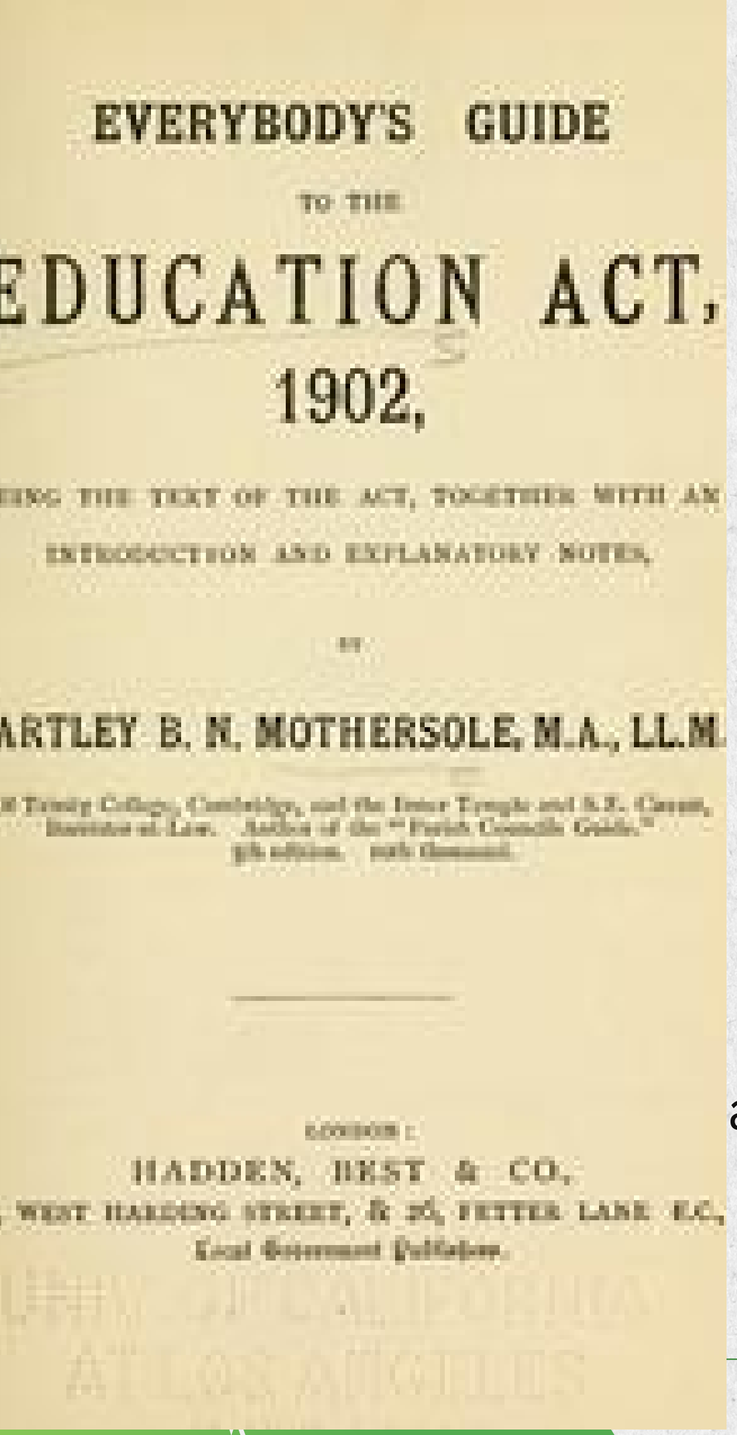
EDUCATION ACT OF 1902

REFORM ACT 1988

BY CAERWYN JAMES


EVERYBODY'S GUIDE

TO THE

EDUCATION ACT,

1902,

BEING THE TEXT OF THE ACT, TOGETHER WITH AN

INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATORY NOTES,

BY

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LONDON:

HADDEN, BEST & CO.,

WEST HARDING STREET, & 26, FETTER LANE E.C.,

Local Government Publishers.

EDUCATION ACT OF 1902

Overview of the 1902 education act

The Education Act 1902 replaced the old system of locally elected school boards with local education authorities for LEAs run by county and borough councils. These LEAs became responsible for both elementary and secondary education, giving them more power to plan and fund schools across their areas. Britannica (n.d.)

A major change was that voluntary church schools mainly Anglican and Catholic could now receive public funding for maintenance. This aimed to stabilize their finances but caused controversy, especially among Nonconformists who objected to paying taxes that supported religious schools. Parliament UK (2024)

The Act also encouraged the expansion of secondary education, allowing LEAs to support grammar schools and establish new secondary schools. This helped create a more coherent education system and paved the way for later reforms, including the Education Act 1944. Gillard (2011)

WHAT WAS GOING ON IN 1901-1902 TO MAKE THIS ACT IMPACTFUL

The Education Act 1902 became so important because the UK was facing a major education crisis in 1901–1902: the school system was chaotic, underfunded, divided by religion, and legally unstable. Social, political, and economic pressures made reform unavoidable (Britannica, n.d. Parliament UK, 2024 Gillard, 2011).

HOW DID THE DIVIDE EFFECT THE EDUCATIONAL FIELD

The religious divide, legal instability, and social, political, and economic pressures around 1902 directly shaped learners' experiences by creating unequal access, inconsistent school quality by in the next couple of slide going to show what they focused on and how it impacted the field and why the act help improve the current state.

HOW RELIGION AFFECTED IT

Across the UK, schooling was split between state schools and voluntary church run schools. This meant learners' experiences depended heavily on their family's religion.

Voluntary schools (mostly Anglican and Catholic) taught daily religious lessons, prayers, hymns, and catechism. For many learners, religion shaped:

- the curriculum (Bible study, doctrine, moral instruction)
- the school culture (Anglican or Catholic values embedded in discipline and behavior)
- the teachers, who were often trained by religious organizations
- the expectations placed on children (obedience, moral purity, denominational loyalty)

This meant that children's education was not neutral it was deeply tied to the religious identity of the school.

Learners in these schools often received less secular academic instruction, because time was devoted to religious teaching. This affected literacy, numeracy, and access to higher grade subjects. Britannica (n.d.)Keeping this loop where children will grow up with these parents believes and keep the cycle going funding/volunteering the schools keeping with lack of higher education causing lack of educated people in the country problems. Britannica (n.d.)

HOW THE LEGAL INSTABILITY AFFECTED LEARNERS

The Cockerton Judgment (1901) ruled that school boards were acting outside the law by teaching subjects beyond basic elementary education. This was massive as it put a lot of strain on the working class and demoralized a lot of inspiring learning because many higher-grade classes for older or more advanced pupils had to stop immediately. ‘It confirms that the ruling made it illegal for school boards to spend rate-payer money on teaching subjects beyond elementary level.’ Technical Education Matters (2011) Learners who were progressing into more academic subjects suddenly found their classes cancelled as there was a lack of funding. Schools could no longer legally offer subjects like science, algebra, geography, or literature at higher levels. This was a national disruption, affecting learners across the UK who relied on board schools for advanced learning. This meant that children, especially working-class learners were blocked from progressing academically. For many, this ended with any chance of entering grammar schools, technical colleges, apprenticeships, requiring literacy or numeracy for civil service exams. The legal ruling created a barrier to social mobility, directly harming learners’ futures. Parliament UK (2024), Technical Education Matters (2011). Gillard, D. (2011)

FOR

Conservatives with Arthur Balfour and his party, Church of England, Industrial leaders where all for the act to be past because it benefited them in these ways, for the Conservatives they believed the UK needed a modern, unified education system instead of thousands of separate school boards making it easier to control and manage and know what all the schools are doing. They wanted to expand secondary education, which Britain lacked compared to Germany and the USA. They argued voluntary (church) schools needed stable public funding to survive. They saw the Cockerton Judgement as a legal crisis that made reform unavoidable as it was becoming and increasing detriment that needed to be changed for the educational health of the country. Technical Education Matters (2011) As for the Church of England, Britannica (n.d.) explains 'voluntary schools were struggling and the Act allowed them to receive public funds.' Leaving them to close down which they did not want to do as religion is a big belfie and at the time wanted to carry on and be protected. So, if they sided with passing the act, they were guaranteed money while keeping control of the property. It also allowed them to afford repairs, teachers, and materials for a better schooling experience

FOR

Industrial leaders like it because Britain needed a more educated workforce to compete internationally with higher-grade and technical schools. As the Cockerton judgement was collapsing with the secondary school system. The educational act allowed local authorities to support technical and secondary education. This effected the learners with more access to science, maths, and technical subjects so it could have better preparation for industrial jobs making the UK more involved in the continuation of the world, as everything was changing and moving into a more industrial age. Parliament UK (2024) The Times (1902)

AGAINST

Why did Nonconformists, School Boards, Liberal Party where all for against, because it did not a line with their goal and what they were trying to achieve. With the Nonconformists of Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, they did not line themself to many of the new legislations. Objected to paying taxes rates that funded Anglican schools. As their policies did not line up and it would not help them in any way. Also, they believed the Act was unfair because it used public money to support denominational religious teaching. They launched the Passive Resistance Movement, refusing to pay education taxes. Which did work causing a lot of problems for the Conservative Government causing massive government embarrassment as (Lawson and Silver, 1973, p. 312) “The Passive Resistance movement became a serious political embarrassment to the Government.” and lead to rethink the denominational funding as they were getting back last from the public for accusations of religious injustice. With this, the impact at the time caused children in nonconformist families to face disrupted schooling. Some families withdrew children from religious lessons, and Community conflict spilled into classrooms which was breeding a negative learning environment. Lawson, J. and Silver, H. (1973) Whitehouse, J.H. (1903) Chitty, C. (2009)

AGAINST

Why did school boards oppose the Act? It introduced the replacement of the school boards with the Local Education Authorities. As many board members believed they had built a fairer, more democratic system, they were not happy with being replaced with a new system as they also opposed giving more power to local councils and the Church. This impact on learners by loss of locally elected control over schools and Some areas saw reduced innovation in teaching with these learners lost access to higher grade board school. Technical Education Matters (2011)

With the Liberal party, they opposed it because they argued the Act was biased toward the Church of England. They also believed public money should fund secular education, not denominational teaching as they thought a system of schooling focused on academic, scientific, and humanistic subjects would have been more beneficial for the country. They like the idea of supporting Nonconformist resistance. The impact this had is it caused political conflict that created instability in some communities, also some schools struggled financially due to the rate-refusal campaigns. Gillard, D. (2011)

BEFORE LEA

- **2,568 separate school boards**
- **14,000 voluntary school committees**
- No unified standards
- No consistent funding
- No coordinated secondary education police

AFTER LEA

- **One unified administrative structure**
- **Consistent funding from local rates**
- **Uniform inspection and standards**
- **Central oversight by the Board of Education**
- **Clear responsibility for both elementary and secondary schools**

"The 1902 Board of Education Act... transferred responsibility for education to county and county borough councils... paving the way for more consistent standards and increased funding." (Vance, 2023)

HOW THE LEA FUNDS

For primary schools

- teachers salaries
- school buildings and repairs
- equmant and materials
- administration
- school buildings

For secondary schools

- buildings new secondary schools
- supporting exisitng grammar schools
- providing schoolarships for the working class puils

LEA money support

- techincal collage
- evening classes
- adult education
- industrial and commercial training

Overall, the LEA money supported a wide view of schools andteachers. With new skills to help them get better qualificationsand be more effective educators , with the higher salary makingit a more desirable job. It also helped poorer pupils attendschool with basic needs. Secondary schools got equipmentmaking it more effective to teach more then just work skills. Parliament UK (2024)

CONCLUSION

In my opinion it was a controversial change with many up sides, but I can see how groups may not have it as much. It overall helped a lot more than hurt epically after the 1901 Cockerton Judgment was past. The against part where happy not to pay the taxing fees because of the refusal campaigns but then had problems in areas where there was lack of money because the fee where not met which doesn't make a lot of sense to me. The introduction of LEA was a positive step forward as it helps school, teachers and pupils to have a better education “The 1904 Regulations brought great changes establishing a balanced curriculum and defining the status of secondary schools.” (Eaglesham, 1967, p. 53) “The Act gave LEAs powers to establish new secondary and technical schools.” (Spartacus Educational, 2024) “The Act made significant provision for secondary and technical education… Councils could set up new secondary ‘grammar’ schools.” (Parliament UK, 2024) “It led to a rapid growth of secondary schools, with over 1,000 opening by 1914, including 349 for girls only.” (Searle, 1992, p. 188)

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REFORM ACT 1988

Overview of the 1902 education act

The Education Reform Act 1988 fundamentally reshaped schooling in England and Wales by introducing a centrally defined National Curriculum, statutory Key Stages, and standardized testing, creating a consistent framework for what pupils should learn and how their progress should be assessed. According to the Department for Education, the Act replaced the fragmented post 1944 system with a consistent and coherent national structure that ensured all children received a broad and balanced education across core and foundation subjects (Department for Education, 2024). The Act also transformed school governance through Local Management of Schools (LMS), transferring budgetary control from local authorities to headteachers and governing bodies, which increased autonomy and encouraged more efficient resource use. In addition, the Act introduced parental choice and open enrolment, treating schools as competing institutions and parents as educational consumers, a shift described by Baker as central to raising standards through accountability and competition (Department for Education, 2024). New school types such as Grant-Maintained Schools and City Technology Colleges further decentralized control by allowing schools to opt out of local authority oversight and receive funding directly from central government. Together, these reforms created the modern landscape of English education, establishing the curriculum, assessment, and governance structures that continue to shape schools today.

REFORM ACT 1988

BEFORE

- Parents have little to no say
- Could teach what erever they wanted in the manner they wanted to
- There was no real test to show if the education was working
- Mostly funded by the churches more outside party's
- No real information beside word of mouth and markeing to get you to enroll

“Before the 1988 Act there was no national curriculum and no national system of testing… making it impossible to compare standards between schools.” (Ball, 2008, p. 45)

AFTER

- Gave them more insight to education
- Every school must teach the same subjects in the same format with the national curriculum
- SAT were brought in to have standardized testing
- LMS government gave set budget so that there would be no biased decision and more overall better health for schools
- With this making a better school and it being on show to the patents

“SATs were central to the accountability framework created by the 1988 Act.” (Glennerster, 1991, p. 27)

HOW WAS THE ILEA OVERPRICED

According to a 1988 statement by Education Secretary Kenneth Baker, "ILEA spent 52% more than the outer London boroughs 45% more than Manchester 83% more than Birmingham." with the same educational and social standard yet the central London was being funded much more “ILEA spent 52% more than the outer London boroughs, 45% more than Manchester, and 83% more than Birmingham.” (Hansard, 1988)

In a 1983 parliamentary exchange, the government stated that ILEA was overspending 66% compared to what they believed was reasonable for its size and responsibilities. With this overspending to educate less than other schools

To counter act this, the government Ministers argued that ILEA could make significant reductions in spending without reducing its ability to provide an effective service, implying that much of its budget was unnecessary.

Government ministers repeatedly claimed that ILEA’s high spending was **not necessary** to maintain educational quality. They argued: “ILEA could make significant reductions in expenditure without reducing its ability to provide an effective service.” (Department of Education and Science, 1984, p. 12)

WHAT STANDARDIZED TESTING DID FOR SCHOOLS

It was one of the bigger changes in schooling by implementing
The national curriculum was set, so all schools followed the same work scheme and tested at the same time using standardized tests. “Standardized testing was central to the accountability framework created by the 1988 Act.” (Glennerster, 1991, p. 27)
The results of SATs then allowed league tables to keep track of the top preforming schools
“The National Curriculum specified subjects, programmes of study and attainment targets... accompanied by national testing at ages 7, 11 and 14.” (Whitty, 1997, p. 42)
Making schooling a more competitive and structured work environment guiding people to improve on their work ethic
“The 1988 Act transformed schooling by imposing a common curriculum framework across England and Wales.” (Chitty, 2014, p. 62)

HOW POLITICAL WAS IT

The abolition of ILEA through the 1988 Reform Act was deeply political, not all for the benefit of education. It wasn't just about education standards or money; it was about ideology, power, and control. Multiple historians and parliamentary records show that the Conservative government viewed ILEA as a left leaning, politically hostile authority. This made ILEA a political target, especially under Thatcher's government, which aimed to reduce the power of large Labor controlled local authorities. "The decision to abolish ILEA was primarily political rooted in Conservative hostility to left-wing local authorities rather than educational necessity." (Ball, 2008, p. 52)

Another reason the ILEA was removed was a conflict of interest and how getting rid of it puts more power to the conservative how the government in power at the time as the ILEA was Labour run. "The government believed ILEA was too powerful and too independent abolition was intended to bring education under tighter central control." (Whitty, 1997, p. 41)

DID IT END THE DESIRE TO MAKE LONDON LESS CENTRALIZED

No, it was part of a bigger, ongoing political project, not the end of it, but a good start for the project. The abolition of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) was not a standalone event but part of a much wider Conservative political project that unfolded throughout the 1980s. Rather than being simply a response to educational concerns, it formed one step in a long-term ideological strategy aimed at reducing the power of Labour-controlled local authorities and centralizing control within central government. Historians such as Ball argue that the "1988 Education Reform Act was deeply ideological, designed to restructure education around market principles and weaken municipal influence, with ILEA's removal acting as an early and symbolic victory in this broader agenda" (Ball, 2008, p. 50). Chitty similarly notes that abolishing ILEA "was not an isolated act but part of a coherent Conservative project to restructure education governance," showing that the move aligned with Thatcher's wider efforts to curb local government autonomy (Chitty, 2014, p. 120). ILEA's strong Labor identity made it a political target, and its abolition helped shift educational power away from a left-leaning authority and towards Conservative-controlled boroughs and central government. As Glennerster explains, this was consistent with earlier actions such as rate capping and the abolition of the Greater London Council, demonstrating that removing ILEA was not the end of a process but the beginning of a larger ideological restructuring of British education (Glennerster, 1991, p. 29).

CONCLUSION

I my opinion there was a lot more with the 1988 act it helped schools dramatically and overall changes where beneficial making schools better and have a competition aspect to them giving a drive to improvements their issues and a lot seems to be cover by "this is bad because of this" but it wasn’t and more of a pollical move disguised as an education update.

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THANK YOU