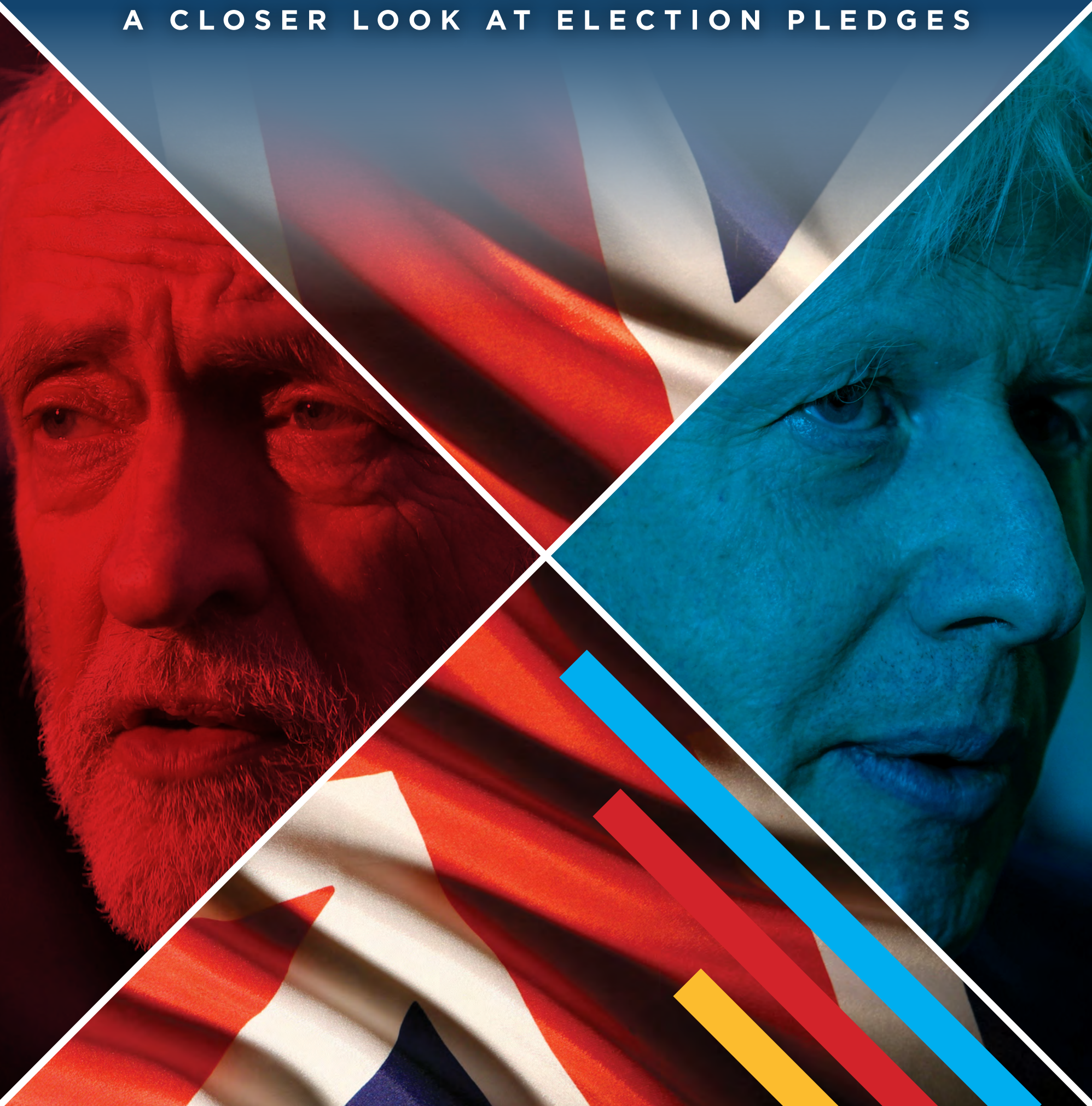


GENERAL ELECTION 2019

A CLOSER LOOK AT ELECTION PLEDGES



ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL WITH FE WEEK



Our newspapers have been publishing for less than a decade, yet here we are, covering our third general election. To say this one is important would be a massive understatement. The choice facing the country is stark – and we know education is one of the most important issues. In this supplement we have sought to round up the commitments made by the three largest parties in England and what they would mean for schools and further education. On pages 4 and 5 you can find details of the Conservatives' plans for education, including an exclusive article written by Gavin Williamson, the education secretary. Reaction is covered on pages 6 and 7. Labour's proposals are summarised on pages 8 and 9, and you can also read what Angela Rayner, the shadow education secretary, has to say about them. On pages 12 and 13, we look at

how the two sectors have responded to these promises. We explore the Lib Dems' plans on pages 14 and 15, which also feature an article from Layla Moran, the party's education spokesperson. My colleagues at FE Week take over on pages 16 and 17, with the findings of a readers' survey and a word from Nick Linford, the paper's editor. Finally, on pages 18 and 19, we explore the reaction of Schools Week readers, and bring you some analysis from Luke Sibieta and Natalie Perera, two leading figures in education research. We hope this supplement, which rounds up our coverage over the past few weeks, proves a useful guide to the part education has played in this campaign. We are not going to tell you how to vote, but please make sure that you do on December 12.

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SCHOOLS WEEK

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David Gallagher

Chief executive at NCFE

A view from NCFE

This election is the latest chapter in one of the most turbulent times in modern British politics. In the current climate, you might be forgiven for thinking that it's very much a Brexit election, but look beyond some of the issues dominating the debate and you can see that education and skills remain central to the manifestos. It was refreshing to see some new policy ideas from the main three parties, which this supplement will cover, but let's not forget the sector has been through a lot of change, and there are still many challenges ahead. Since the 2015 general election, there has been significant reform. Major changes include: the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, reform of the structure of apprenticeships, as standards

replace frameworks, the publication of the post-16 skills plan, the introduction of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, and the development of T-levels. Devolution of part of the adult education budget is set to herald regional variations in which programmes are funded. The Ebacc and Progress 8 has seen a shift away from creative subjects and towards traditional academic subjects in schools. Given the amount of change in both policy and personnel, if there are two things I know the sector is good at they are resilience and change management! While the sector has coped well with the pace of change, I would urge whichever political party wins on December 12 to let us have a period of stability and embed the aforementioned policies.

Typically, a newly formed government is keen to make its mark, and have huge reforms to qualifications and the system itself. However, this time it feels different. It is great to see that T-levels have cross-party support. None of the main parties has committed to scrapping the apprenticeship levy, instead proposing ideas to work with and improve it. The parties themselves appear to be getting the message from the sector, that policies must be allowed the time and space to mature and develop. There are, of course, other issues that need to be addressed. These include teacher training and recruitment, careers advice and guidance, the need for adult retraining and the fall in apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds. Many of the party manifestos show a recognition of these issues, and include ideas and proposals to address them. All parties are promising additional investment in education and skills, and this will be welcome news to those working in the sector, who have shown incredible commitment to work with limited resources for almost a decade. The challenge for the next government will be to invest new money in the right places, and work with the sector to ensure that it is spent effectively. Whoever finds themselves in government on Friday 13 December, I hope the focus will be on creating a consensus to go forward and continue to support the excellent work we do in giving life-changing opportunities to people across the UK.

FEK AND SCHOOLS WEEK

JEREMY CORBYN LABOUR

As in 2017, Jeremy Corbyn has been popping up across Britain as Labour campaigns fiercely to take the keys to Number 10 from Boris Johnson.

And just like in 2017, he's shown he's not afraid to get his hands dirty.

On November 25, during a visit to the West Nottinghamshire College Construction Centre, in Ashfield, the Labour leader tried his hand at bricklaying.

It's not the first time Corbyn has given the trade a go. Back in July 2017, after that year's election, FE Week covered his visit to Barnet and



Southgate College, where he quickly got to work putting up a wall. Angela Rayner, the shadow education secretary, has also been deployed to schools up and down the country to spread Labour's message on education.



Jeremy Corbyn visits West Nottinghamshire College

BORIS JOHNSON CONSERVATIVES

Boris Johnson looked pleased with his hard work when he joined pupils for an art lesson at Middleton Primary School in Buckinghamshire in late October.

The PM said he was "delighted" to meet pupils and staff at the school, before going on to repeat his misleading claim that his party is investing £14 billion in schools.

During a visit to West Monkton CEVC Primary School in Taunton, Somerset, on November 14, Johnson read *Where's Wally* to pupils and was even pictured holding a rabbit.

His party colleagues will be



hoping his opponents can't pull one of those out of a hat on December 12...



Boris Johnson visits Middleton Primary School

JO SWINSON LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Jo Swinson got her goggles on during a visit to Hinchley Wood School in Surrey last month.

The Lib Dem leader was pictured with pupils as she toured the school's facilities and even took part in a practical science lesson.

Swinson was also joined by Lib Dem education spokesperson Layla Moran during a visit to Trumpington Park Primary School in Cambridge, where the pair read with pupils and examined their work.

One of the books chosen was a history of the great fire of London, where the party has recently fallen behind in the polls.



Jo Swinson visits Hinchley Wood School

Above: Press Association Images

Conservative manifesto: light on detail

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Investment in schools and apprenticeships is a headline pledge from Boris Johnson's Conservatives in this election, but the party's manifesto was light on detail.

On the second page of the document, launched at a hastily arranged event in the Midlands on a Sunday in November, Johnson made his "guarantee" to voters, as he pledged "millions more invested every week in science, schools, apprenticeships and infrastructure while controlling debt".

But a full read of the document revealed some glaring omissions, particularly for schools.

For example, although the manifesto set out specific plans to spend £1.8 billion over five years to upgrade the further education estate, there was no such pledge on school capital spending.

Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, insisted last month that schools would get a share of the £100 billion allocated over five years for infrastructure if his party wins, but will have to wait until after the election to find out exactly how much.

The party has also made no concrete pledge on free schools numbers after missing both of its previous targets.

While the schools section of the manifesto largely focused on existing proposals and a few other grant-based titbits, the document revealed larger plans for the skills sector, pledging a £600 million-a-year "national skills fund".

The fund will be the "centrepiece" of the Tories' plan to "level up Britain's skills", but comes in the face of news that the party is set to miss its 2015 manifesto pledge of three million apprenticeship starts by a massive 800,000 starts.

Unsurprisingly, there is no specific apprenticeship target in this year's manifesto, but the Conservatives say their new fund will "transform the lives of people who have not got on to the work ladder and lack qualifications, as well as people who are keen to return to work from, say, raising a family, or switch from one career to another".

When it comes to school funding, the party is relying on Johnson's earlier pledge to increase the schools budget by £7.1 billion by 2022-23.

But they are already in hot water over how that pledge was included in the manifesto.

The UK Statistics Authority has already given the party a slap on the wrist for claiming they are spending an extra £14 billion on schools, when in fact this is a cumulative figure. The authority had to remind leaders again this week that without context, the figure is unclear.

Despite the overall pledge to "level up" school funding, the Conservatives also felt the need to include some small-ticket items in the

manifesto for schools.

These include funding of up to £34 million a year to boost PE teaching in primary schools, an annual £110 million "arts premium" for secondary schools and up to £260 million a year to boost "wraparound childcare" at schools and childcare providers, with an additional £250 million in capital funding for that same aim.

The party also sought to distance itself from Labour on issues such as discipline and school accountability. The manifesto includes a promise to "back heads and teachers on discipline" and support leaders to use exclusions.

"Unlike Labour, we believe that Ofsted inspection serves a valuable purpose not just in improving standards but in improving behaviour," the document states.

But if a school capital funding pledge was conspicuous by its absence from the manifesto, then a mention of the academies programme was even more so.

Once the jewel in the crown of Michael Gove's

reforms, the policy was relegated to one line in the document: "And we will continue to build more free schools."

The manifesto also includes a vague pledge to "continue to do everything we can to ensure every school is a great school", and to support "innovation" through projects like maths schools.

The party has also pledged to expand alternative provision schools for excluded pupils and "deliver more school places for children with complex special educational needs".



Unleash Britain's Potential

For the past nine years, the Conservatives have been cleaning up Labour's mess. Because of the tough decisions that our party made and our success in bringing down the deficit, the economy has continued to grow and the public finances have been restored. Thanks to Conservative policies, employment is at a near-record high.

We've helped millions of people into work, halving the unemployment rate. We've doubled the personal allowance to £12,500, meaning that every worker gets to keep more of what they earn. We've introduced and consistently raised the National Living Wage - and will raise it still further.

The strength of the UK's balance sheet - the hard work done by all of us in this country - means that we are now in a position to invest properly in our future.

A Conservative Government will give the public services the resources they need, supporting our hospitals, our schools and our police. We will help people and families throughout their lives by bringing down the cost of living and making sure that work always pays.

We will keep costs down for small businesses - rather than hiking their taxes and crushing Britain's prosperity. We will not borrow to fund day-to-day spending, but will invest thoughtfully and responsibly in infrastructure right across our country in order to increase productivity and wages. Our fiscal rules mean that public sector net investment will not average more than 3 per cent of GDP, and that if debt interest reaches 6 per cent of revenue, we will reassess our plans to keep debt under control.

This means that debt will be lower at the end of the Parliament - rather than spiralling out of control under Labour. And we will use this investment prudently and strategically to level up every part of the United Kingdom, while strengthening the ties that bind it together.

We will also prioritise the environment in the next Budget, investing in the infrastructure, science and research that will deliver economic growth, not just through the 2020s, but for decades to come.

Above all, we will listen to the people who have felt left behind by the last few decades of economic growth and want to have more control of their future. We will get Brexit done, so we can unleash Britain's potential.





GAVIN WILLIAMSON

The education secretary writes for Schools Week and FE Week



Since becoming education secretary in July I have had the privilege of visiting over 40 schools and colleges.

Every time I am always struck by teachers' unwavering dedication to the children and young people they teach.

I am determined that a Conservative government will give teachers and headteachers the support they need to provide young people with a world-class education.

That is why we are increasing the starting salary for teachers to £30,000 – one of the most competitive in the graduate labour market.

We are introducing the early career framework, providing training for newly qualified teachers. And we are working closely with schools and Ofsted to cut teacher workload.

But there is more to do.

There can be no winners or losers when it comes to our children's futures. We are raising school funding by £14 billion over the next three years*, increasing the minimum level of per pupil funding in primary and secondary schools. We are also increasing funding for pupils with special educational needs, so that every child can reach their potential.

We will back teachers and headteachers on discipline. We know the effects that disruptive behaviour can have – on children and on teachers.

We will expand our programme to help schools struggling to manage behaviour learn from the best. And we will back head teachers to use exclusions.

In the difficult situation where a young person has been excluded there must be education provision to meet their needs. We will expand alternative provision for those who have been excluded – and make sure it is of the highest quality.

We will invest in primary school PE teaching and will offer an arts premium to secondary schools. And we will continue to invest in the pupil premium, helping children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds to get on in life.

And what about those that are finishing school?

Having gone to an FE college I know first-hand the difference they make to young people's lives. We are investing £400 million in education for 16- to 19-year-olds, the single biggest annual increase for the sector since 2010.

My ambition is to revolutionise technical education.

We will invest almost £2 billion to upgrade the entire further education estate.

We'll also create 20 new Institutes of Technology, partnerships between colleges, universities and businesses, delivering high-level technical STEM qualifications, allowing young people, and those looking to retrain, to access the high-skilled, high-wage jobs we are creating.

And we will create a £3 billion National Skills Fund to level up the skills of the entire nation.

We are doubling investment in apprenticeships, making sure they are a proper preparation for the workplace by increasing starts on employer-designed standards. Thirteen per cent of apprenticeships are now at foundation degree level or higher. We will improve the working of the apprenticeship levy, including increasing the number and quality of apprenticeships at SMEs.

In government, we have cut youth unemployment in half and we have reduced the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

The Conservatives will continue to make

sure all children, no matter their background, are given the tools they need to succeed. I know that is a mission that Schools Week and FE Week readers share.

And what would Labour offer?

Jeremy Corbyn puts ideology ahead of children's education. His plans to abolish primary testing, high-performing academies and free schools are regressive.

His dangerous plan to scrap Ofsted – without an independent replacement – would deprive parents of information, threaten school standards, and put children, particularly the most vulnerable, at risk.

The choice at this election is clear – Jeremy Corbyn's Labour, who would be too distracted holding two chaotic referendums to focus on children's education and supporting teachers; or the Conservative Party, who will get Brexit done so we can continue to invest in our schools and ensure every child is set on the path to a brighter future.

*** FE WEEK FACT CHECK: This figure is the cumulative increases to the schools budget over three years. The budget will actually rise by £7.1 billion in cash-terms.**

Conservative education pledges

Schools

- £7.1 billion increase in the schools budget by 2022/23, including £780 million for special needs.
- Guaranteed £5,000 per pupil in secondary schools from 2020, £4,000 in primaries from 2021.
- A £110 million arts premium for secondary schools to fund "enriching activities for all pupils".
- Up to £34 million investment in primary school PE teaching.
- Starting salary of £30,000 for all teachers.
- Backing heads and teachers on discipline and using exclusions.
- Expanding a programme to help schools with the worst behaviour to learn from the best.
- Helping teachers tackle bullying, including homophobic bullying.
- Creating more good schools.
- Supporting "innovation" through things such as maths schools.
- Expanding alternative provision.
- Delivering more school places for children with complex needs.
- Building more free schools (no specific target).
- Intervening in schools where there is entrenched underperformance.
- A £100 billion investment in infrastructure over five years, some of which

will be for schools (although the party does not say how much).

- Up to £260 million a year to support wraparound childcare at schools and childcare providers.
- One-off £250 million capital funding injection to boost facilities for wraparound childcare.
- New laws requiring schools and other public services to work together through violence-reduction units.
- Addressing the complex reasons why some groups do less well at school.
- Backing the National Citizen Service and promoting it in schools.
- Amending planning rules to ensure new school places are delivered before people move into new housing developments.
- A £9.2 billion investment in the energy efficiency of homes, schools and hospitals.

Further education and skills

- £600 million a year for a new National Skills Fund (£3 billion over the course of the next parliament).
- £1.8 billion for college capital projects.
- A UK Shared Prosperity Fund to replace EU funding, including the European Social Fund



SCHOOLS WEEK

Tory plans constitute real-terms freeze

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The Conservatives' headline spending plans will still leave schools facing a real-terms freeze in spending, and some small-ticket items announced in the manifesto work out as just a few pounds per pupil.

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, which looked at the commitments in the context of inflation, the Tories' plan to increase the schools budget by £7.1 billion over three years actually works out as a £4.3 billion real-terms increase in spending, just short of what is needed to reverse funding cuts seen over the past decade.

The ASCL headteachers' union has also raised concerns that a "significant amount" of the extra funding will be absorbed by the Conservatives' proposed £30,000 starting salary for teachers.

"It is a case of giving with one hand and taking away with the other," said ASCL general

secretary Geoff Barton (pictured). "We do need to improve teacher salaries in general but this needs dedicated funding."

As well as the already reported funding hikes, the party pledged up to £34 million a year to boost PE teaching in primary schools. This equates to just £7.19 per pupil per year.

It also promises up to £260 million a year to boost "wraparound childcare" at schools and childcare providers.

That is on top of a one-off £250 million in capital funding to help schools deliver it – the equivalent of just over £12,000 for every school in the country.

A promise of an annual £110 million arts premium for secondary schools works out at about £33 per pupil per year, or less than £1 a week.

Barton said the arts premium pledge was "welcome" but "slightly galling that it comes



after arts subjects have been hammered over the past few years by a combination of cuts to school budgets and school performance measures which prioritise traditional academic over creative subjects".

But in an interview with Schools Week, Gavin Williamson denied the policy amounted to an admission the EBacc had adversely impacted arts subjects.

The education secretary also asked the sector "to please not read anything into" the omission of academies or a free schools target from his party's manifesto.

"Just because something isn't mentioned... academies, free schools are an absolute central part of everything we're doing in terms of education. We want to drive up the numbers."

Other grants included in the manifesto were criticised by the sector.

The National Education Union called the PE teaching proposal "absurdly funded", and accused the Conservative of ignoring "the exam factory phenomenon within English education, caused by high-stakes tests".

Dr Mary Bousted, the NEU's joint general secretary, also warned there was more to solving teacher recruitment and retention than hiking pay.

Headteachers have also criticised a post-manifesto announcement by Boris Johnson that Ofsted will pilot no-notice inspections if the Conservatives return to power.

In a surprise announcement, Johnson said he wanted to change the way inspections work, so they give a "true reflection" of how well schools are performing.

The prime minister also announced plans to increase the length of inspections from two days to three, and has said he will pump an additional £10 million into Ofsted's coffers to fund his proposed changes.

But Paul Whiteman, from the NAHT headteachers' union, said no-notice inspections "will do more harm than good".

"They will result in more wasted time for inspectors, whilst arrangements are frantically put in place to meet their needs; they will be more disruptive and stressful to teachers and pupils; and will give zero additional insight in return."

Teacher Tapp tests reactions to Tory pledges

Plans to increase school funding will be the most impactful of the Conservatives' manifesto pledges, according to respondents to a survey by Teacher Tapp.

More than 4,700 teachers, leaders and other professionals answered questions on the app following the release of the party's manifesto.

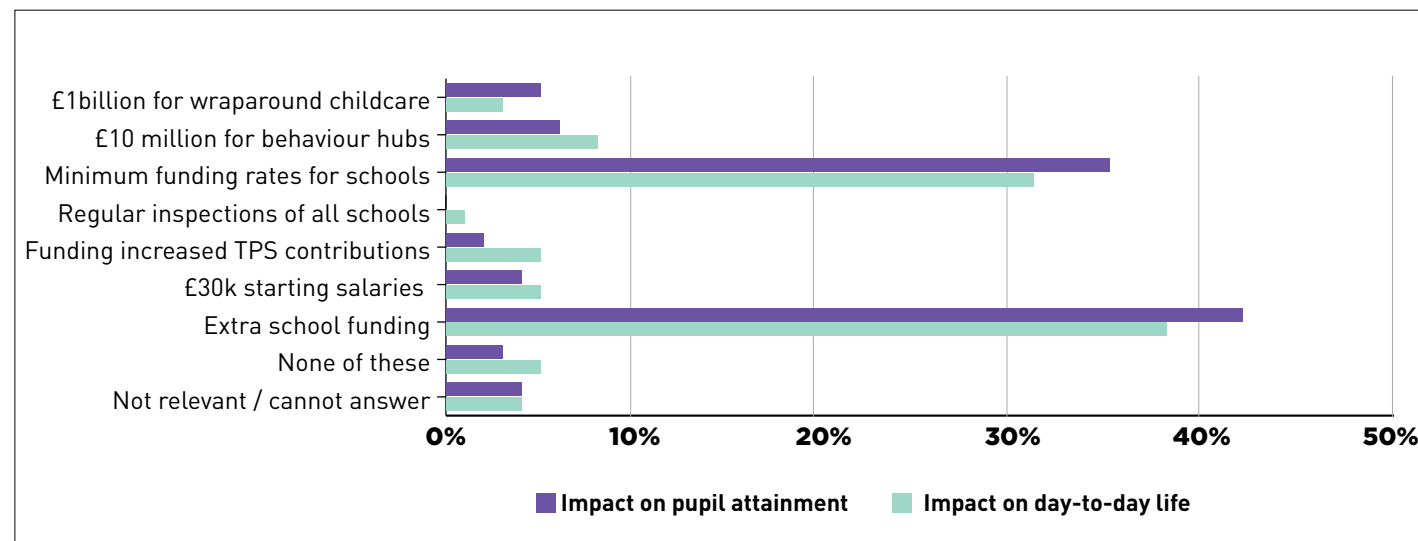
Respondents were asked to say which of seven key Tory pledges would have greatest impact, both on day-to-day life at their school and on pupil attainment overall.

Day-to-day life

Asked which of the selected proposals would have the biggest impact on day-to-day life at their school, 38 per cent of respondents said the party's headline proposal to increase school revenue funding in the coming years, while 31 per cent named plans to bring in new minimum per-pupil funding rates.

The two funding pledges came out way ahead of any other announcements in the Conservative manifesto.

Eight per cent of respondents said the government's intention to continue with its plans for a £10 million behaviour hubs network would have the greatest impact on day-to-day



school life, while 5 per cent selected funding increased contributions to the teachers' pension scheme, and another 5 per cent chose the plan to introduce £30,000 starting salaries for teachers.

Just 1 per cent of respondents said having regular inspections of schools, including schools rated as "outstanding", would have the greatest impact on the running of their school.

Pupil attainment

When asked to consider the impact on pupil attainment overall, 42 per cent picked the overall funding settlement, and 35 per cent selected the minimum funding rates.

Six per cent of respondents said the behaviour policy would have the greatest impact on attainment, while 5 per cent picked the Tories' proposal to allocate £1 billion for flexible, high-

quality wraparound childcare, including during the school holidays

Two per cent of respondents said funding increased contributions to the teachers' pension scheme would have the biggest impact on pupil attainment.

TEACHER TAPP
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FEWEEK



Devil will be in the detail for new skills fund, says sector

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

A “new national skills fund” pledged by the Conservatives and backed with £600 million a year has “real potential”, according to sector leaders – but they’ve warned the “devil will be in the detail”.

In a manifesto that was arguably light on FE promises, the party labelled this fund as the “centrepiece” of its plans for skills. It would total £3 billion over five years and be “the first steps towards a ‘Right to Retrain’”.

The Conservatives insisted this would be brand new funding “on top of existing skills funding”, and they expect it would be for a “range courses, including apprenticeships”.

A proportion of the fund would be “reserved for further strategic investment in skills”.

Their manifesto explained that the fund would provide matching funding for individuals and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for “high-quality education and training”.

Speaking to FE Week, education secretary Gavin Williamson said a consultation will be launched “very, very rapidly”, which suggests that it has been pretty much drafted.

The full details will then be set out in the first spending review of a Conservative majority government.

Association of Colleges chief executive David Hughes said he is “intrigued about the national skills fund – who it will be aimed at, how it will be established, how colleges will be supported to deliver it and what outcomes will be aimed for”.

It has “real potential”, he added, but will “not be enough on its own, given the severe cuts to adult learning budgets and the pressures on funding for apprenticeships for SMEs and young people”.

Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said his organisation would be “encouraged if the proposal led to the development of individual



Gavin Williamson, education secretary

skills accounts using registered providers”.

“Then we might see, for example, a proper realisation of an entitlement for adults to gain digital skills.”

He added that the new ministers should “look hard”, though, as to how the fund might sit alongside the National Retraining Scheme: “We constantly talk about how the FE and skills sector needs delayering in terms of complexity and here we are looking at the possibility of another layer being thrown on top when the latest one is barely under way.”

FE policy analyst Mick Fletcher said the fact that the Conservatives have decided to announce this policy is “good news, even if we are sceptical

about their delivering them since it shows they think there are votes in FE: recent campaigns by the sector may have paid off”.

He added that a “Right to Retrain” is a “catchy slogan which we might want to keep”.

The bad news, however, is that the new fund is “not extra investment in the existing system but yet another centrally designed initiative which no doubt hard-pressed providers will have to bid for”.

Stephen Evans, chief executive of the Learning and Work Institute, said the issues of design and delivery “would determine the funds ultimate success”.

“It’s great that we’re talking about new money,

but we need a clear lifelong learning strategy in order to avoid a patchwork quilt of initiatives,” he added.

University and College Union general secretary Jo Grady said the “devil will be in the detail and it remains to be seen how the national skills fund would sit alongside other existing funding pledges, for example on T-levels”.

It is “important”, she added, that any new funding “supports existing colleges to deliver more and better learning opportunities, rather than driving further fragmentation and duplication of provision in the sector”.

And Bill Watkin, chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, agreed there is a “clear need to drive up the skills of the current and future workforce” but said it will be “important for the fund to complement existing initiatives and link to the wider education system”.

As well as the national skills fund, the Conservatives have promised £1.8 billion for college capital “estate upgrade” funding. But the manifesto costings document shows this additional investment would not start until April 2021.

Williamson told FE Week that the ability to switch on a capital project “literally overnight is not really that viable” and his party wants to “make sure the colleges that are applying to this capital fund are in a position to be able to manage it properly”.

One notable omission from the manifesto was any promise to further increase the base-rate funding for 16- to 18-year-olds, which is set to rise by 4.7 per cent from August next year, the first rise since August 2013.

Williamson promised this would be looked at again at the next spending review but added that the £400 million announced for this area in August is “a lot of money – if that is not your view I’d love to see your house”.

David Hughes, Association of Colleges
chief executive



Jo Grady, University and College
Union general secretary



Labour aim: a National Education Service

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Labour has pledged large-scale spending on both schools and skills, but its manifesto still leaves questions unanswered about its plans for a National Education Service.

The party has pledged a £10.5 billion increase in the schools budget by 2022/23. It will also give all adults an entitlement to six years of free study, raise the base rate of per-student funding in further education to secondary school levels and expand the apprenticeship levy.

Jeremy Corbyn and Angela Rayner's proposed reforms to education all fall under the umbrella of the National Education Service, Corbyn's flagship policy, for which Rayner has taken responsibility since her appointment in 2016.

The main premise behind the NES is that education will be free "from cradle to grave". As state school education is already free, this means that the main structural changes will be in the childcare, further education and higher education sectors.

But Labour has also announced wide-ranging changes to the way schools are operated and held to account.

For example, academies and free schools will be brought back "under control of the people", with a system in which budget and day-to-day decisions are transferred back to schools, overseen by "an accountable governing body with elected representatives".

Responsibility for the delivery of education and support for young people "will sit with local authorities", which will manage admissions and have responsibility for school places, including the power to open schools.

The "oversight and coordination" of schools will be carried out by regional offices of the party's national education service, which will oversee "continuous, peer-to-peer school improvement modelled on the London Challenge".

The party also says all schools will be "subject to a common rulebook" which will be "set out in legislation". However, the manifesto contains no further details of what this common rulebook would contain, or indeed how the party would go about changing the funding agreements for 8,000 academies.

Previously announced changes to accountability also feature prominently. A move to replace Ofsted with a new system of council health checks and follow-up inspections by a new inspecting body and a pledge to scrap primary tests were confirmed in the manifesto.

Labour has also announced that all public sector workers, including those in education, will get a 5 per cent pay rise next April if the party wins this election. However, it is not clear

whether this would also apply to academy trust chief executives or college principals.

Corbyn and co have also announced substantial changes to the way further education is funded.

They have pledged to reform the apprenticeship levy by allowing it to be used for a wider range of accredited training, and reverse the "fragmentation and privatisation of further and adult education".

In the accompanying Funding Real Change costings document, the party announced it will spend £1.4 billion on the restoration of the education maintenance allowance, equalising 16-to-19 funding with key stage 4 and the Union Learning Fund (to give workers the right to accrue paid time off for education and training).

The gap in per-student funding between secondary and 16-18 education was 9 per cent in 2017/18, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies.



The recommendations from Labour's independent commission on lifelong learning, including free key stage 3 and key stage 4-plus (training with maintenance grants for disadvantaged learners) and the restoration of English for Speakers of Other Languages funding, would cost £3.3 billion.

Labour's free lifelong learning entitlement would offer training up to level 3, as well as six years of training at levels 4 to 6, with maintenance grants for disadvantaged learners.

IT'S TIME FOR REAL CHANGE
THE LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO 2019

The party has also pledged to launch a climate apprenticeship programme

and provide targeted bursaries to encourage the participation of women, black, Asian and minority ethnic people, care leavers, ex-armed forces personnel and people with disabilities.

Like the Conservatives, Labour has also been told off for an "unclear" claim in its manifesto.

The document includes a claim that the Conservatives' spending plan "leaves 83 per cent of schools still facing cuts next year".

The UK Statistics Authority said it had previously investigated a similar statistic – from the union-run School Cuts campaign – which it found was "misleading" for creating a "worse picture" of school funding.



ANGELA RAYNER

The shadow education secretary writes for *Schools Week* and *FE Week*



In May 2010 the Tories and Lib Dems decided to inflict a needless austerity programme on our country. Nowhere are the consequences clearer than in our education system.

The cuts are driving up inequality, and driving down standards.

While there is less funding, the government have tried to pass the blame for its failures on to the very schools and teachers that are at the sharp end of their cuts.

The accountability regime has become unfair, unreliable and reflective as much of the intake of a school as the work being done there.

That is why Labour will transfer responsibility for inspections to a new body, one that measures excellence, not poverty.

There will be an increased focus on developing expertise and local understanding, while playing a positive role in driving improvement.

An innovative two-stage inspection system will give assurances about the quality of education providers, and move us towards

an accountability system that drives improvement rather than one that is driving teachers out of the classroom.

Labour will end the rapidly spiralling workload and unnecessary stress caused by the current inspection regime, ensuring that teachers are supported in the classroom rather than burnt out by a failing system.

As it is, ministers have failed to meet their own teacher recruitment targets seven years running, leaving a generation of children to pay the price for their failures.

It is the same story with the shocking rise in child poverty.

Last year, teachers reported that malnourished children were filling their pockets with food from the school canteen to take home because they were hungry.

One member of staff even said that their pupils had "grey skin" due to their hunger. This is what the United Nations has called the "tragic social consequences" of Tory-led policy.

So, it is a moral imperative for Labour to

eliminate the poverty that is creeping into our schools.

To do this we'll introduce free school meals for all primary school children, as well as encouraging breakfast clubs, so that children aren't starving when they start their lessons. We will also alleviate the excessive financial burden of school uniforms, by capping costs.

As bad as the Tories have been, no one can forget the Lib Dems' behaviour to the students whose votes they had courted in 2010.

Within six months they went from a party who were against tuition fees, to one that trebled them. They even helped scrap EMA. As a result, we should never take their election pledges seriously.

Everyone in further education knows how successful EMA was. It had a genuine, positive effect on attainment and participation in further education. It should never have been abolished.

So, we will restore it. And we'll increase the base rate of funding for learners in further education, ending a decade of real terms cuts.

We will ensure education is available throughout your life too. Since 2010, spending on adult education has been recklessly cut, and the number of adults currently learning is at its lowest since 1996.

This can't continue. We need to throw open the door for adults to study, and that is precisely what Labour are offering.

We'll deliver a revolution in lifelong learning, with a fully funded right to lifelong learning meaning that everyone will receive the funding they need to get qualified up to level 3, as well as a right to six years of credits levels 4 to 6 for everyone.

This will include additional support for those that need it most – including workers who are displaced by automation and climate transition.

As Jeremy Corbyn said, we'd rather give a break to the worker who wants to learn, than a tax break to the billionaire who wants for nothing.

Education changed my life, and Labour will change yours too.

Labour education pledges

Schools

- A £10.5 billion increase in the schools budget by 2022/23 and a fairer funding formula.
- Maximum class sizes of 30 in all primary schools.
- Scrapping key stage 1 and 2 SATs and baseline assessments, refocusing assessment on "supporting pupil progress".
- £160 million arts pupil premium to fund arts education for every primary pupil.
- A review of the curriculum to ensure that it "enriches students and covers subjects such as black history and continues to teach issues like the Holocaust."
- Bringing free schools and academies under the control of parents, teachers and local communities.
- Giving schools control over budgets and day-to-day decisions, overseen by "an accountable governing body with elected representatives".
- Putting councils in charge of admissions; allowing them to open schools.
- Putting National Education Service regional offices in charge of delivery and co-ordination of schools, including peer-to-peer improvement based on the London Challenge.
- A common rulebook for all schools, set out in legislation.
- Replacing Ofsted with a new body "designed to drive school improvement".
- A teacher supply service to tackle wasted money paid to private agencies.
- Making schools accountable for the outcomes of pupils leave their rolls.
- Reform of alternative provision.

- Extending free school meals to all primary pupils.
- Tackling the cost of school uniforms.
- The return of the school support staff negotiating body, and national pay settlements for teachers.
- Closing the tax loopholes that currently apply to private schools.
- Charging VAT on private school fees.
- Tasking the Social Justice Commission with advising on the integration of private schools and the creation of a comprehensive education system.
- A 5 per cent pay rise for teachers, support staff and all other public sector workers in April 2020.

Further education and skills

- Raise the base rate of per-student funding for 16-18s to secondary-school levels.
- Reform the apprenticeship levy by allowing it to be used for a wider range of accredited training.
- Train 320,000 people in a new climate apprenticeship programme.
- £1.4 billion for the restoration of the education maintenance allowance.
- Introduce a free lifelong entitlement to training up to level 3.
- Six years of free training at levels 4 to 6, with maintenance grants for disadvantaged learners.

Note: Due to space limitations, this is a summary of key policies, not an exhaustive list.



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FEWEEK

This will be hard to achieve in just a term

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

Labour's ambitious plans for FE have been lauded as a "strong package for the future" – but sector leaders have warned they can't see how they'll be achieved over the next parliament.

The first of a number of further education pledges, which were drip-fed in the run-up to the party's manifesto launch, was to spend £3.17 billion annually by 2023 on lifelong learning.

Included in this is a free lifelong entitlement to training up to level 3, as well as six years of training at levels 4 to 6, with maintenance grants for disadvantaged learners.

Mark Dawe, boss of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said his organisation's wish to see the "needs of the 'forgotten 50 per cent' of school leavers with few or no qualifications has been answered" with these commitments.

However, he also said that Labour's plans for the apprenticeship levy to be used for a wider range of accredited training would be "premature, especially when current demand for apprenticeships by employers means that the levy is now being overspent".

University and College Union general secretary Jo Grady said for "too many years" adult learning has been "sorely neglected", so the plan for a "wide-ranging new learning entitlement for adults is particularly welcome", as is Labour's pledge to restore English for Speakers of Other Languages funding and to expand all-age careers guidance.

The lifelong learning pledges were taken from the final report of the party's independent Lifelong Learning Commission.

A key recommendation in the report, but absent from its announcements, was that adults should have a "right upon enrolment to lifetime access to beginner and taster content, free of charge, whether at institution or system level".

It led to questions over Labour's commitment to fully funding "second-chance" adult short education courses, but a party spokesperson later told FE Week this recommendation, along with all others in the report, had not been dropped.

They insisted that Labour was continuing to work on incorporating them into its National Education Service, which will provide "cradle-to-grave



Mark Dawe

“There is no justification for the sharp reduction in education funding at the age of 16”

learning that is free at the point of use” – although it wasn't included in the party's manifesto.

What was included, however, was a promise to spend £1.4 billion on raising the base rate of per-student funding in FE to secondary-school levels and the restoration of the education maintenance allowance, as well as an undisclosed sum for college capital projects.

James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges



Gordon Marsden

Association, said as young people are now required to participate in education or training until the age of 18, there is "no justification for the sharp reduction in education funding at the age of 16".

He added that Labour is also right to prioritise a capital expansion fund – his organisation estimates an additional 260,000 16-to-18 years will be participating in education by 2028 – "so preparing for this demographic increase is a sensible step".

Association of Colleges chief executive David Hughes said the Labour manifesto offers a "strong package for the future, with the potential to make real change, for business, for individuals, and for communities".

But Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said that given the scale of what Labour is proposing, it is "unlikely that it would be able to achieve all these objectives immediately, and it needs to be clear about its priorities".

"It would clearly require a great deal of planning and resourcing to ensure that there is sufficient capacity but we are in a strong position to deliver this ambition, building on the existing expertise in our colleges and universities," he added.

FE policy analyst Mick Fletcher said there are "lots of good ideas" in the Labour manifesto "but, as has been pointed out more generally, the scale of change proposed might better be set out as a ten-year programme than a single term".

"Good ideas risk being discredited by rushed and poorly planned implementation – remember individual learning accounts?" he added.

"Also it takes time and careful negotiation to build a coalition of support to stop initiatives simply being scrapped by a new government – remember the diplomas? Let's hope Labour have learned from past mistakes."

One part of the manifesto that raised a few eyebrows was a commitment to "reverse the fragmentation and privatisation of further and adult education".

Shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden later told FE Week this did not mean that Labour would prevent independent providers from accessing public funding, "it is essentially about ensuring there is a common regulation across the system", he said.

"That means making sure that all institutions, whether they are colleges or private training providers, follow the principles of the National Education Service's charter."

SCHOOLS WEEK



Greater clarity needed

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Labour's plans to charge VAT on private school fees has prompted a row over how much it would cost the public purse, amid claims the party will put "politics before pupils".

In its manifesto costings document, Labour admitted its proposals could lead to about 5 per cent of independent pupils moving into the state sector.

As of June, there were 580,000 pupils in private schools – meaning up to 29,000 more pupils would enter the state system.

Based on the average of the cost of educating pupils in state primary and secondary schools, an exodus of this size would cost the state £158 million in per-pupil funding each year.

But private school leaders say they expect as many as one in five pupils to leave the private sector if the VAT change is imposed, with research suggesting this would cost more than £400 million within five years.

Mike Buchanan, the executive director of the

Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, said the taxes were "putting politics before pupils and will have serious unforeseen consequences".

The party also faces questions over its proposals to put academy headteachers back in charge of their budgets and the day-to-day running of their schools, sidelining multi-academy trusts' central teams.

The manifesto repeats the promise made by shadow education secretary Angela Rayner to bring all schools under a common rulebook, but gives no further detail of what those rules would be.

Jonathan Simons (pictured), a former education adviser to Gordon Brown and David Cameron, and who now works for the think tank Public First, described these plans as "vague".

"A commitment to greater oversight from elected representatives probably means councillors sitting on trust boards with parents and staff, but that's not clear."

The party confirmed councils would have



responsibility for the "delivery of education", as well as managing admissions, and would regain the ability to open new schools.

Oversight and coordination would be carried out by regional offices of the new National Education Service. It is not clear whether regional schools commissioners will be replaced.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said the section on academies "begs more questions than it answers", and warned against "another round of costly and disruptive structural reforms to the education system".

"It outlines a system in which governance, admissions and school place provision would

be reformed, but it isn't clear what would happen," he said. The promise to set up NES regional offices was also "vague".

Labour is also yet to release further details of a pledge to tackle the "injustice" of high exclusion rates among black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils.

The proposal was put forward in the party's race and faith manifesto.

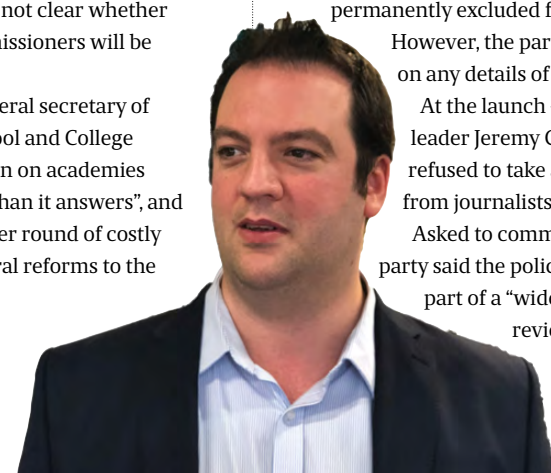
In the manifesto, the party pledged to work with community groups, councils and schools to tackle "high exclusion rates of young people from BAME backgrounds, particularly black Caribbean pupils".

According to government data, black Caribbean pupils are almost three times as likely as their white British peers to be permanently excluded from school.

However, the party has kept quiet on any details of the policy.

At the launch – which included leader Jeremy Corbyn – the party refused to take any questions from journalists.

Asked to comment later, the party said the policy would form part of a "wide-ranging" review, but would not provide any further details.



Teacher Tapp tests reactions to Labour pledges

Plans to boost access to early years education, replace Ofsted and reduce class sizes are among the Labour policies education professionals think will have the greatest impact.

More than 4,600 people responded to a Teacher Tapp poll after the party's manifesto was published.

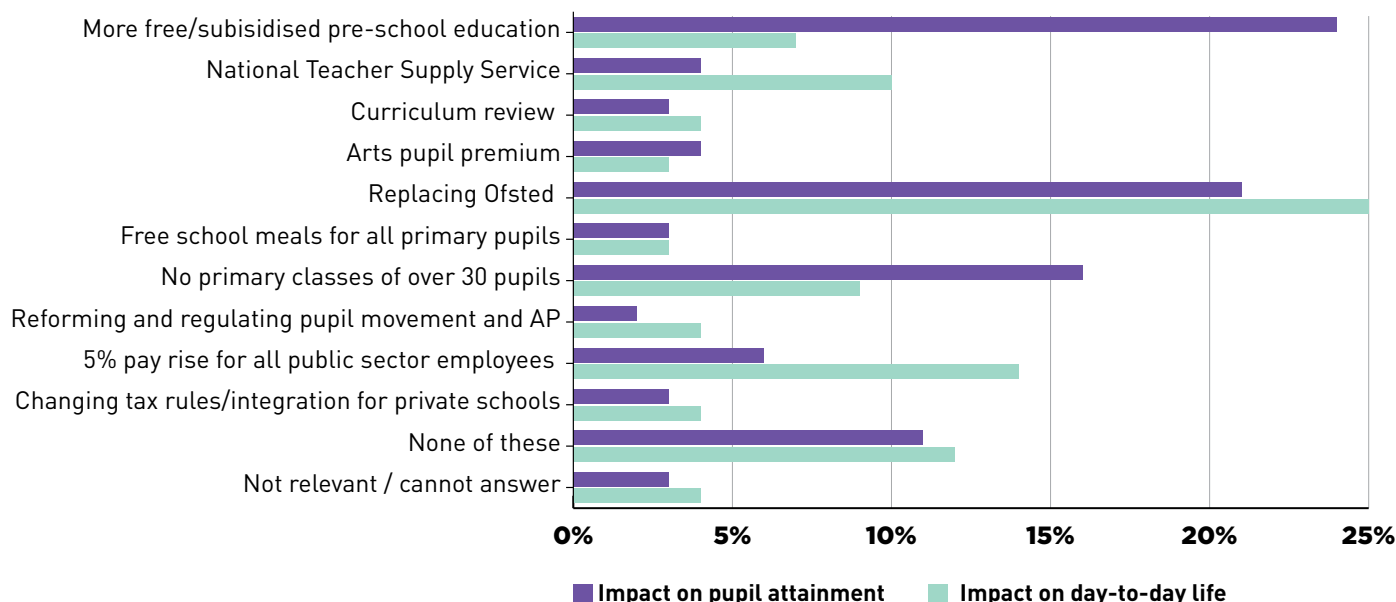
They were asked to say which of ten key policies they felt would have the biggest impact, both on day-to-day life in their school and on pupil attainment overall.

Pupil attainment

When asked which policy would have the most impact on the attainment of pupils, 24 per cent named Labour's proposal to provide more free and subsidised pre-school education hours per week, along with 150,000 new early years staff.

Twenty-one per cent selected Labour's policy of replacing Ofsted with a new regulatory body, while 16 per cent chose the party's plan to restrict class sizes at primary to no more than 30 students.

Six per cent of respondents said the plan for a 5 per cent pay rise for all teachers would have the biggest impact on pupil attainment, while just 2 per cent said reforming and regulating



pupil movement and education with the alternative provision sector would have the biggest impact.

Day-to-day life

Asked to choose the policy that would have the biggest impact on day-to-day life at their school, 25 per cent of respondents chose Labour's

Ofsted plan, while 14 per cent selected the teacher pay rise proposal.

Ten per cent said the plan to create a new national teacher supply service to reduce the cost of teacher shortages on schools would have the greatest impact, while 9 per cent selected the proposal to cap class sizes for all primary school pupils.

Seven per cent said the improved early years offer would have the biggest effect on life at their school.



LibDem pledges based on ‘Remain bonus’

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

A pledge to boost school teacher numbers by 20,000 and create a “skills wallet” with £10,000 for education and training for every adult in the UK have been announced by the Liberal Democrats.

The party has promised, if it forms the next government, to boost school funding by £10.6 billion over a five-year period and give further education an additional £1 billion a year, to include VAT refunds for colleges.

Jo Swinson’s party would also spend a further £7 billion in new school buildings and maintenance over five years, and invest to clear the “backlog of repairs” to college buildings.

In its manifesto, the Lib Dems described FE as a “vital route to learning”, and announced plans to expand the apprenticeship levy by diverting 25 per cent of the funds raised from companies into a “social mobility fund”, targeted at areas with the greatest skill needs.

The party has also said new sector-led national colleges will back up a major expansion of high-quality apprenticeships, including higher apprenticeships.

The pledge has drawn comparisons to the national colleges launched by the Conservatives in 2014 – one of which is surviving on a taxpayer bailout and is looking at dissolving, while another has dramatically altered its offering after also receiving a bailout.

Under the skills wallet plan, announced earlier in November, a Liberal Democrat government would put in £4,000 for every adult by the time they reach 25, a further £3,000 by the time they’re 40 and another £3,000 by 55.

Individuals will be able to choose how and when to spend this money on a “range of approved education and training courses” – but only those from regulated providers and monitored by the Office for Students.

The party’s offer to schools focuses on a series of boosts aimed at attracting and retaining more teachers, with a target for a net increase in the number of teachers working in the profession by 2024/25.

As of last November, there were 453,400 full-time-equivalent teachers working in state-funded schools in England, up by 12,000 since 2010. Demand for teachers is expected to rise in the coming years, particularly at secondary level, where a baby boom in the early 2000s has prompted a sharp rise in pupil numbers moving into the system from primary schools.

The pledge also comes during a growing teacher recruitment and retention crisis, which has seen issues such as pay and workload become a priority for successive Conservative education secretaries.

In their manifesto the Lib Dems matched the Conservatives’ pledge of a £30,000 starting

salary for all teachers by 2022/23, and promise that all state school teachers will get an annual pay rise of at least 3 per cent over five years.

The £10.6 billion extra schools funding will also cover extra funding for special educational needs and disabilities support, halving the amount schools must pay upfront for such provision from £6,000 to £3,000.

The manifesto also pledged a “fully funded” entitlement to 50 hours of continuing professional development a year for all teachers, which will be in place by 2025 if the party wins the election.

The party says the funding for its various education initiatives will come as part of a “remain bonus” resulting from its plans to scrap Brexit.

In the manifesto, the Lib Dems also re-committed to a number of policies announced at previous elections and in between.

These included a pledge to replace Ofsted, scrap SATs and replace them with teacher assessments and introduce a “curriculum for life”, including compulsory citizenship and financial education for all schools.

In terms of new policies that aren’t related to funding, the party pledged to require inclusive

school uniform policies “that are gender-neutral and flexible enough to suit different budgets”, and also promised to abolish the EBacc accountability measure.

As in 2017, the Lib Dems are also promising to give councils responsibility for admissions and exclusions at all schools.

“The ‘skills wallet’ will allow individual choice”



Our Plan for Better Education and Skills

Education is about achieving the best, about exploring possibilities and seeking new challenges, about fulfilling people's promise for the good of themselves and the whole of society. The next generation will face a complex, technologically advanced and ever-changing world. England's education system – from nurseries and schools, to universities and colleges – should be world-class, helping every child to make the most of the opportunities ahead, no matter their ability or background. It must nurture not only academic excellence but also creativity, adaptability, and teamwork. Instead, nurseries are struggling, and the attainment gap between rich and poor is widening. Teaching assistants are being laid off. Cash-strapped councils are struggling to support children with complex needs. Too many schools are unable to keep their doors open for a full five-day week.

The Conservatives are failing our children. They have cut school and college budgets to the bone. They focus too heavily on test results at the expense of giving children a good all-round education. The closest they have to a big idea is the backward-looking and divisive plan to create more grammar schools, despite the evidence that a new and more inclusive system is needed. Labour want to waste time and money on a plan to improve standards.

Liberal Democrats

STOP BREXIT
BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE

MANIFESTO 2019



LAYLA MORAN

The Liberal Democrat education spokesperson
writes for *Schools Week* and *FE Week*



The Conservatives have failed our children – the Lib Dems will provide the funding and teachers our schools and colleges desperately need.

There's a clear choice in this election. Labour Red or Tory Blue, Brexit blows a hole in our public finances and the other parties' spending plans. Brexit limits young people's opportunities. Instead, Liberal Democrats will stop Brexit, so we can invest in our children's futures.

By stopping Brexit, we can invest our £50 million Remain Bonus on public services and tackling inequality, starting in our schools. We will give every child the best start in life, recruiting 20,000 more teachers and spending an extra £10 billion a year on our schools by 2024.

Our schools and colleges should be world-class, helping prepare children for the challenges ahead. Instead, they're in desperate need of cash.

Schools are using crowdfunding sites to ask parents for glue sticks and library books. In Birmingham alone, 26 schools now

operate a four-and-a-half day week or are consulting on it.

Two in five FE colleges are in deficit. Colleges are delivering fewer subjects, for fewer hours, in larger classes.

At a recent meeting with local teachers and governors, I made the point that schools had little slack in their budgets to deal with extra costs.

One teacher in the audience spoke up to correct me: "Actually, Layla, there is no slack any more." Something as basic as hiring a teacher to cover someone's long-term sick leave can leave a school in the red.

This can't go on. Boris Johnson doesn't understand the urgency of the schools funding crisis. Teachers and pupils can't wait any longer.

Schools need an emergency cash boost – so Liberal Democrats will give them one.

We will spend £10 billion more on schools in 2024 than we currently do. We'll support our most disadvantaged children by giving councils thousands of pounds more for each child with the most complex needs.

Headteachers tell us that they are desperate for more staff – so this funding will allow schools to recruit and retain 20,000 more teachers, by giving them the inflation-busting pay rise and support they deserve.

Unlike Boris Johnson and Michael Gove, we trust teachers to get on with the job. We'll put a stop to unnecessary political meddling in the curriculum by creating an independent body to oversee future changes.

We'll reduce the stress on pupils and teachers by scrapping SATs – tests that ministers openly admit mean nothing for a child's life chances.

Schools can't be measured by just one week of tests, so we'll give parents performance measures they can trust. League tables will be replaced with an annual "report card" based on feedback from pupils, parents and nearby school leaders, not just exam results.

In addition, a new schools watchdog will be set up to replace Ofsted, supporting schools to succeed rather than punishing

them for failure.

We'll stop children going hungry at school, extending free school lunches to 3 million more children, including every primary school child and all secondary school children on Universal Credit.

Meanwhile, we've announced a funding package to save our colleges. Every young person, no matter how and where they study, should be given the support they need to succeed in their education.

So we're spending £1 billion a year to raise the rate in 16-19 education, including by refunding the VAT that many colleges pay. Plus, we'll extend the pupil premium to colleges to support the most disadvantaged students.

Under the Conservatives, school and college budgets will still be squeezed and teachers will continue leaving the profession they once loved.

Only the Liberal Democrats can deprive Boris Johnson of his majority – so we can stop Brexit, reverse school cuts and build a brighter future for our children.

Liberal Democrat education pledges

Schools

- A £10.6 billion increase in the school budget by 2024/25, starting with a £4.6 billion increase next year.
- A move to end the "crisis in special educational needs and disabilities funding" by halving the £6,000 that schools currently pay towards the cost of a child's education health and care plan.
- £30,000 starting salary for all teachers, and annual pay rises of at least 3 per cent.
- Abolishing the EBacc.
- Establishing a curriculum for life, including citizenship, financial education and life-saving skills, to be taught all schools, including academies.
- Establishing an independent body of experts to decide any future curriculum changes.
- An entitlement to 50 hours of fully funded continuing professional development for all teachers by 2025.
- Replacing Ofsted with a new "HM inspector of schools", which will conduct inspections of state and independent schools every three years.
- Replacing league tables with "a broader set of indicators, including information about pupils' and teachers' wellbeing, and academic attainment".
- Replacing SATs with a "formal, moderated teacher assessment" at the end of each phase of education "and some lighter-touch testing".
- Giving councils responsibility for admissions and exclusions at all schools, so that councils can act as "strategic education authorities" for their areas.
- Making multi-academy trusts face full inspections.
- Allowing councils to open new community schools.
- Opposing "any future expansion" of grammar schools.
- Devolution of all capital funding for new school spaces to local authorities.
- Requiring inclusive school uniform policies "that are gender-neutral and

flexible enough to suit different budgets".

- Extending free school meals to all pupils in primary schools and to all secondary pupils whose families receive universal credit.
- Appointment of an individual responsible for mental health in all schools.
- A statutory duty on schools to promote the wellbeing of their pupils.
- Reform of alternative provision.
- Extending free school meals to all primary pupils.
- Tackling the cost of school uniforms.
- The return of the school support staff negotiating body and national pay settlements for teachers.
- Closing the tax loopholes that currently apply to private schools.
- Charging VAT on private school fees.
- Tasking the Social Justice Commission with advising on the integration of private schools and the creation of a comprehensive education system.
- A 5 per cent pay rise for teachers, support staff and all other public sector workers in April 2020.

Further education and skills

- An extra £1 billion a year in FE, including VAT refunds for colleges.
- Give every adult in England £10,000 to put towards a "skills wallet" for education and training.
- Expand the apprenticeship levy into a wider skills and training levy.
- Invest to clear the backlog of repairs to school and college buildings.
- Develop National Colleges as national centres of expertise for key sectors, such as renewable energy.
- Introducing a "Young People's Premium" for those aged 16-18

FEWEEK readers cast their vote

FRASER WHIELDON
@FRASERWHIELDON

More FE professionals will be backing Labour at next week's general election than the Conservatives, exclusive FE Week polling can reveal.

When asked who they would be voting for, 37 per cent of the 542 respondents replied saying Labour; while 27 per cent said the Conservative Party.

Coming in third was the Liberal Democrats, on 17 per

cent; ahead of 'don't know' with ten per cent and the Green Party, three per cent.

The Brexit Party has made little impact with sector workers, narrowly avoiding last place with one per cent, little more than the option for 'other'.

The Conservative party were the least trusted of the three main parties to carry out their FE and Skills manifesto commitments for a £3 billion National Skills Fund and near £2 billion for capital estate upgrades.

They earned 53 per cent on the least trusted question, compared to Labour with a 26 per cent share.

Respondents were drawn from across colleges and

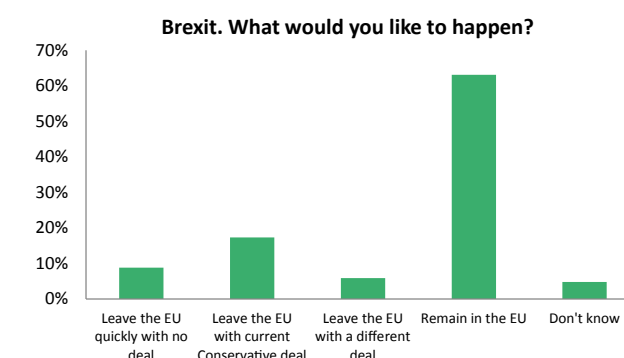
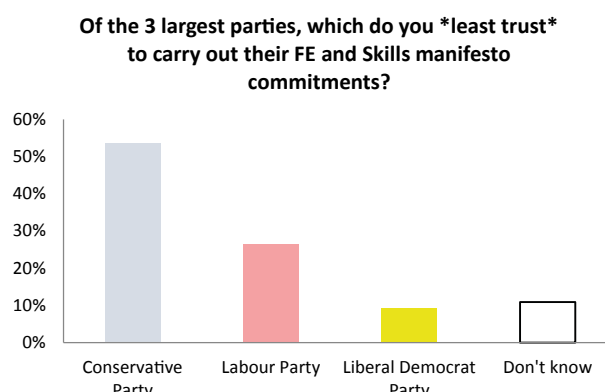
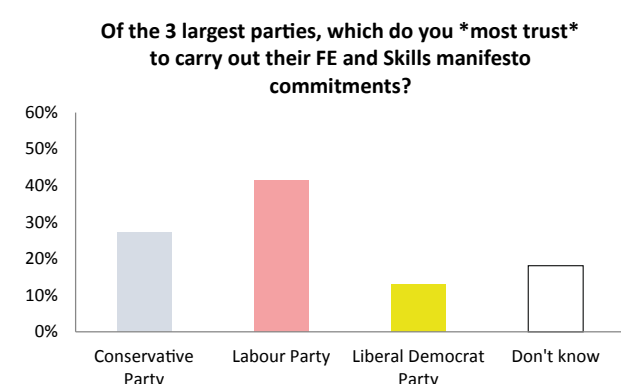
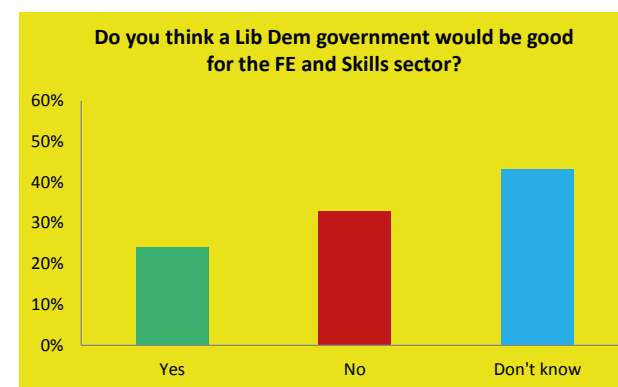
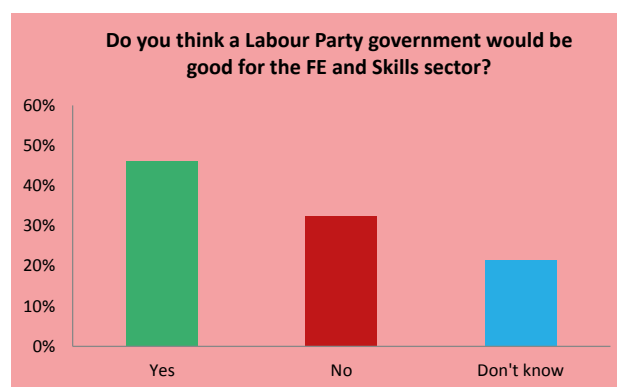
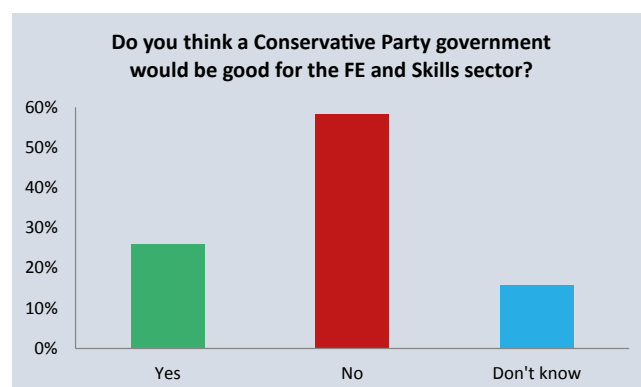
training providers, which had some very different views on the election.

Thirty five per cent of respondents from general further education colleges said they would vote for Labour, while 39 per cent of voters from the private area told FE Week they will back the Conservatives.

FE colleges trusted Labour to carry out their FE and skills manifesto more than they did the Conservatives, by a margin of 43 per cent to 29 per cent.

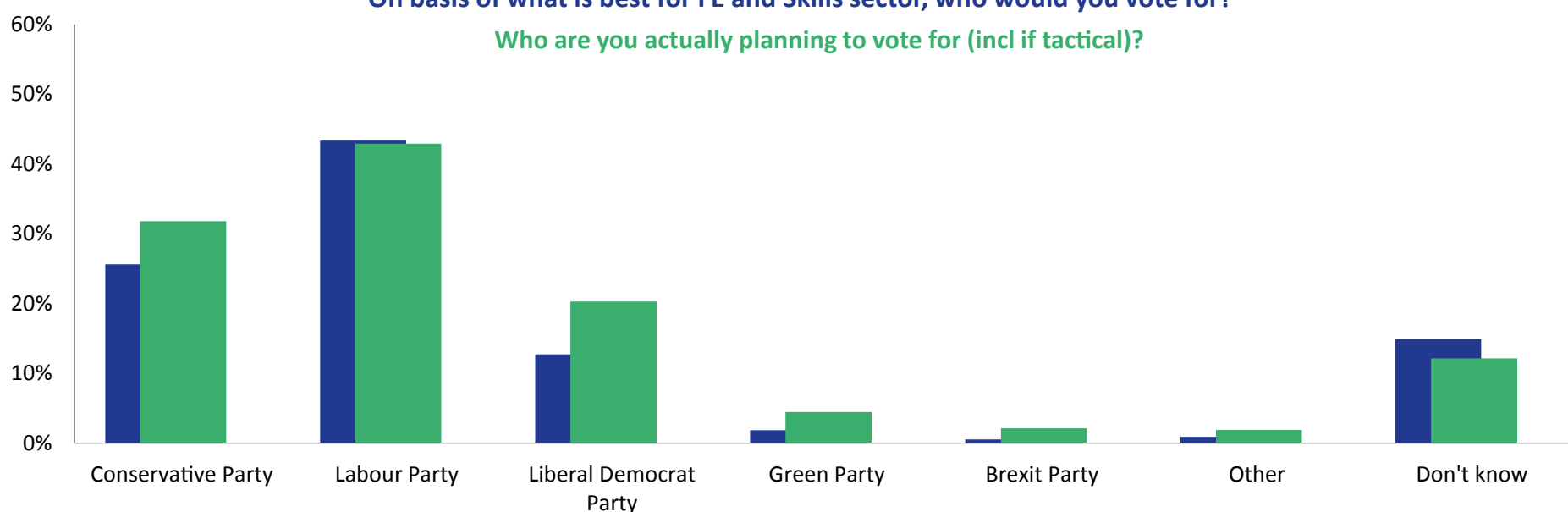
But a majority of college and provider voters want to remain in the EU: 68 per cent and 54 per cent, respectively.

Summary of all 542 responses received on 4 December, of which 81 per cent were leaders and middle managers, 37 per cent were from college and 28 per cent were from private training providers



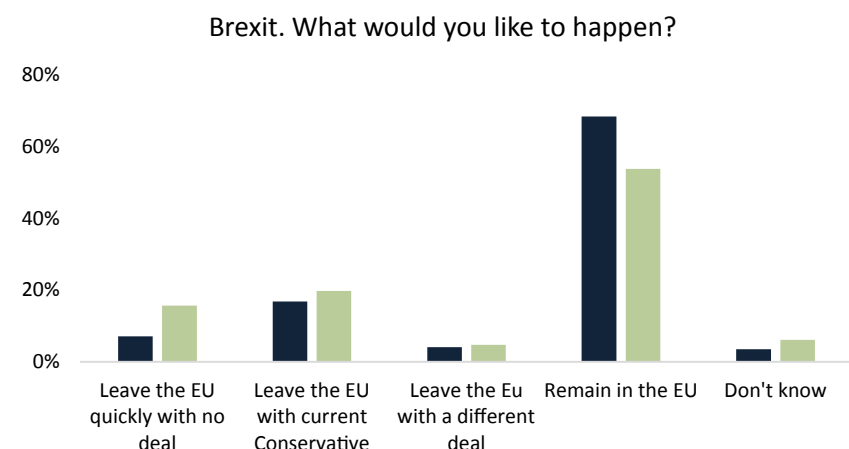
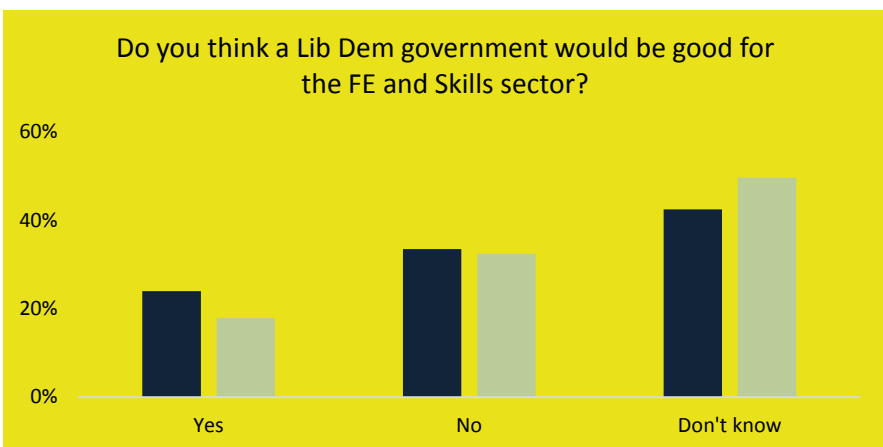
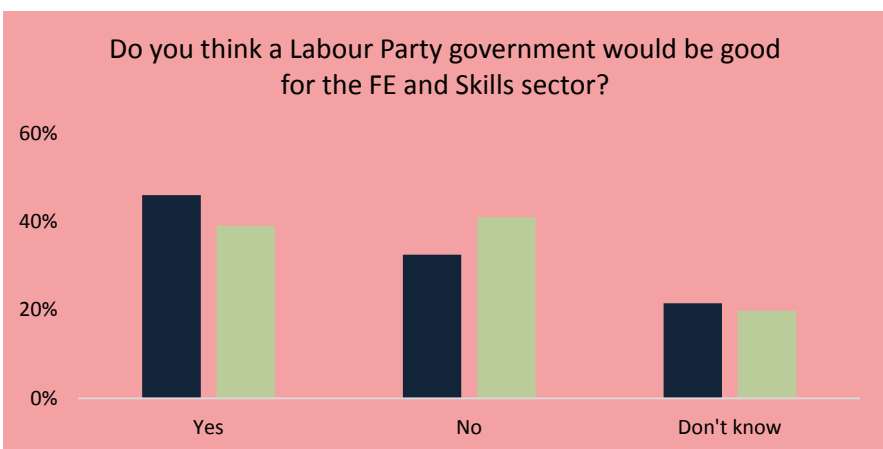
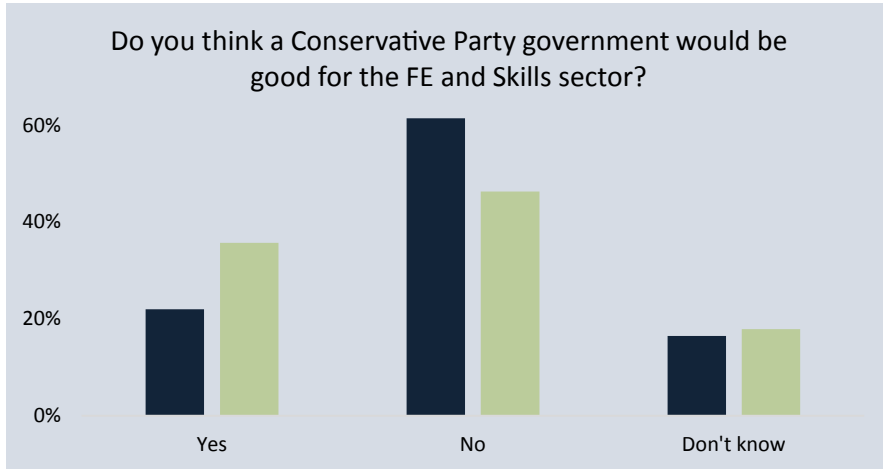
On basis of what is best for FE and Skills sector, who would you vote for?

Who are you actually planning to vote for (incl if tactical)?



College versus private provider staff

KEY: FE college staff (200) Private training provider staff (151)



OUR SURVEY SAYS ...

Do you think the Conservative Party government would be good for the FE and skills sector?



COLLEGE COMMENT YES: No comments available.

College comment NO: They all promise to put more money in but this rarely happens.

PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDER COMMENT YES: I believe the apprenticeship levy on the whole has been successful, and assuming the non-levy changes are implemented successfully from January it will create a level playing field for all providers.

PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDER COMMENT NO: Due to them reducing funding and lack of knowledge on requirements for the apprenticeship. There is already too much pressure on the education sector in general. They expect us to do the job of five people with less funding.

Do you think a Labour Party government would be good for the FE and Skills sector?



COLLEGE COMMENT YES: I do think that Labour would invest more but would it be sustainable?

COLLEGE COMMENT NO: Spending plans with no budget and no real direction or strategy just lots of numbers thrown about to sound good.

PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDER YES: In my opinion, Labour care more about education in general, which will ensure appropriate funding will be introduced, not just to schools but also to FE.

PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDER NO: The level of borrowing will have a detrimental impact on all areas if Labour are successful in the general election.

Do you think a Liberal Democrat government would be good for the FE and Skills sector?



COLLEGE COMMENT YES: I feel that a Lib Dem government would be more responsible with taxpayers' money

COLLEGE COMMENT DON'T KNOW: Think some ideas are quite positive but not sure how they are funded or if there is any sustainability in the long-term strategy.

PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDER COMMENT YES: No comments available.

PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDER COMMENT NO: The removal of tuition fees will further devalue degrees as more students will go to university which will dilute the impact of holding a degree.

SCHOOLS WEEK

What was the verdict of *Schools Week's* readers?

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

It's been clear since we started in 2014 that *Schools Week* readers are a political bunch, and it's always fascinating to get an idea of the personal politics of those who read our paper.

This week we polled 373 people on our mailing list to find out how they plan to vote and how much of an impact education will have on that vote.

This is not a scientific poll. The sample isn't weighted to be more reflective of a particular population as official opinion polls are, and the sample size is small.

Therefore we are not going to draw a specific conclusion about *Schools Week* readers overall from this data (you bunch of Remain-y lefties, you). It paints an interesting picture, however.

Thirty per cent of the respondents work in secondary schools, 15 per cent in primary schools and 15 per cent in other educational establishments, including early years.

About 16 per cent work at either a charity, non-profit organisation or think tank, while 23 per cent said they worked somewhere else.

Twenty-five per cent of respondents were senior leaders, 9 per cent were middle leaders, 10 per cent were classroom teachers and 12 per cent were academy trust chief executives or executive heads. Thirty-three per cent listed their role as "other".

We didn't offer "governor" as an option – a massive oversight. We'll make sure it's in there next time.

The results

If we look at the headline figure of who our readers will vote for, taking into account tactical voting, Labour is the clear winner, but not by as big a margin as in 2017 when more than 50 per cent backed the party.

About 39 per cent of respondents said they would vote for Jeremy Corbyn's party this time, compared with 29 per cent for the Lib Dems and 16 per cent for the Tories. The Green Party is on about 6 per cent, while the Brexit party polled about 1 per cent.

If we look just at the 227 respondents who work in schools or other educational establishments, the Tories fare a little better on 18 per cent, while Labour falls to 36 per



cent and the Lib Dems remain stable at about 29 per cent.

If just senior and middle leaders are taken into account, Labour performs better on about 41 per cent, while the Tories stay on 18 per cent and the Lib Dems fall to 26 per cent.

Interestingly, if you ask people who they would vote for purely on the basis of what would be best for schools, Labour's share rises to 45 per cent, while the Lib Dems and Tories drop to 22 per cent and 17 per cent respectively.

Labour picks up the teachers

Polling by Teacher Tapp before and after the parties launched their manifestos also offers a fascinating insight into the voting intentions of a much larger group of educationists.

The app polled 4,017 teachers on October 31 and November 27, and then weighted the results to reflect national teacher and school demographics.

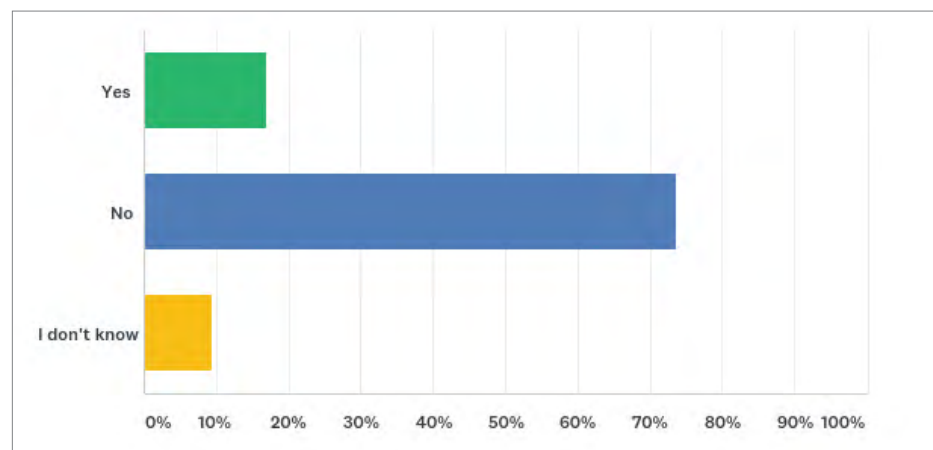
The results show that Labour jumped from 32 per cent in late October to 42 per cent at the end of November. Like Labour's improvements nationally, much of that leap seems to be at the expense of the Liberal Democrats, who slumped from 26 to 19 per cent between the two polls.

The Tories fell from 9 to 8 per cent, while the Greens dropped from 7 to 5 per cent. There were also fewer "don't knows" (17 per cent, down from 20 per cent).

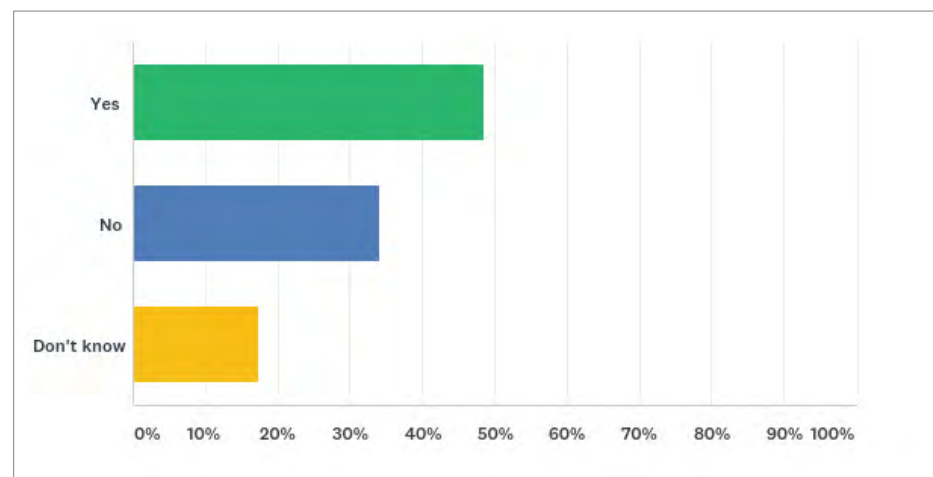
It's possible that this is simply a by-product of what we're seeing nationally – a consolidation of the vote around the two main parties.

But it's also possible that the parties' proposals for education, fleshed out in their manifestos, has had some bearing.

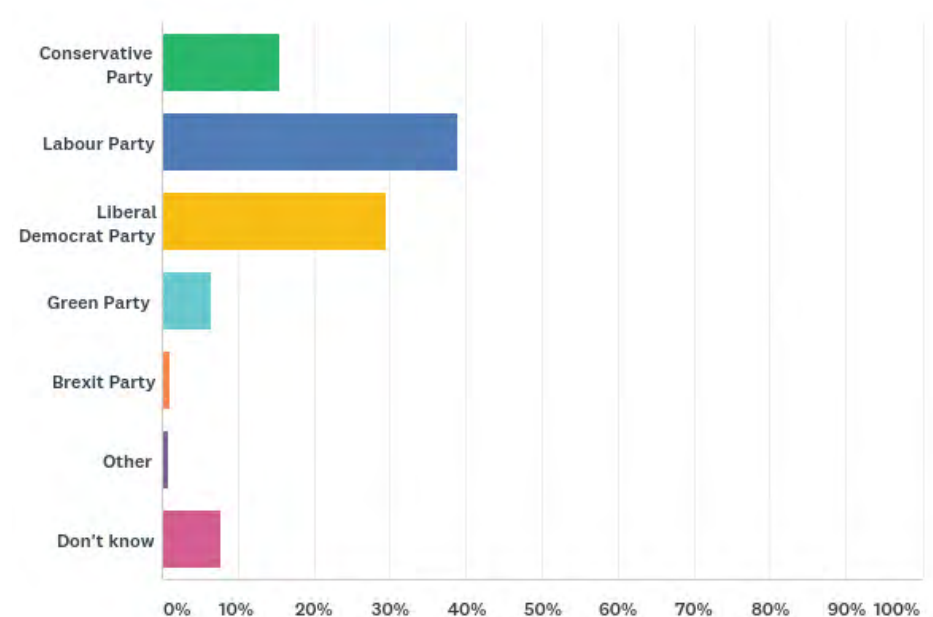
Do you think a Conservative Party government would be good for the schools community?



Do you think a Labour Party government would be good for the schools community?



Who are you actually planning to vote for (incl if tactical)





LUKE SIBIETA

Research fellow,
Institute for Fiscal Studies

Proposals for big increases in school funding and teacher pay

School spending per pupil has fallen in real-terms. Luke Sibieta looks at the main parties are promising to boost funding - although none has said much about how it will be distributed

Over the past decade, analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows that school spending per pupil in England has fallen by 8 per cent in real-terms.

Such cuts to school funding became a hotly contested issue in the 2017 campaign. At this election, the main parties are proposing large increases in school funding and teacher pay.

At the 2019 Spending Round, the government committed to a £7.1 billion cash-terms increase by 2022. This equates to a £4.3 billion rise in today's money, or a 7.4 per cent real-terms rise in spending per pupil.

This would near enough reverse the cuts seen over the past decade. However, it would still leave spending per pupil in 2022-23 no higher in real-terms than it was 13 years earlier, a significant squeeze in historical terms.

The Conservative Party largely stuck to these plans in its 2019 manifesto.

The Liberal Democrats would provide a slightly larger increase (an 8.5 per cent rise in spending per pupil up to 2022-23) but would provide the money sooner and they have set out plans for increases through to 2024-25.

The Labour Party has proposed an increase of £10.5 billion in cash-terms, or £7.5bn in today's money.

This would be enough to reverse past cuts and then some, with a planned rise of 14.6 per cent in real-terms over the next three years, or just under 5 per cent per year.

Whilst this may seem large compared with the past decade, this is a similar rate of increase to the 2000s.

All the main parties are also proposing large increases in teacher pay.

The Conservatives have proposed starting salaries of £30,000, an increase of about £6,000 or 23 per cent. They have also committed to a rise for existing teachers, but have not said by how much.

The Liberal Democrats have committed to £30,000 starting salaries and increases for all teachers of at least 3 per cent per year.

All these commitments would be funded from within their proposed school funding settlements.

Labour has committed to an initial rise of

at least 5 per cent for all teachers and above-inflation increases thereafter.

The precise increases would be determined on the advice of the pay review bodies.

Significantly, however, they have committed to extra spending to fund these rises. By our estimates, schools could be in line for an extra £1-£1.5 billion as a result.

None of the main parties has said much about how funding will be distributed across schools, beyond making things "fairer" or ensuring increases for all.

In government, the Conservatives focused much of the increase in funding for 2020-21 on the introduction of compulsory minimum funding levels of £3,750 per pupil in primary schools (rising to £4,000 in 2021-22) and £5,000 in secondary schools.

These benefit the lowest funding schools, which are typically schools in relatively affluent areas.

If there are to be big increases in starting salaries, more of the planned rise in funding may need to be targeted at more deprived schools, given that these schools contain more new teachers.

Perhaps the largest omission is any specific plans on capital spending.

However, all the main parties have proposed fiscal rules that allow them to borrow more

"We estimate that schools could be in line for an extra £1-1.5 billion

for investment, so there is certainly scope for further investment in school buildings in the next few years.

This might be needed too. Whilst the primary school population boom has started to fade, it has now moved into secondary schools, with an extra 330,000 or 11 per cent more secondary pupils expected over the next five years.

Following a decade of cuts, schools may be relieved to see all the parties proposing big increases in school funding.

However, there are still a range of unanswered questions on the extent of pay rises for existing teachers, how the money will be distributed and whether more money will be found for new school buildings.



NATALIE PERERA

Executive director, head of research,
Education Policy Institute

The biggest political divide is on the subject of accountability

For an election that was predicted to be dominated by Brexit, politicians have given us plenty to discuss and debate in relation to education, writes Natalie Perera

While education has traditionally been an opportunity for parties to draw their ideological lines, the sector should take some comfort and assurance in the fact that there is cross-party agreement on two of the most important issues facing schools today.

Whichever party or parties form a government after December 12, there will be a commitment to, and a mandate for, more money and more teachers.

Given that education research shows that funding can make a difference to attainment, not least for disadvantaged children, this is welcome. But that's where the consensus appears to end. Because underneath those headline issues of funding and teachers, the political dividing lines are ever-present.

Accountability is, by far, the issue on which parties are most divided. But this isn't a new debate.

Since Ofsted and school performance tables were introduced in the early 1990s, the debate about whether we have created the right system and incentives has lingered.

But, until relatively recently, the parties generally agreed on issues such as Ofsted and school testing

It's fair to say that the current accountability system is imperfect.

As our research has shown, Ofsted inspections appear to have been biased against schools with large cohorts of disadvantaged pupils, and an increasing proportion of (mostly vulnerable) pupils have experienced an unexplained move out of a mainstream school - possibly due to the negative consequences of high accountability.

The problem is that while each of the main parties has clear positions to either dismantle the current accountability system (in the case of Labour and the Liberal Democrats) or to keep it broadly as it is (under Conservative plans), both positions are sub-optimal.

International evidence suggests that school accountability, which includes the direct comparison of schools alongside standardised testing, has a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

We also know from separate research that parents tend to value Ofsted. Labour and the Liberal Democrats propose to abolish Ofsted but,

recognising that there needs to be some form of regulation of schools, plan to replace it.

It's difficult to see how these plans, which would come at significant cost and disruption, would be better than reforming the existing body, which already has an infrastructure and brand-recognition amongst parents.

But while it might, arguably, be going too far in

"Accountability is, by far, the issue on which the parties are most divided

relation to testing and inspection, Labour does recognise the problem of so-called "off-rolling" in schools, although its solution of making schools accountable for pupils who leave isn't without challenges and risks.

And while Labour and the Liberal Democrats get voters talking about these significant reforms, the Conservatives stay mostly quiet (apart from a post-manifesto commitment to extend inspections to three days and to pilot no-notice inspections, which, cynically, might be viewed as an opportunity to present the party as being pro-Ofsted, which polls well with parents).

But this shouldn't be mistaken as an intention to keep things mostly the same in schools policy.

Indeed, vague references to improving behaviour and discipline as well as ensuring "that parents can choose the school that best suits their children" gives them the mandate to introduce powers that could be anti-inclusive and to expand selective schools but without facing the political backlash ahead of voting day.

Neither the Conservative manifesto nor existing government policy aims to address any of the problems with the existing accountability system.

The fact is that voters are left with two options: they can keep things broadly as they are, with the risk that the negative elements of the current accountability system will be left unaddressed (and that it is likely to continue to penalise disadvantaged pupils more heavily); or completely overhaul the system and deal with years of disruption with little evidence to suggest there would be long-term improvements.

Either way, the accountability debate may well replace funding as the key issue in education.

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