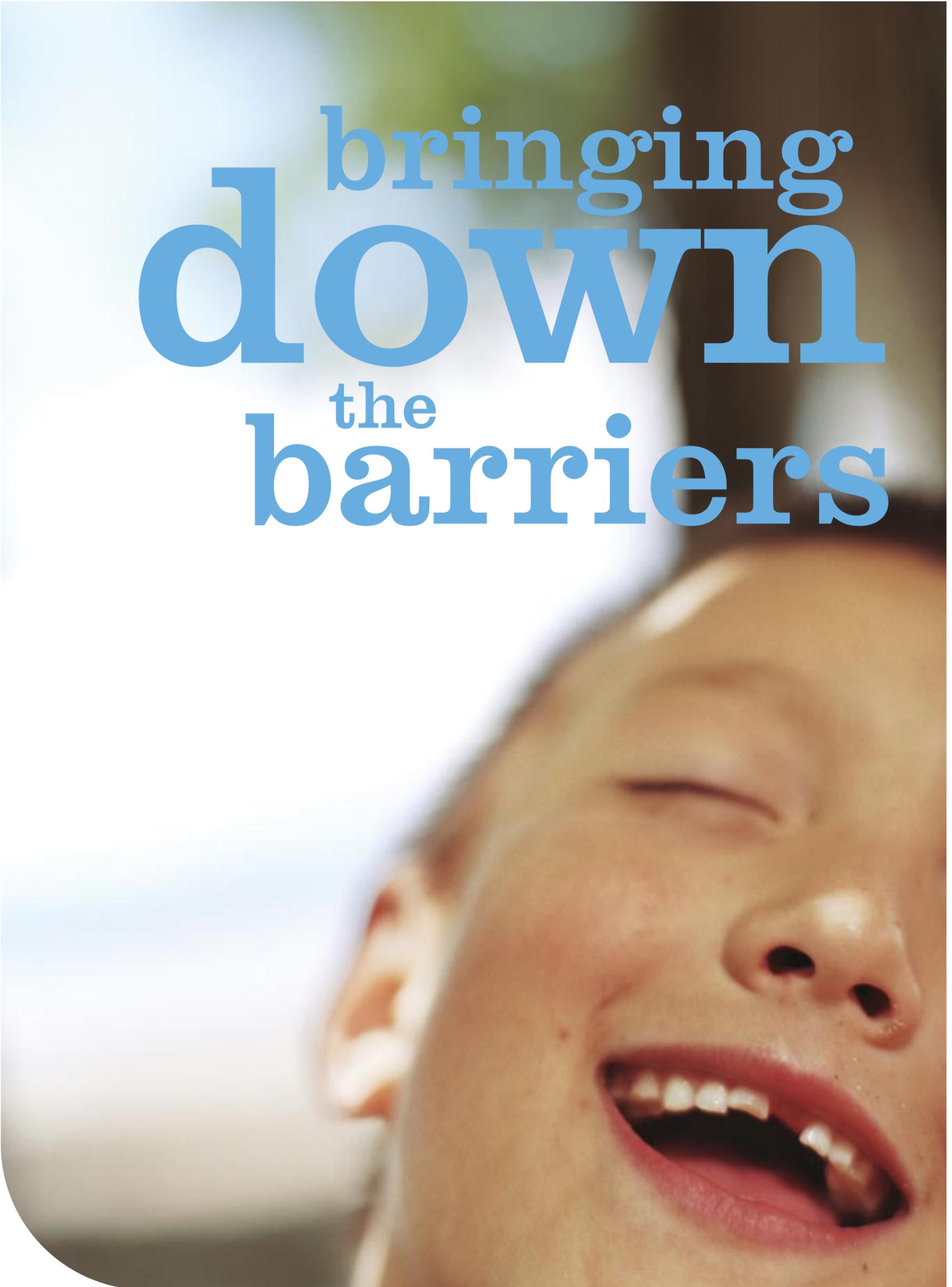




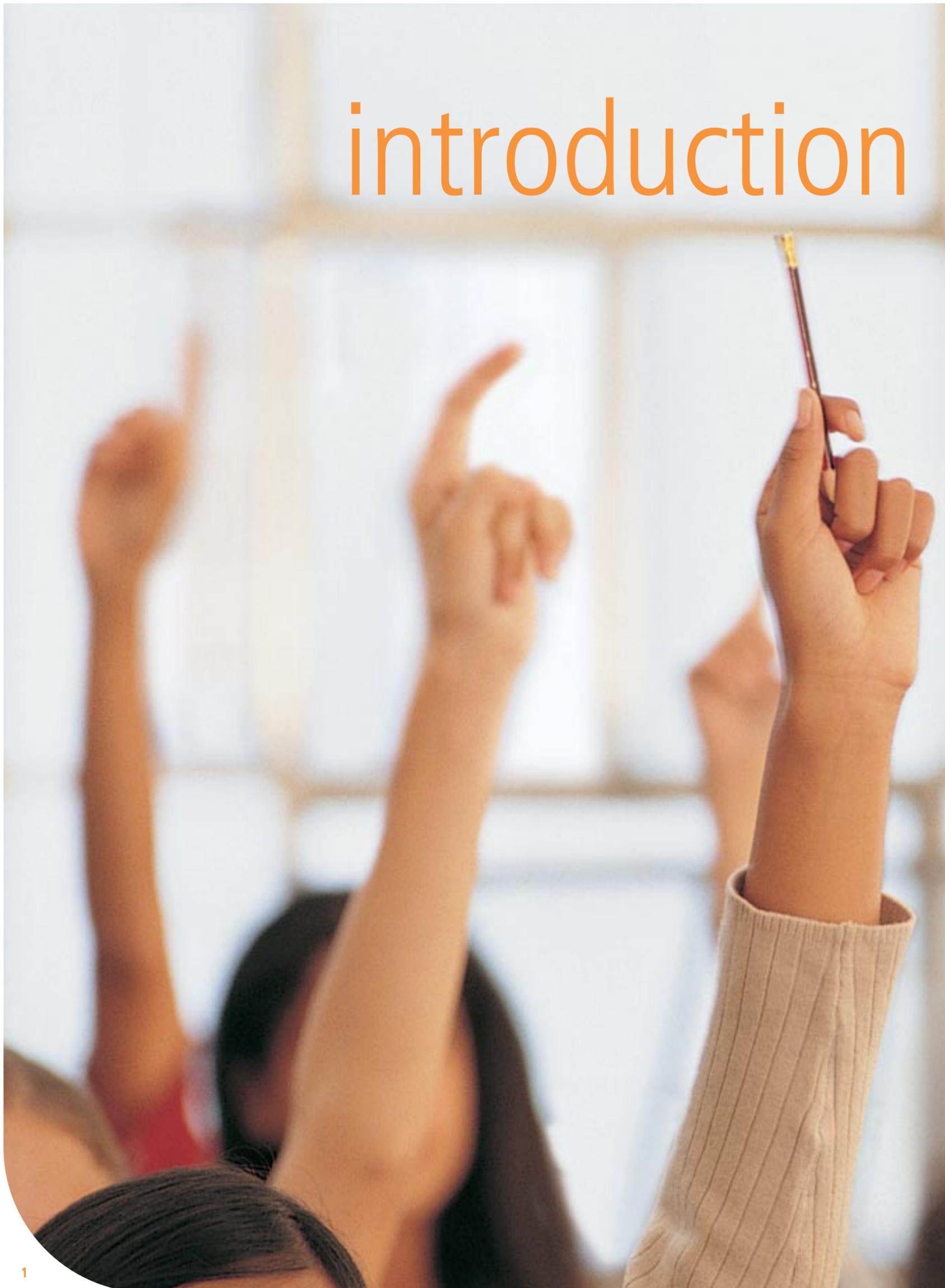
NUT education statement:
meeting the needs of all children and young people

bringing down the barriers



bringing down the barriers
introduction

introduction



Steve Sinnott,

general secretary of the national union of teachers

I am very proud of the NUT's Education Statement 'Bringing down the Barriers'. I believe that its policies and proposals represent a powerful strategy for education in England for at least the next five years, if not longer.

The Statement is rooted in the traditions and history of the National Union of Teachers. The NUT has an enormous wealth of knowledge and experience from which to draw. For over 130 years, the National Union of Teachers has had a unique record in promoting positive progress in education. Our policies have enhanced the lives of children and young people and their teachers.

'Bringing down the Barriers' is based on thorough research and evidence. We believe that, if adopted, its proposals will enhance education for all children and young people.

Indeed, teachers must feel able to contribute to the debate on how education can enhance the lives of children and young people in the global economy.

It is vital we learn from and work with education systems internationally. We can learn from and contribute to their development.

'Bringing down the Barriers' both represents the voice of NUT members and all members of the teaching profession. 'Bringing down the Barriers' is for everyone involved in education and in school communities; for parents and young people and for teachers and all who work in schools. I hope also that our proposals, and the principles on which they are based will resonate with a wide audience and not only with those in the education world.

I would welcome views and contributions on this document. I commend 'Bringing down the Barriers' and look forward to a healthy debate on its proposals.

bringing down the barriers
introduction

1. Education is a fundamental human right. All children and young people have a right to high quality education. Education is central to the personal development and health of young people. It encourages them to think and acquire knowledge. Education enables young people to make sense of and contribute to society. And at the heart of education are teachers. Teachers inspire young people and unlock their potential. Teachers enrich their countries and societies.

2. As a human right education is special. It promotes other rights and responsibilities. Globally and at home education can play a central role in the elimination of poverty. It has the power to help liberate not only individuals but also whole groups of people. These ideas have underpinned the policies and practises of the National Union of Teachers for over 130 years.

3. The NUT has always understood that lifelong education is vital to both society and the economy. Today we recognise that globally, many economies are developing exponentially. China, for example, is developing rapidly into a major manufacturing power. This is both a challenge to and an opportunity for our country. Education must play its part in making the most of this opportunity and rising to the challenges presented.

4. All young people must not only have equality of access to high quality education but they must also be able to learn new skills and disciplines throughout their adult lives. Education is vital to each young person. It is vital to all communities in which they live.

5. This education statement of the National Union of Teachers is based on our experience, knowledge and evidence of both national and international developments. Increasingly, countries understand that their social, cultural and economic health is dependent on the knowledge, learning and skills of their populations. The latest Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report, 'Education at a Glance' reports that all OECD countries have seen a rise in the education levels of their citizens over the past decade and, in some, the increase has been spectacular. The NUT is committed to playing its part in raising still further the educational achievements of our children and young people in the UK, in Europe and across the world.

6. Indeed, the educational barriers between countries are coming down. A recent ground-breaking protocol agreed between the Government and Commonwealth countries seeks to protect the investments made in the training of teachers in developing countries.

7. At a global level, countries draw information and ideas from each other and while governments learn from each other, so too do teacher organisations. Education International and other international organisations provide global forums and networks within which are promoted the fundamental values of equality of opportunity to high quality education. The depth of contact teachers have with each other through their organisations

has never been greater or more vital. 'Globalisation' itself certainly applies to education. The recent talks on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATs) have involved fierce debates about whether education should or should not be included within the global market. The NUT agrees unequivocally with Education International that, in order for all children and young people to fulfil their human right to education, education must be a public service, inspired by the values and ethos of public service and publicly provided.

8. Education in England needs all the different stakeholders to appreciate and live up to their responsibilities. This includes teachers, parents and indeed students. For too long our education service has been undermined by short term thinking. Too often education has been used to make narrow party political points and petty point scoring. Education should reflect the confidence and credibility that flows from a broad participation and a sense of ownership by key stakeholders nationally and locally. In this statement the NUT sets out proposals to draw on the support and contribution of teachers and their organisations, trade unions and employers' organisations, parents and students. Bringing down barriers needs to be the theme of education for our new century.

9. It is the NUT's intention in this statement to set out strategic proposals for the education service in England which it believes will enhance access to high quality education for all children and young people and which will develop the achievements of comprehensive education for the 21st Century.

10. The statement focuses on four key areas:

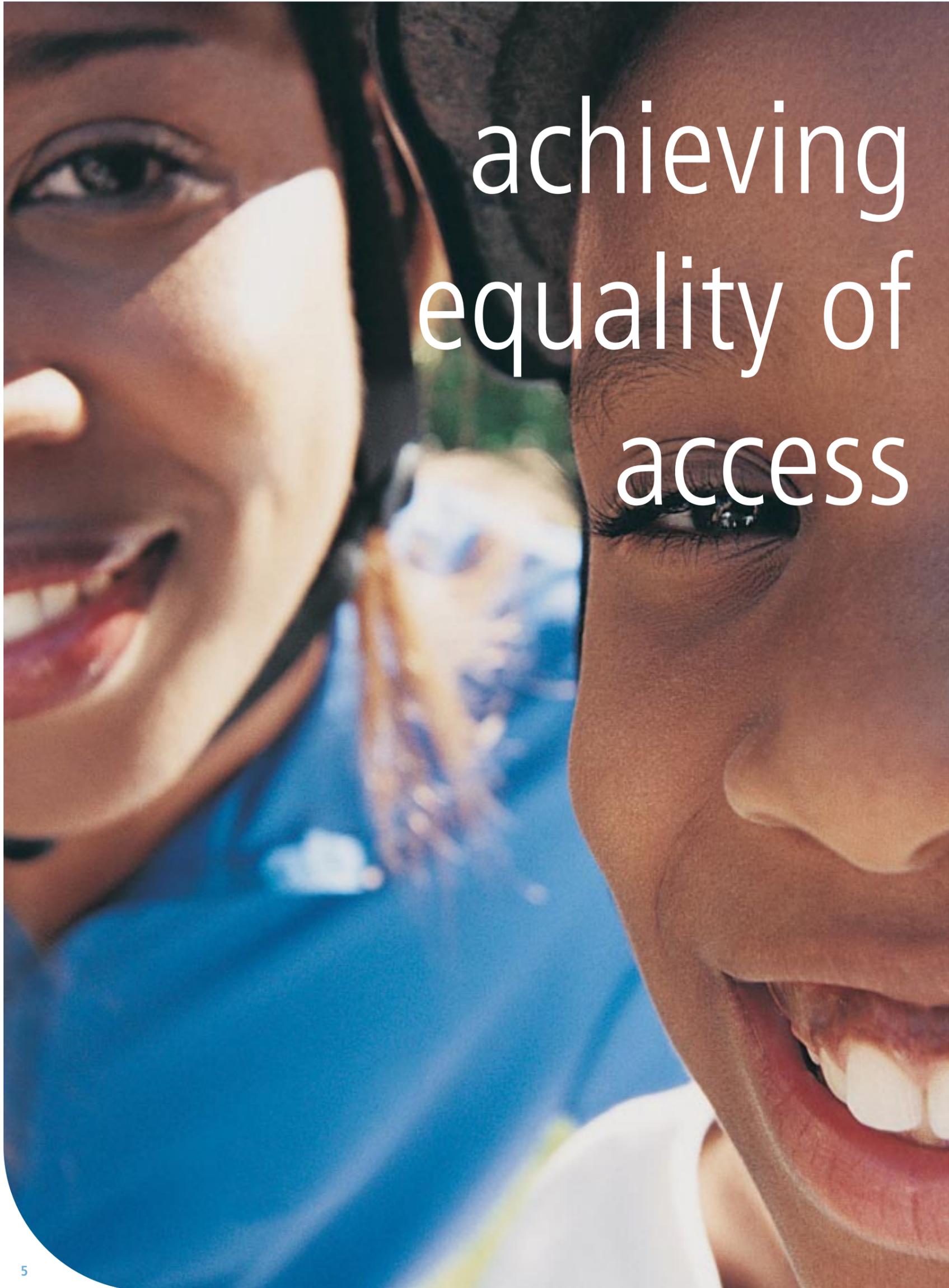
- an education service for all;
- the National Curriculum and its assessment;
- the teaching profession; and
- accountability.

11. The NUT's education statement is a contribution to the debate on how education in England can be carried forward for the next decade, and in this new century. A separate and complementary statement is published for Wales.

education is a
fundamental
right

bringing down the barriers

part one: an education service for all



achieving equality of access

the terms
**comprehensive
education** and
equality of opportunity
are synonymous

12. If an education service is to meet the needs of all children and young people, it must be comprehensive in its approach. Primary and special education are as much examples of the success of a comprehensive approach as secondary education. There is nothing 'standard' about comprehensive education. There is nothing in comprehensive education which holds back high expectations of young people's achievements. Comprehensive education can contribute as much to the talented and gifted child as to the child who is currently struggling to learn.

13. Comprehensive education is about tackling barriers to high quality education. No government committed to raising the living standards of its people and to playing a progressive role internationally can afford to have an education service which is shaped by barriers arising from, for example, the influence of social class and economic and health issues, race, gender, disability or sexuality. No civil society can permit itself to be anything other than vigilant in seeing that its leaders live up to their responsibilities.

14. The terms 'comprehensive education' and 'equality of opportunity' are synonymous. As the OECD's Programme of International Student Assessment (2000) report demonstrates, the best education service is one where there is a single, non-diverse, system of well resourced provision within which the needs of all children and young people are targeted and met.

15. Within such a system, there should be a sustained attack on the root causes of social and economic deprivation. Save the Children has found that close to one in ten children still suffer from severe and persistent poverty, lasting for five years or more. Initiatives, such as 'Sure Start', are both an important recognition of this fact and a real contribution to tackling a persistent and damaging feature of our society. Social class still has a powerful influence on the achievements of young people. To its credit, the Government has recognised this. There needs to be, however, proper joined up thinking, to use a familiar phrase, on how initiatives in communities to tackle social and economic deprivation can link up to education locally.

16. The greatest potential for such joined up thinking lies in the widely welcomed 'Every Child Matters' agenda which recognises and sustains the idea that every school is at the centre of its community. It is an approach which is equally important for urban and rural communities.

17. If schools are essential to their communities, then all parents should be entitled to send their children to good local schools and live up to the responsibilities that go alongside such entitlements. All the evidence points to the fact that this is the wish of the vast majority of parents. Indeed, local schools are enhanced by their communities and communities are enhanced by their local schools.

18. It would be profoundly pessimistic to assume that the idea of good local schools for every community is a less powerful idea than the concept of the right to choose schools. Indeed, the idea of "choice" can exacerbate social division. The right to choose a school can only be used by those who have the capacity to make such choices. Discrimination and economic and social disadvantage make the idea of school choice being equally available to all an illusion. Choice has real meaning when it is available to young people within schools. An entitlement curriculum and high quality teaching empowers young people to choose how and what to learn.

19. The next five years will be characterised by demographic changes that are now making their effects felt through falling school rolls. The education service should learn the lessons from the past when falling rolls affected schools. Proposals later in this statement refer to ways in which the education service could be further improved by using falling rolls to improve class sizes, for example. There needs to be effective and accountable democratic decision-making that responds positively to the effects of demographic change and which reflects the needs of local communities.

bringing down the barriers

part one: an education service for all

schools, communities and local authorities

20. In order to ensure that every child and young person can achieve equality of access to good local schools, there must be a framework of provision which encourages and supports that principle. Local authorities leading their local communities are a key to that concept. Local authorities have the capacity to maintain and provide additional support to schools when it is needed (references to local authorities in the Statement refer to those which include education within their range of services).

21. Whilst schools have always been at the centre of their communities, there is, as yet, no clear picture of how schools over the next decade will provide additional services to children, to their parents and to the wider community. Neither is there, as yet, a clear picture of the future relationship local authorities, as distinct from local education authorities, will have with schools.

22. While Children's Trusts are being established, the relationship between Trusts and schools has yet to be explored. Schools cannot simply create new services themselves. Neither can local authorities simply establish new services in schools. The evidence is that for extended schools and full service schools to be successful, it is schools which have to take the lead in initiating and developing services in co-ordination with local authorities. In short, schools themselves must own the development of services. Otherwise, those services will not be effective.

23. Alongside the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, the Government has proposed that local authorities develop a 'single conversation' with schools. While there are strong arguments for streamlining the quality assurance role of local authorities, the single conversation has yet to factor in the potential for supporting schools in working with each other or defining the services to which schools should be entitled.

24. Local authorities, are not solely commissioners and quality assurers of educational services, nor are they solely co-ordinators of services; they are much more than that. Effective local authorities, as a whole, do not operate from the citadels of county or town halls but are ones where employees, parents and governors are seen as part of those authorities with their organisations working in partnership with them.

25. Indeed there is no evidence that outsourcing of education services to private companies has delivered anything other than, at best, the kind of improvement which other local authorities supporting an authority facing difficulties could have delivered better but at less cost. At worst, outsourcing has undermined improvement by being expensive, bureaucratic and ineffective and has sown confusion about who is accountable to whom.

26. It is local authorities that have the capacity to ensure that services support schools effectively. They also have a continuing role in providing services. The Government's own Special Educational Needs strategy rightly points to the vital need to protect SEN services and behavioural support services, from piecemeal erosion. Support for children from minority ethnic groups through Ethnic Minority Achievement and Traveller grants is vital. Local authorities have a vital role also in planning and securing disability access in schools and colleges. In short, confident and trusted local authorities play an essential role in ensuring all children and young people have equality of access to education.

schools

themselves must own the

development

of services

bringing down the barriers

part one: an education service for all

admissions

27. In order for there to be equality of access to education, there must be in place a fair and equitable pupil admissions process. Common admissions arrangements are the key to achieving this goal. The NUT has supported consistently the concept of local admissions forums. Initiatives such as the cross borough admissions form in London are also a step forward. Local admissions Forums must have teeth. No admissions procedure should be in place which advantages one school at the expense of another.

28. In contrast, Academy status has the capacity to undermine local communities of schools and the effectiveness of local authorities' support. Sponsorship has the capacity also to undermine democratic accountability and curriculum entitlement. Indirectly, Academy status promotes the message that by virtue of status and additional capital investment, Academies are better than other schools, irrespective of the evidence.

29. If all schools were subject to a common admissions procedure there would be no contradiction between schools developing individually and clusters of schools working together. Common to both approaches would be the principle of specialist provision and clusters of schools serving the needs of all pupils in each community.

Common admissions arrangements are the Key

bringing down the barriers

part one: an education service for all

equality

an effective
education service
is one which is able to
respond
to **local needs**

30. An effective education service is one which is able to respond to local needs. It is sustained also by a coherent vision of equality. A focus on institutional choice, however, can have the capacity to exacerbate segregation and strengthen barriers to equality. It is a concern that is recognised by the Home Office, for example, in its 'Strategy on Common Cohesion and Race Equality'. The Strategy says, rightly, that

"greater choice in public services could lead to people exercising their choice in a way which leaves them living separate or parallel lives where they do not interact with people from different backgrounds."

31. While girls' examination successes are publicised and concerns expressed about boys falling behind in a number of subject areas, behind that debate there is a generation of young women and men who have fallen through the education net completely and are considered lucky if they end up in low paid jobs. There is also a clear link between gender and child poverty in the UK. For women and for men economic

inactivity is a major route into poverty but women face additional poverty risks as a result of their lower earning power, caring responsibilities and changing family structures. Government has a vital and continuing role, therefore, in mainstreaming equality of opportunity.

bringing down the barriers

part one: an education service for all

the funding of education

32. There has been a welcome increase in investment in education since 1997. Additional investment has made a material difference in schools, both in terms of school revenue budgets and improvements in school buildings. Nevertheless, analysis shows that the trajectory of increase may have flattened, with the Government objective of achieving spending of 5.6 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) on education being moved from its original target date of 2006 to 2007/08. Analysis shows further that the United Kingdom Government has yet to achieve the objective of spending 5.9 per cent of the GDP on education which is the OECD average.

33. In addition, while the mechanism for funding education in England at local authority level has, to a certain extent, been clarified, the fundamental question about how to quantify and meet the basic and additional needs of schools has still yet to be resolved. Equality of access to education cannot be subject to short-term changes in funding. While the Government's three-year spending reviews have eased abrupt changes in public spending levels, more sustained mechanisms for supporting education spending are needed.

basic
and
additional needs
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bringing down the barriers

part one: an education service for all

proposals

part one: an education service for all

- (a) > Schools' forums for advising local authorities on funding schools are a growing success. Local authorities should establish local education advisory forums, to advise local authorities on the development of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, including the development of extended and full service schools. Education advisory forums would be responsible also for providing advice on the development of a single conversation with schools and its relationship with the quality assurance of other local authority services.
- (b) > If local authorities are to co-ordinate and ensure the effective provision of a range of services for schools, then education forums should have the status to be effective. Their membership should include representatives of parent, teacher and governor organisations and could be chaired by lead members of children's services. It is essential, in this context that local authorities retain second-tier officers for education and social services in order that schools can be confident that when initiatives are proposed and agreed, they can be implemented successfully.
- (c) > Initiatives for the development of extended and full service schools should come from schools themselves. Audits should be conducted of additional services needed at school-level by schools in conjunction with local authorities. With financial and logistical support from local authorities, schools would make proposals for developments. With funding support from Government, local authorities would be required to cost developments and guarantee funding, including capital funding.
- (d) > The capacity of schools to select pupils on the grounds of academic ability or aptitude should be abolished. Local admissions forums should determine school admissions policies. The code of practice on admissions should be revised to take into account the need to abolish selection and its criteria should be strengthened to prevent state funded schools, including Academies, adopting separate admission policies. Local admissions forums, with the agreement of local authorities, should be able to combine, where necessary, to determine common admission procedures across local authority areas.
- (e) > It should be the role of school organisation committees to plan, with capital funding provided by Government, the establishment of new schools. Proposals for the establishment of new schools should come from local communities, including parents. Schools organisation committees would be required to consider proposals, both from local authorities and from local communities. Local authorities should be able to combine to determine where new schools should be built.
- (f) > Specific funding to support collaborative arrangements between schools should be available to schools from Government and local authorities. It should be a requirement that specialist facilities developed by individual schools should be available to schools in the wider community.
- (g) > Where schools are in difficulty, local authorities should be given the powers and financial capacity to provide long-term support within those schools. This proposal is developed further under the section on 'Accountability'.
- (h) > The relationship between Government policy developments and their cost needs to be clarified. The Government should audit the cost of its statutory requirements and policy commitments for the education service. Each policy introduction should be accompanied by an evaluation of its cost. Such a cost evaluation should cover the real term costs of introducing other services at school level, including capital costs.
- (i) > The Government should set up a funding review group to establish a funding mechanism for schools and LEA services that is based on activity-led funding costing the requirements placed on schools. It should draw on previous work conducted by the Government's Education Funding Strategy Group. The funding review group should establish a single mechanism for schools replacing the two current funding streams for secondary schools with sixth forms. Membership of the Funding Review Group should be drawn from local and central Government and from all teacher and support staff unions.
- (j) > A separate funding review group should examine the role and capacity of local authorities to sustain across all services the needs of socially and economically disadvantaged communities. At a stage when initial work is completed both groups would combine to agree coherent and joint findings for Government. Prior to the establishment of both groups, the Government would commit itself to carrying through both approaches.
- (k) > The United Kingdom Government should set an objective, as a minimum, the achievement of the OECD average of 5.9 per cent of the GDP to be spent on education.
- (l) > A halt should be called to the role of the private sector in providing essential education services at national and local level. In its place the Government should develop policies which encourage local authorities to combine to provide support for other local authorities whose services are in difficulty.

schools
would make
proposals
for developments

no child or young person should be...

- (m) > All local authorities should be required to retain or ensure schools have access to a range of core services and provision. These are set out below.
 - Core services for minority ethnic achievement should be maintained by local authorities. The role of those services should be to provide support to schools and to pupils where necessary and to provide also professional development for teachers.
- Each local authority should be required to establish or be able to provide in collaboration with other local authorities a full range of special education provision, including Educational Psychology services. The range of services should include support services for children with specific special educational needs and a range of special schools. Each local authority's policy on inclusion should involve maintaining a wide range of provision including linked mainstream and special schools. Local authorities should continue to be required to develop access to all schools in order to secure complete disability access.
- Each local authority should be required to provide behaviour support for schools. No school should be required to continue to accept on roll pupils with continuing unacceptable pupil behaviour. No child or young person should be written off. It should be a requirement on all local authorities to maintain or have access to a range of provision, including behaviour support services and schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. All local authorities should maintain or have access to Pupil Referral Units and Hospital and Home Services. Such services are vital in supporting children and young people who are not taught in mainstream schools and are vital also in meeting the needs of vulnerable children. The right to education of all children needs to be protected.
- In the context of new local authority responsibilities for vulnerable children, each local authority should appoint lead professionals whose role would be to provide advice to schools and to take action where necessary when a vulnerable child has been identified. The Children's Services Grant should be sufficient to fund the appointment of lead professionals. With schools and teacher organisations, local authorities should continue to develop practical policies on pupil behaviour, including on bullying and homophobic bullying.

(n) > At national level, the Government should commit itself to carrying out comprehensive race equality impact assessments of their policy proposals and make them available for public scrutiny. The Government should implement the recommendation of the Home Office's Community Cohesion Panel that the composition of school populations should be monitored and that the DfES should establish strategies which encourage mixed intake schools.

(o) > The Government should maintain and upgrade, in line with inflation and need, specific Ethnic Minority Achievement and Traveller Grants. A national grant should be established for local authorities to draw on when their schools experience significant increases in the number of children of refugees and asylum seekers.

(p) > The Government should develop a funded strategy for creating an entitlement for high quality and affordable childcare for all working parents.

(q) > Legislation now requires school buildings to be accessible. The Schools Access Initiative, triggered by the NUT and Scope, was successful, but dedicated grant funding is now no longer in place. Over one half of schools are not yet fully accessible, however. The Government should relaunch the Schools Access Initiative as part of a sustained programme to ensure that all schools are fully accessible.

...written off

bringing down the barriers

part two: the national curriculum and its assessment



"In respect of people's lives, the pace of change is unprecedented. Changes and attitudes to the environment and upheavals in international politics, are occurring alongside economic and technological developments which have begun to transform the nature of work and organisation.

We need, therefore, a curriculum which, within a decade at most, redefines achievement away from its current narrow academic connotations, which encourages achievement for all and which promotes creativity, collaboration and a sense of adventure".

34. These words come from the introduction to the NUT's publication, "A Strategy for the Curriculum". They remain as fresh and as relevant today as they were when they were published in 1990. Since then, the National Curriculum in England has been subject to a number of reviews leading to new statutory orders. There is now a fundamental debate about the role of creativity in the primary curriculum. Downward pressure from the Tomlinson 14-19 Review will lead to a review of Key Stage 3.

35. Alongside these changes, the Primary and Secondary strategies have been introduced by the Government in England to provide the training and professional development needed to complement the statutory subject orders. As the strategies have developed, they have had inevitably an impact on practical curriculum content and indeed on the wider area of classroom organisation. In addition, Education Ministers have recently promoted the concept of 'personalised learning'.

curriculum and assessment pre-14

part two: the national curriculum and its assessment

36. For many teachers, a number of Government initiatives have had a positive impact on professional lives. In primary schools, standards in the core subjects have never been higher. And, as examination results demonstrate, secondary education has never been more successful for more young people than it is now. Despite its content overload, the concept of a National Curriculum is seen as having had a positive impact.

37. Set against this background, the National Curriculum and its assessment arrangements still exert a range of negative pressures on teachers and young people.

38. In primary schools, children's access to a broad and balanced curriculum is still limited. The introduction of the Government's Creative Partnerships scheme which provides support to schools in being involved in a wide range of cultural activities, is a positive step but there remains too little curriculum time available for creative subjects. National Curriculum and assessment pressures limit the time available to teachers to be able to respond to pupils' own interests.

39. The current National Curriculum assessment arrangements still need fundamental reform. The Key Stage 1 pilot was welcomed by teachers and its

roll-out in England is welcome.

The logical next step for Government would be to introduce such a pilot for Key Stage 2 assessment. National Curriculum testing and associated targets at Key Stage 2 distort the curriculum and any maintenance of such requirements in future would continue to do so.

40. While the Foundation Stage Curriculum is supported by teachers, the Foundation Stage Profile remains controversial because of its impact on workload and because its positioning and purpose in the Foundation Stage is questionable.

41. In secondary schools, there is strong evidence that teachers experience a lack of time for reflection and lack also professional space for talking with and learning from colleagues. Allied to this issue, is the constant pressure of unacceptable behaviour from a minority of pupils. Many young people in years 7 and 8 themselves believe that the curriculum does not encourage variety, enjoyment and engagement. As Cambridge University has detected, there is "an intrinsic relationship between pupil behaviour, high class sizes, inappropriate curriculum, pressure to meet targets and keeping up with initiatives."

42. There are other pressures on teaching and learning, arising from the current

National Curriculum and its assessment. Despite the inclusion statements in the National Curriculum, equality is still not at its heart. The National Curriculum does not facilitate easily the preparation of pupils for adult life in a diverse society and in a global context. Neither does it encourage the meeting of specific needs such as those of minority ethnic pupils and those from socially and economically deprived backgrounds.

43. The introduction of Citizenship has had a positive impact in many schools, but the lack of curriculum space and flexibility means that it is still not integral to an already overloaded curriculum. The curriculum must provide schools with the confidence to tackle discrimination, including racism, sexism and homophobic bullying. International evidence shows that equal opportunities policies raise standards, but they cannot work as effectively as they might if the curriculum acts as a restraint not an encouragement.

National Curriculum
and assessment pressures **limit**
the amount of time
available to teachers
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pupils'
own interests

bringing down the barriers

part two: the national curriculum and its assessment

the post-14 curriculum

the road to equality

44. The piecemeal reduction in the number of statutory subject orders post-14 has not achieved the aim of all young people being offered a broad and balanced curriculum and of tackling effectively the vocational and occupational skills deficit. The plight of modern foreign languages and technology post-14 is an example of the urgency with which the 14-19 curriculum has to be tackled.

45. The NUT supports the principles of the diploma and its structure set out in the Tomlinson 14-19 Review. In its policy document, 'The Road to Equality', published in 1996, the NUT set out a framework broadly similar to that proposed by Tomlinson. There are still major issues to be resolved, however, including the breadth and depth of curriculum entitlement for all young people.

bringing down the barriers

part two: the national curriculum and its assessment

personalised learning

46. Personalised learning has a long history based in part on child centred learning and the need to differentiate teaching according to need. Meeting the individual needs of each child and young person is an aspiration which all those involved in education can sign up to. The NUT believes that two conditions need to be established for personalised learning to succeed. A fundamental review of the National Curriculum and its assessment arrangements is essential to meeting the aspirations of personalised learning. Young people need to be able to experience and teachers need to be able to provide much more one-to-one teaching.

meeting
the
individual
needs^{of}
each
child

bringing down the barriers

part two: the national curriculum and its assessment

proposals

part two: the national curriculum and its assessment

47. The proposals that the NUT sets out in this section are predicated on the view that there has to be an end to imposed curriculum and assessment change and that change must be supported by teachers and school communities.

- (a) > Currently, the National Curriculum is overloaded. The prescribed detail of the National Curriculum does not encourage depth of learning. By its very prescription the National Curriculum restricts access to new areas of knowledge and the capacity to construct imaginatively areas of teaching and learning which cross traditional subject barriers. It fails also to encourage an entitlement to educational experiences outside school including the benefit of residential experiences. The National Curriculum must provide a framework for describing in broad terms young people's entitlement to learning.
- (b) > There should be an independent review of the 5-14 curriculum which should focus on restructuring the National Curriculum as a statutory framework. The present distinction between the core and foundation subjects would be replaced by a framework curriculum which would describe a common curriculum entitlement, the purpose which would be to support young people's learning. A framework curriculum would also provide a scaffolding for the development of teachers' creativity and enthusiasm for their own learning. Integral to the review must be an examination of how a new framework can encourage the tackling of discrimination and the promotion of equality.
- (c) > The framework would describe a range of statutory entitlements including literacy, numeracy, science and technology, the creative arts, the humanities including a knowledge of global developments, information and communication technology and modern foreign languages.
- (d) > A statutory framework would encourage new approaches to cross-curricula learning, such as thinking skills, environmental learning, the impact of religious and secular beliefs on society, learning about industry and manufacturing, citizenship and personal and social education, including healthy living and the importance of exercise.
- (e) > Integral to the new framework would be specific references to the needs of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. The needs of children from socially and economically deprived backgrounds alongside those with special educational needs and disabilities would be integral to the new framework. The new framework curriculum would encourage teachers to adapt the curriculum to meet the specific needs of pupils without teachers having to demonstrate artificially that they had covered the content of the National Curriculum. Much of the content of the current statutory curriculum would be re-designated as having an advisory status.
- (f) > The NUT welcomes the Government's commitment to review the Key Stage 3 curriculum. The basis for such a review should be the learning needs of young people as they transfer from the primary to the secondary phase and their needs in their first years in secondary school.
- (g) > The organisation of secondary schools at Key Stage 3 is determined largely by the current subject requirements. The removal of the statutory requirement covering much of the current curriculum content at Key Stage 3 will necessarily be part of the overall review of the content overload in the 5-14 National Curriculum.
- (h) > The current structure of Key Stages 2 and 3 does not encourage curriculum continuity between primary and secondary schools; neither is there a recognition in the two Key Stages of the different ways primary and secondary schools are organised. There is a strong argument for a curriculum which supports flexibility in the organisation of teaching such that primary schools are able to introduce specialist teaching alongside class teaching and secondary schools can provide specific support for pupils in years 7 and 8 who are not ready for a full curriculum range. It is essential that a new framework curriculum supports the development of links between primary and secondary schools.
- (i) > Personalised learning has been described in many different ways. In essence, all descriptions focus on meeting the needs of individual learners. The NUT would propose that as part of the development of personalised learning the Government should fund and pilot, in a group of primary and secondary schools, personal tuition arrangements for pupils which would involve enhancing the number of teaching staff in those schools.
- (j) > The concept of a guaranteed entitlement for all pupils should be included within the pilot. Personal entitlements would include, for example, a range of experiences including involvement in a minimum number of outdoor activities and visits to museums and galleries.
- (k) > The Government in England should recognise the major developments which have taken place in reforming assessment in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The review of assessment in Wales, conducted by Professor Richard Daugherty and his team, is a model from which the DfES should learn. An independent review of testing and assessment of children should be commissioned by the Government. Such a review should encourage and support assessment for learning and should examine the role of summative assessment. It should cover the current foundation stage profile and testing and assessment in the 5-14 age range.
- (l) > The NUT will respond in full to the White Paper promised by the Government on the Tomlinson Report on 14-19 education. That response will draw on the principles the NUT set out in 'The Road to Equality'. It is vital that the issue of how to achieve curriculum entitlement for all young people post-14 is at the heart of the White Paper.
- (m) > The six principles which the NUT set out as a precondition for 14-19 reform and which have been largely adopted by Tomlinson must be adopted by the Government in its forthcoming White Paper. A thorough audit of the cost implications of future arrangements must be conducted by the Government and successive governments. The costs of the White Paper's proposals must be met in full by additional resources.
- (n) > There are a range of organisations alongside schools which will have a direct responsibility for the outcomes of Tomlinson such as the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). As a result of the ten-year lead time, no single government can have responsibility for implementing the post-Tomlinson arrangements. It is essential, therefore, that 14-19 reform should have continuity over time. The NUT would propose, therefore, the establishment of an implementation body which covers the full term of the post-Tomlinson arrangements. A broad range of representation from teacher organisations, the TUC, LSCs, Universities and industry to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and Government would be included on its membership. Its job would be to provide a forum and sounding board for any potential problems arising from the practical implementation of change. Its existence would assist in establishing a social consensus for progressive change.

currently
the
national curriculum
is overloaded

bringing down the barriers

part three: the teaching profession



48. The NUT has argued consistently for the establishment of an all graduate teaching profession. Integral to high quality education is a teaching profession with a capacity to respond to the needs of local communities, yet which at the same time has a national identity and voice. Now more than ever teaching is linked nationally through developments in information and communications technology and access to a common bank of knowledge about learning.

49. In order to maintain the high standards expected by parents and young people, continuing professional development has to be part of each teacher's contractual entitlement. The National Curriculum can only provide a framework for the practical realities of teaching and learning. Teachers' professionalism is defined by their knowledge, skills, experience, training and professional development.

50. It is through an entitlement to continuing professional development, which is integral to a teacher's work, and not additional to teachers' workloads, that teachers' enthusiasm and commitment to teaching can be enhanced. Such an approach will reduce also the still unacceptably high rate of teacher turnover and loss to the profession.

51. The NUT is committed fundamentally to establishing for teachers an entitlement to CPD. The evidence from the NUT's CPD programme and Union Learning Fund (ULF) ICT training programme is that CPD, valued and owned by teachers, enhances professional confidence, morale and learning. If appraisal is to mean anything it has to deliver CPD as a professional entitlement, not as an imposition.

52. There are many layers to CPD, some of which will be the product of Government legislation such as the new Children Act. The school as an institution will have professional development priorities. And, fundamentally, professional development identified, chosen and owned by teachers themselves is the key to high morale, motivation and confidence among teachers.

53. The Government's CPD strategy, launched in 2001, was a limited success, but a success nonetheless. The Best Practice Research Scholarships, Early Professional Development Pilot, teacher bursaries and sabbaticals, represented a genuine opportunity for many teachers to continue their learning and research in depth.

54. The 2001 Strategy represented, at long last, a hint of the original 1971 James Report's intention that, throughout their careers, teachers should have the time, space and funding to reflect, research and develop their practice. There is strong evidence, for example, that teachers who take a year's professional development overseas, for example, through Voluntary Service Overseas, return with refreshed motivation and new ideas. In turn, overseas trained teachers have specific needs. The NUT believes that James' original vision and commitment can still be learnt from and should still be a cornerstone of CPD policy.

55. Yet many teachers do not have sufficient time to carry out sustained CPD. There is still an unacceptable variation between teachers and between schools in the time and resources available for CPD. Only an equitable and dedicated funding entitlement for each teacher can remove this wide variation.

the
national curriculum
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teaching

bringing down the barriers

part three: the teaching profession

proposals

part three: the teaching profession

- (a) > Each teacher should receive a material entitlement to continuing professional development. This entitlement should be made available in two forms; through guaranteed time available during the timetabled teaching day and through securing an individual funding entitlement for all teachers and head teachers. Both entitlements will need to be quantified. In making its own proposals to the School Teachers' Review Body the NUT has called on it to review the impact of continuing professional development arrangements in Scotland including the Chartered Teachers' scheme.
- (b) > The Government in England should relaunch national strategies for continuing professional development for teachers. All teacher organisations in England, alongside the General Teaching Council (England), should be asked to establish a set of proposals, the purpose of which would be to secure guaranteed and continuous professional development for teachers. The strategies would take into account the need to encourage teachers to conduct their own research on what works in teaching.
- (c) > The role of Higher Education would need to be evaluated in terms of providing mentoring for those teachers who undertake research. Specific financial incentives should be given to Teacher Training partnerships and School Centred Initial Teacher Training Consortia in order to develop teams of trained research mentors whose responsibility would be to provide skilled and practical guidance to teacher researchers.
- (d) > Teachers need consistent updating on developments in their disciplines and subject areas including professional development in the use of Information and Communications Technology. Any future strategy must focus on developing peer coaching and the ability of teachers with specific skills to train others. Guaranteed time during the school day should be introduced in order to enable teachers to share their practice with teachers in other schools.
- (e) > The experience of the NUT's CPD programme is that teachers respect their Union's capacity to deliver high quality CPD; an experience replicated in the United States where both the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association are given school board and state wide funding to deliver full and ongoing programmes for teachers.
- (f) > The NUT has warmly welcomed the Government's Union Learning Fund and welcomes also its commitment to expanding the ULF network. Expansion of the ULF should provide not just the delivery of adult basic skills such as basic ICT literacy but professional development programmes including leading edge developments in teaching. Local authorities should be encouraged by the Government to establish CPD advisory committees including teacher organisations, Union Learning Representatives and schools to co-ordinate and publicise the supply of professional development.
- (g) > The funding model for delivering an entitlement for CPD must focus on ensuring that each school receives a dedicated sum sufficient to meet the needs of all its teachers. Each school should receive annually a minimum funding entitlement for each teacher of £1,000, at current prices, for personal professional development. In addition, each teacher should be entitled to a one term sabbatical once every seven years of teaching to conduct his or her own research into effective classroom practice.
- (h) > In the context of the agreement reached recently by Commonwealth countries on a teacher recruitment protocol, Governments should make available through Voluntary Service Overseas and the British Council a range of opportunities for experienced teachers to work in developing countries for a year. The scholarship programme would include the allocation of scholarships for professional development overseas with the number of such scholarships determined by the number of schools in each local authority area. The criteria for the award of these scholarships would be based on the potential for CPD links to be developed between schools in England and schools in developing countries.
56. High standards in Initial Teaching Training and high quality continuing professional development for teachers as an entitlement, alongside a framework curriculum and assessment which supports learning and creativity, would provide the bedrock for the future success of the education services in England.
57. The NUT believes that the proposals in this statement will enhance teaching and learning. Certainly, the evidence from OFSTED to the OECD demonstrates that a trusted teaching profession receiving high quality training and continuing professional development contributes to high levels of achievement for all children and young people.

each
teacher
 should be entitled to a
 1 term
sabbatical

teaching numbers and class size

58. The full effects of high quality teaching can only be achieved if there are sufficient teachers in each school and if class and group sizes are small enough for teachers and teaching assistants to 'personalise learning'. The NUT has been at the forefront of seeking to reduce the stress caused by imposed and excessive workload. At the NUT's initiative, delegates at the Trade Union Congress agreed unanimously to evaluate workforce reform. In the context of that evaluation, it is clear that a number of strategies should be adopted by the Government.

personalise learning

bringing down the barriers

part three: the teaching profession

proposals

- (a) > Government regulations have defined the role of support staff in carrying out specified work. There is a vital need to define the core characteristics of practising qualified teachers. Such a definition should be based on the principle that teaching is a highly skilled responsibility extending across a broad range of professional skills. The creation of such a definition would provide a benchmark for head teachers and governing bodies in taking decisions about the teacher and support staff structures in schools. The Government should seek, therefore, parliamentary approval for regulations identifying the work of qualified teachers alongside separate regulations identifying the work of support staff.
- (b) > Each school and pupil referral unit should be required to employ a minimum number of teachers. The basic number of teachers for each institution should be defined by maximum class and group size limits, appropriate distinctions between the work of teachers and support staff, a statutory curriculum framework which requires a balanced and broadly-based curriculum, and the personal and social needs of children and young people. A separate section in this document makes proposals for the adoption of activity led funding which would help define the staffing needs of schools.
- (c) > The next Government should publish legislation which sets maximum class sizes for the 3-19 age range and which sets out also further reductions for class sizes at Key Stage 1.
- (d) > Falling pupil rolls should represent an opportunity, not a threat. They represent an opportunity to:
- reduce class sizes and improve the conditions of service of teachers and support staff;
 - improve the ability of teachers to meet the individual learning needs of children and young people;
 - expand curriculum opportunities and provide time for professional development and liaison between staff;
 - establish productive links with parents, with other schools and with local communities;
 - liaise with other services at school and local authority level on how to meet the needs of vulnerable children;
 - establish productive links between schools and local employers.
- (e) > In recognising such opportunities, the government in England should establish a target annually for the total number of teachers and support staff who should be in employment. Such a target should be informed by the opportunities set out above and the target totals costed in the annual Local Government Finance Settlement.
- (f) > The latest publicly available figures show that almost half of all teachers were aged 45 or over in 2002. The Government needs, therefore, to initiate a major and thorough investigation into the future supply of teachers for the next 10-15 years.

teaching is a highly skilled responsibility

bringing down the barriers

part four: accountability and schools



part four: accountability and schools

59. Accountability for the effective functioning of the education service is a legitimate requirement of both local communities and government. Parents have the right to expect fair and accurate systems of accountability. The accountability system in England is permeated, however, by a lack of trust. Teacher initiative and creativity is undermined by uncertainties created by multiple and often conflicting lines of accountability. National Curriculum and assessment results are geared uniquely to school performance tables. Evaluation and assessment are geared to high stakes consequences for those schools which are perceived to be failing.

60. As 'A Strategy for the Curriculum' said;

"parents and others ought to be informed about the success of the school their child attends but the publication of raw test results serves political not educational purposes, and is unlikely to affect achievement. In its place there needs to be discussions at national level centred on what an effective school is and how its effectiveness can be evaluated. This process should lead to parents and others receiving a much more accurate picture of schools than published test results can provide."

The NUT believes that those discussions still need to take place and that its own work on schools self-evaluation would make an essential contribution.

61. Although OFSTED has moved some way from punitive approaches to inspection, the consequences of schools being placed in 'special measures' can be severe. Despite reforms to OFSTED, including attempts to reduce pre-OFSTED demands, the root causes of pre-OFSTED anxiety and post-OFSTED slump among teachers have yet to be removed. The judgement that a school is 'failing', triggered often by a low position on test and examination performance tables can lead to career blight for teachers, excessive workload and, for teachers in schools in special measures, movement to another school or change of career.

62. The arguments against school performance tables and national targets of test and examination results are well rehearsed. They certainly widen the gap between those schools which receive the value-added advantage of parental support for their pupils' learning and those schools in economically and socially deprived areas. Tables and targets can also contribute to distorting the curriculum in schools and often expose individual schools to unfair public exposure and ridicule.

63. The issue of the evaluation of schools is more complex. The NUT has led the way in seeking to secure school evaluation which supports, not punishes, schools. School self-evaluation is now at the heart of the Government's proposals for a "New Relationship with Schools". School self-evaluation is also at the centre of OFSTED's new proposed arrangements for school inspections.

64. The response of teachers to OFSTED's proposals has been mixed. They believe that the latest reform in the inspection arrangements are moving in the right direction. They support shorter, sharper focused inspections, although they are opposed to a narrow focus by inspections on the core subjects. Teachers are split on whether to support 'no-notice' inspections. Teachers support the idea of schools having 'critical friends'. Self-evaluation is supported by teachers if it supports their own teaching and is not established to serve OFSTED's needs.

65. The future of school evaluation is on a cusp therefore. The prime purpose of OFSTED's reforms, that is to gain acceptance for school inspection by school communities, has a long way to go, although reforms have ameliorated some of the original harder edges of inspection. As teachers support teacher assessment, so they support self-evaluation. But if imposed, both approaches could bite the profession which supports them. It is quite possible to turn both school self-evaluation and teacher assessment into imposed and rigid regulatory regimes internal to schools. School self-evaluation has the capacity to turn into school self-inspection, with the head teacher playing the role of internal inspector. These potential developments must not occur.

66. Teachers' judgements need to be at the centre of assessment and evaluation. The evidence from countries which have adopted 'bottom up' self-evaluation is that such approaches have contributed to high levels of achievement for the vast majority of young people. Where teachers' 'own' assessment and evaluation, standards go up, not down.

67. The NUT's proposals for a new approach to accountability are based on evidence. They recognise that the Government itself has started to shift its position on the interface between public accountability and the needs of schools. The purpose of these proposals is to accelerate reforms which will benefit schools and support teaching and learning.

bringing down the barriers

part four: accountability and schools

proposals

part four: accountability and schools

- (a) > There are no school performance tables or national targets linked to test results in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland. School performance tables and national targets have the capacity to damage the record of Government on education as well as schools. The next Government should abolish both tables and targets.
 - (b) > The data available from summative assessment and examination results should feed into school evaluation reports as they do in current inspection reports. To meet the country's need for a summative picture of the effectiveness of the education service it should re-establish the Assessment of Performance Unit. The Unit would be able to summarise data and ask questions through studies based on sampling. Such a unit would operate independently with an advisory board involving teacher and support staff unions, the TUC, the CBI, Government and relevant agencies. It would respond to requests for national evidence on standards within schools and colleges.
 - (c) > The terms, 'special measures' and 'significant weaknesses' or 'notice of improvement' should be replaced by the terms "schools in need of additional support". Such support may involve external support. If external evaluation identifies problems in a school then the local authority should be required to provide support including advisers and seconded teachers based in the school. There should be no "one-size-fits-all" deadline for improvement.
 - (d) > An independent Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) should be re-established which replaces OFSTED and would be responsible for evaluating schools. The HMI would be independent of Government, not as a non-ministerial Government Department, but as a stand-alone independent, publicly funded body. The HMI Annual Report would be presented to Parliament, via the Education Select Committee, on an annual basis.
 - (e) > External school evaluation should be conducted by HMI possibly accompanied by a small number of trained advisers who would advise HMIs drawn from teachers, advisers, parents and school communities.
 - (f) > Each school should be able to appoint a critical friend whose job it would be to provide advice to the head teacher and staff and seek to secure additional support where necessary. Appointments would be made solely by the school. Critical friend posts would be funded by local authorities through specific grants allocated by Government.
 - (g) > HMI would evaluate the procedures put in place by schools to assess their strengths and weaknesses and their plans for improvement. The HMI would examine the processes and procedures schools have in place for gathering information on levels of pupil achievement, on the personal and social development of pupils and on the views of the school community. The HMI evaluation schedule would be flexible enough to respond to school evaluation models which have been developed or adapted by schools themselves to reflect their curriculum range and activities.
 - (h) > HMI evaluations should be flexible enough to cover both individual schools and collaborative arrangements between schools including federations.
 - (i) > School profiles would be determined by each school's own evaluation. A single profile would cover each school's public description of its offer and achievements.
 - (j) > Open and public accountability for schools should be predicated on an evaluation system which results in fair and accurate judgements. A new system of school evaluation would have integrally an open and separate appeals procedure where schools which disagree both with the procedure or content of judgements can appeal. The results of appeals should lead to judgements which can be maintained, modified or overturned.
68. There should be one single form of institutional evaluation; school self-evaluation. Institutional evaluations should be developmental, not punitive. Punitive evaluation does not strengthen schools; it makes them fragile. Assessment of the curriculum should be focused on supporting learning, not on carrying out a task for which it is inherently unsuited; that of being a proxy for the evaluation of schools.
69. The proposals which the NUT has set out above provide a framework for a new system of accountability for schools and, indeed, colleges. It is one which supports, not undermines, schools and contributes to the quality of the education service.

assessment
of the curriculum
should be
focused
on **supporting learning**

conclusion



70. Four themes have informed the NUT's proposals in 'Bringing down the Barriers'.

Education is a powerful force in securing equal life chances. Local communities and local authorities should underpin equality of access to education for all children and young people.

All schools need to have the confidence to innovate and draw on the professionalism of all their staff. A curriculum and assessment system which encourages innovation is vital.

For teachers to own change, their professionalism must be respected. At the centre of teachers' professionalism must be equality of entitlement to professional development.

The wider public, as well as government, have a right to know how effective the education service is. It is quite possible for accountability to be both rigorous and support schools.

71. 'Bringing down the Barriers' is about proposing practical policies which will work. This Statement recognises that education is indeed at the heart of everything we value in society.

proposing practical policies
which will
work

bringing down the barriers

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