

AI Declaration

I can confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

EDUCATION

A vibrant, multi-colored patterned rug, likely a Persian or Turkish rug, with intricate floral and geometric designs in red, blue, yellow, and green. A large, rounded orange rectangle is centered over the rug.

Past

Source: (Blogs Spot, 2016).

A modern classroom setting with students at desks. A large, rounded pink rectangle is centered over the image.

Present

Source: (Bay Atlantic University, 2022).

A futuristic digital interface with glowing blue lines and patterns, resembling a high-tech network or data visualization. A large, rounded light blue rectangle is centered over the image.

Future

Source: (Wallpaper Access, 2024).

The Education Act 1981

Introduction

For my first contested issue, I am going to be talking about the Education Act 1981. I have decided to talk about this issue because it focuses on special educational needs in children during the 1980s in England and Wales. When researching, I found this to be the most interesting issue to read about. Moreover, I usually work with special educational needs children and want to continue to do so in the future. For this reason, I thought this was the perfect issue to discuss, talk about and express my own opinion on the subject.

Why is it important and deemed contested?

According to Legislation.gov.uk, no date, the Education Act 1981 is seen as an important development in the education system. This is because it looked at making provisions considering the children with special educational needs. Whalley, 2006 says the Education Act 1981 was deemed as a contested issue because it only overlooked the provision for special educational needs children. Meaning, this act did not meet the needs and abilities of the children who did not have a special educational need.

What will I be discussing?

In this section of my scrapbook, I will be looking in detail at the Education Act 1981 and talking about its advantages and disadvantages, as well as looking at the point of view of other people. Furthermore, I will look at the current plans for children with special educational needs and see how the provisions for these children have changed over time.



Source: (Timetoast, 2018).

Main Body

What is the Education Act 1981?

According to Legislation.gov.uk, no date, The Education Act 1981 was created and passed on 30th October 1981. Education-org.uk, no date, says that this new framework was established to help and educate the children with special educational provision in primary schools. Special education provision means finding additional support for those children who require it and have reached the age of 2 years old. Information found at education-org.uk, no date. Parliament.UK, 2006 explains how the act focused on normal education goals for all children, no matter their abilities, or whether they had disabilities. Moreover, it established an 'integrated' approach, which was later known as 'inclusive'. Education-org.uk, no date also talks about how else the Education Act 1981 works with children with special educational needs. It states that the act helps children who have a greater difficulty in learning and how it supports the children who have difficulty using facilities that are provided by the schools they attend. According to Maddern, 2013, the idea of SEN children having normal education goals is being scrapped. During this time in 2013, the government are revamping the act to try and make it easier for professionals to identify children's needs more quickly. This information was also found by Maddern, 2013.

Education Act 1981 Advantages and Disadvantages

Parliament.UK, 2006 states that an advantage of the Education Act 1981 was to introduce the idea of special educational needs children by trying to encourage them to be independent, have enjoyment and be understanding, regardless of their abilities. Its Psychology, 2025 explains how the Warnock report had an impact on the education act. It says that the Warnock report wanted to make people aware of educational needs. In addition, Its Psychology, 2025 makes it clear that educational needs are common to everyone. Daniels, Tawell and Thompson, 2019 talk about the disadvantages of the Education Act 1981. They suggest that the Education Act 1981 put a number of demands on teachers and schools across the UK. Moreover, Daniels, Tawell and Thompson, 2019 say that schools became worried about examination results. This is because they were afraid children with special educational needs would not meet their standards. As a result of this, Daniels, Tawell and Thompson, 2019 say how this then added on to the schools reputation.

What do other people think about the Education Act 1981?

During the time when this act came into place. There were many people with different opinions on it. For example, an article written by Walley, 2006 states that some people believed that the act only intended to focus on the children with special educational needs. This would include children who previously, before the act was established had a SEN and those who had just been established to have a SEN. According to Walley, 2006, because people believed the act only met the needs of special educational needs children, it completely discarded the rest of the children who did not have a special need. From this, it is evident that people did not respect the act and believed it to be unreliable to the education of children. Maddern, 2013 explains how the government were adamant that the current system in place was not helpful for the children with a special education need. As stated previously, they had ideas to revamp the act to make it more reliable for SEN children.

The Warnock Report 1978

Education-org.uk, no date states that the Warnock Report started by Margaret Thatcher and the secretary of education. They wanted to review education in England, Scotland and Wales. From this, they looked at children with physical and mental disabilities when also considering their medical needs. According to education-org.uk, no date, Thatcher and the secretary of education wanted to come up with arrangements that would help children with special educational needs and prepare them for employment. They did this by creating a committee where they discussed topics. From this, it was concluded that Mary Warnock would be the person to publish a document called "children and young people handicapped by disabilities of body and mind". Information found at Independent, 2019. According to Webster, 2018, Mary Warnock published the Warnock Report in 1978, and that the Warnock report briefly spoke about what the Royal Commission, 1889 say about special educational needs. This is that children with special educational needs are those who are blind, deaf, and 'dumb'. The Warnock Report aimed to change this prospect. Independent, 2019 states that Mary Warnock was a philosopher who challenged some of the big issues in the 70s. In 1974, Warnock was made chair of the Committee of Inquiry in Special Educational Needs and 4 years later, the Warnock Report was published. According to Independent, 2019, the Warnock report discussed how it was important to "take account of the medical aspects of the handicapped children and young people". This goes back to what was said about Thatcher and the Secretary of education wanting to consider children's medical needs in special educational needs children. Webster, 2018 also talks about what Mary Warnock believed and how the Warnock report aimed to help children with special educational needs. Webster, 2018 says that Warnock believed that identifying children using 'names' was inappropriate and 'unhelpful'. The names Warnock referred to as this was mentally defective, backwards, retarded, incurable and educationally subnormal. Webster, 2018 included this in his discussion. Furthermore, the Warnock Report spoke about how it wanted to help include the SEN children in normal activities. According to Webster, 2018, the Warnock report says that schools should be 'inclusive' and willing to adapt to the needs of these children. This links to what is said about the education act 1981 and how it planned an inclusive approach for children with special educational needs.



Source:(BBC News, 2019).

According to Bloom, 2005, Mary Warnock had a change of heart about what she said about SEN children being in mainstream schools. Previously, as stated in the Warnock report, mainstream schools should be adapted for the needs of children with special educational needs. Bloom, 2005 says that Warnock now believed that SEN children are not better off in mainstream schools. This came from the fact that Mary Warnock herself taught children where 18% of the class had special educational needs. Bloom, 2005 also says that Warnock realised that SEN children have completely different needs to other children. Mary Warnock says "special schools should be widened to include children with other disabilities. This was found by Bloom, 2005.

How has special education evolved since the Education Act 1981 and the Warnock Report?

According to Parliament.UK, 2006, the Warnock report stayed put in place during the 90s. During this time, Parliament .UK, 2006 states that the number of children in special educational needs schools had declined rapidly. Recently, BBC News, 2025 has come out with a statement said by Sir Martin Oliver. He says that special education has a demand for a high cost but has poor outcomes regarding the children with these needs. According to BBC News, 2025, Oliver describes this as a "lose-lose situation". On the other hand, an act known as the Children's and Families Act 2014 was passed. According to BBC News, 2014, children who have a SEND will have education, health and care plans, also known as EHCPs. BBC News, 2014 says these children will remain to have this until they are 25 years old. Also, according to BBC News, 2014, its aim is for the young people to be assigned more personal goals and to support them when they are in education. Furthermore, BBC News, 2014 states that if they need it, a young person with an EHCP can ask for a budget that will be made especially for them. NHS England, no date, talks about SEND children. Before known as special educational needs (SEN) children, now SEND refers to children with special educational needs and disabilities. NHS England, no date mentions the SEND Code of Practise 2014 that can be accessed to ensure that all SEND children are supported. BBC News, 2014, says that before children receive an EHCP will still have their statements or learning difficulty assessments available so they can still be supported. Moreover, those without an EHCP will still be able to receive extra support by a specialist. BBC News, 2014 also talks about the aims of this new act. It wants to simplify the system and help support young people and their parents.



Source: (SEEK, 2019).

Conclusion

Overall, I have very much enjoyed researching this contested issue. It has given me an eye opener to how special educational needs were seen around this time, compared to how they are now. It was interesting to read how Mary Warnock has changed her views and the reasons why. From my research, there have been many opinions on SEN children. I personally think that children who have a special needs should be in an environment that is suitable for them. I have many experiences with special educational needs children, and they all seem to thrive and enjoy themselves more when they are placed in an environment where there are children like them. For example, in a specialist's school. On the other hand, I feel like it is important for other children who may not have a special need to have an understanding on children with a special educational need. This way, they are aware that some children are different from others.

1870 Elementary Education Act

Introduction

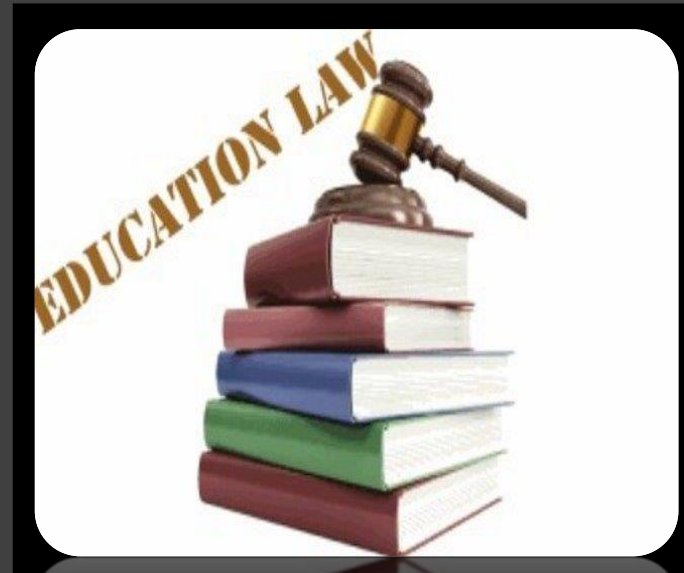
In this section of my academic scrapbook, I am going to be discussing the 1870 Elementary Education Act, which is also known as the Forster Act. I have decided to talk about this issue because when researching, I found that this issue covered a lot of points that I can talk about. Moreover, looking into any historical aspect from the 19th century interests me. For this reason, I am confident that I will enjoy researching and learning more about this issue in depth.

Why is it important and deemed contested?

According to UK Parliament, 2025, the 1870 Elementary Act is important because it was the very first piece of legislation in England and Wales that dealt with the provision of education. According to Boos, 2015, the 1870 Elementary Education Act was seen as a contested issue because it lacked the subjects it allowed schools to teach, and it encouraged rote learning. Cornell, 2024 states that rote learning was used as part of the 1870 elementary education act so that learners could memorise the material they have learnt. This was done by the learners continuously repeating facts until it was learnt. This information was found by Cornell, 2024.

What will I be discussing?

Just like my last contested issue where I talked about the Education Act 1981, I will be discussing the 1870 Elementary Education Act in detail. Furthermore, I will look at the advantages and disadvantages of the act, as well as looking at the point of view of other people. I will also be looking at how time has changed from then and now and how education has differed since this act first came into place.



Source: (Timetoast, 2016).

Main Body

What is the 1870 Elementary Education Act?

According to history website, no date, the elementary education act was created by William Forster. This law was then passed on 17th February 1870. Back in the day of..., 2020 explains how the aim of the act was to try and put an end to child labour, and that parliament were committed to change inequality in the education system. Hallahan, 2020 states that The Elementary Education Act 1870 was made to set out framework for the children in schools from the ages of 5 to 13 years old in England and Wales. This act was created to have more sustainability in education. Hallahan, 2020 says before the act was made, there was no school board who would check over the quality of education, or whether there were enough spaces for children to join. Stated by Victorian children, 2025, when Queen Victoria came to the throne, schools and education was only for the rich. This was because they could afford to go. Then, when the Education Elementary Act 1870 was passed, it allowed for rich and poor children to attend. UK Parliament, 2025 says this is because education system were elected by local bodies, where they then got funded from local rates. Victorian children, 2025 also states that as a result of all children having access to education, it began an education system, similar to the one there is today.

1870 Elementary Education Act Advantages and Disadvantages.

Scott, 2024 talks about the advantages of the Elementary Education Act 1870. He says that the act helped to change the education system by allowing all to attend. Moreover, Scott, 2024 says that standards were also being set for the curriculum to help this happen. On the other hand, Boos, 2015 stalks about the disadvantages of the elementary education act 1870. She says that the act only taught a limited number of subjects, and it encouraged rote learning. I previously discussed rote learning when introducing this act. According to Oxford Learning, 2017, rote learning has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantages, as mentioned by oxford learning, 2017 are that it memorises facts and allows them to learnt quickly, and it develops a base understanding on certain topics. However, Oxford Learning, 2017 says the disadvantages of rote learning are that it's easy to lose concentration and it doesn't allow for children to gather further understanding on the topic. This may give them the wrong impression on it, making it even harder to understand. According to Boos, 2015, another disadvantage to the act was that higher education was still very limited to most people, although it was made more aware.

What did other people think about the 1870 Elementary Education Act?

Back in the day of..., 2020 discusses education during this time. It says that children were expected to look after their parents later on in life when they became elderly. For this reason, back in the day of..., 2020 says that many parents had high hopes for the act as they saw it as a way to provide great investments for all of their family's future. Furthermore, back in the day of..., 2020 states that a parent whose child does well in school could receive a well-paid job with the education they are being received, meaning the parents are guaranteed an easy and steady retirement. Hallahan, 2020 talks about MP John Candlish and his opinion on the act. It says that Candlish argued that the act forced children to learn about a certain religion that they may not believe in.

William Forster

According to Westminster Abbey, 2025 William Edward Forster was born 11th July 1818 and died 5th April 1886. Before entering parliament, Westminster Abbey, 2025 says Forster began working in wool and trade. He later then became a member of Parliament for Bradford. Westminster Abbey, 2025 states that his compassion for education and his determination to make it better created the Elementary Education Act 1870. According to Hallahan, 2020, Forster was the leader of National Education League (NEL). This was a political movement in England and Wales. UK Parliament, 2025 explains that the National Education League was founded so that it could campaign for schools to become free, compulsory and non-religious for all children. However, Hallahan, 2020 states that education was not made completely free. Instead, England was divided into local districts, where it was managed by local school boards. Furthermore, Hallahan, 2020 says that education during this time may not have been free, but it was definitely in reach of all children.



Source: (Pixels, 2019).



Source: (Pinterest, 2014).



Source: (Park Hall, 2025).

How has education changed since the Elementary Education Act 1870?

According to UK Parliament, 2025, following the 1870 act, in 1880 schools were made compulsory for all children ages 5 to 10. Following this, UK Parliament, 2025 states that the age of this rose to 11 years, and then again to 12 years in 1893. Moreover, UK Parliament, 2025 says that all school children were given the right to have and receive medical inspections. This was known as the "Education (Administrations Provisions) Act". BBC Bitesize, 2025 talks about the successfulness of this act. It says during their years in school, children would receive three medical inspections. Furthermore, if children were sent into school in poor conditions, then the school board could act against their parents. Also, according to BBC Bitesize, 2025, after 1912, there was free medical treatment available for school children. UK Parliament, 2025 says that education population increased rapidly in 1910 with 5 million children attending school. In addition to this, UK Parliament, 2025 states that the leaving school age of children was upped to 15 in 1944, and free secondary education was provided in the UK. Education has drastically changed since the 1800s. For example, Edmentors, 2023 says that early years education in England begins at ages three and four, where they have access to 15 hours of free nursery education a week. Edmentors, 2023 also says that Wales is similar as they also provide a lot of early years education. This can include, voluntary playgroups, private nurseries or even approved childminders. My Tutor, 2025 says that in 1988 the National Curriculum was set up in England and Wales. The idea of the curriculum was to help learners receive the same standard of education. Moreover, My Tutor, 2025 explains that the core subjects, such as English, Maths and Science became the main focus. GOV.UK, no date says that in Wales Early Years is the first stage of a child's education, ages three to five. From this, children then enter key stage 1 from the age of five to seven. GOV.UK, no date vocalises that the compulsory school starting age in England and Wales is five years old. First things first, 2025 explains how children now learn through play as it helps them develop social and emotional skills.



Source: (Wolsey Hall Oxford, 2022).

Conclusion

Overall, from the evidence I have given for this contested issue, it is clear to see and understand why it was deemed as contested at the time. When researching, it was interesting to see how education was perceived and how the system worked, compared to how it is now. I personally think that the education system during this time was quite strange. I say this because children would only be able to memorise the material they were learning. Also known as rote learning. This is stated by Oxford Learning, 2017 and was mentioned in my scrapbook when discussing the advantages and disadvantages of this act. However, from my own experience working in education, children tend to learn through playing. I noted that this was how children now learn by first things first, 2025 when discussing how education has evolved since this issue. Overall, I have thoroughly enjoyed researching and discussing this issue. I have found it interesting and mind-thrilling to read.

Word count: 3281

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