary aided or foundation schools. It also emerged that some schools were using supplementary admission forms in addition to the forms in the coordinated scheme. Some forms asked for such information as parents' occupations or whether they were living in bed and breakfast accommodation. Selection on aptitude was found to be increasing.

The research can be downloaded from [www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CER/research.htm](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CER/research.htm)

## Tell us how it is in your area

You may live in one of the many areas affected by selection – please send us a short description of how it affects schools, parents and children.

We are collecting personal stories. We have had letters about the 'choice' facing parents with children travelling long distances across local authority boundaries.

Please let us have your local information by email or by writing to the address on the front page.

### Membership Form

Join our campaign by signing below – please include a donation if you can or request a standing order form. Send to: Comprehensive Future, PO Box 44327, London SW20 0WD

*I/We support Comprehensive Future's aim of a comprehensive secondary school system in England with fair admissions criteria to all publicly funded schools, guaranteeing an equal chance to all children and an end to selection by ability and aptitude.*

Signed .....

Name/Organisation .....

Address .....

.....

Phone ..... Email .....

Constituency ..... Local Authority .....

*I/We enclose a donation of £.....*

*Please send me/us a form to make a regular donation by standing order.*