

APPG for Education Inquiry Call for Evidence: Do schools prepare young people for their future careers?

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About Third Space Learning -

Third Space learning provides online maths teaching to thousands of children in primary schools across England.

Third Space was established to help with the challenge of teacher supply, especially in maths, and the social attainment gap in our school system.

Third Space have established academic centres in Asia, recruiting STEM graduates and training them to be online maths teachers, using technology to connect our global tutor base to children in schools across the UK for live, online one-to-one support.

Third Space works with 3600 each week. 51% of Third Space students are from disadvantaged backgrounds, and 89% are at risk of not making the required progress.

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APPG questions -

1. What should our schools be focusing on in order to prepare young people for the future?

The future is uncertain, innovation is quick, and today's children probably don't have a clue what their professional passion is, let alone whether an industry exists for this. As such, trying to provide them with the specific skills seems illogical.

Instead they need the tools to adapt to an uncertain future, to innovate and create. This should focus on growth mind-set (the ability to believe they can learn new things), problem solving and analysis (the essential ingredients for any subject or profession), and the characteristics of determination and persistence (because careers aren't handed to you on a plate).

2. Should schools play a role in developing skills, or should subject knowledge be prioritised?

Subject knowledge should be an outcome of having the right skills.

Schools should teach skills that provide children with the tools to acquire and use subject knowledge. In particular, this should focus on the characteristics to pick up skills (to acquire and use subject knowledge).

3. Who should be responsible for ensuring that young people develop soft, financial and entrepreneurial skills?

The single biggest determinant of a child's academic success is the wealth, or poverty, of their parents. Clearly we cannot expect schools to achieve everything alone. We must recognise that learning, and the resulting achievements, comprise various inputs into a child's life.

It is important that schools take the lead. They must be at the centre of a child's development. But the framework they provide must consider, and involve, the other factors involved. I would say this should be the parents, and the local / regional communities and employers.

There are some good frameworks for involving parents, though I wonder if this might involve educating the parents in the basics of teaching / support, as opposed to informing them of what is happening. They need the tools to help their children effectively.

Companies can be involved in such subjects as computer science, business studies and entrepreneurship. There are some good examples, notably in the STEM subjects, where engineering companies like Siemens provide school support. This should be encouraged as much as possible. Could the government offer tax incentives? Could employers of a certain size be obliged to provide teaching in schools, or on their premises? The companies have a direct incentive to achieve this. We need to provide a framework for how they can do this, whilst ensuring this is provided for all children and not just aimed at certain regions or talents.

4. Do education providers have the resources to prepare young people for the workforce?

No, not on their own they don't. As above, they need support of parents and employers / community.

It should also be noted that for a school, just like a business, resourcing their staff is a very difficult and a long-term task. The government cannot make short-term demands of them that cannot be resourced. A good example is the need to teach languages and computer coding at primary school; where are the teachers going to be found?

5. To help the APPG create a practical set of approaches and recommendations:

- a. **What examples are there of schools and colleges preparing young people well for the workforce?**

I am afraid I don't have good examples. I would suggest looking at schools who have formed relevant partnerships with local institutions and employers. I think this must be the future, providing a more holistic partnership that reflects the reality of a child's transition from school to work place.

b. What examples are there of employer-led initiatives that have had an impact?

As to part A, I think the best examples are partnerships between school and employer.