

Since 1996 there have been numerous policies which have shaped education into what we know it to be today. These policies have had both positive and negative effects on all educational stakeholders. This essay will look specifically from the point of view of teachers and how educational policy development over time has affected them in different ways.

A key policy regarding children with special educational needs was integrated into the education system in 1976. In March 1974 it was

recommended that the child guidance service should be based on a multi professional team, providing assessment, diagnosis, consultation, treatment and other help.' (Gillard, 2011, p:1). It seems as if this was the era in which it was realised that children with special educational needs require extra provisions within education. According to Gillard, help given to children with behavioural, emotional and learning difficulties should be extended. This would result in children with SEN getting a better chance at education and expanding their opportunities. As stated this was integrated in the 1976 education act. The act declared 'LEA's to provide for the special education of all handicapped pupils in county and voluntary schools.' (Gillard, 2011, p:1). Gillard reports the only exception for this is if it was impractical or incompatible with the efficiency of the school. Therefore, children with special educational needs were receiving a much better customised education in most schools. A consequence of this policy being embedded in the education system could be that teachers will have to undergo extra training in order to equip them with the skills needed to educate children with special educational needs. This could be seen in a positive way as they are gaining new skills making them a more qualified and better equipped teacher. On the other hand, training may be difficult and time consuming which may deter teachers.

In 1988 came the Education Reform Act. According to Ward, this act is widely known for the introduction of testing and the national curriculum, however it also introduced local management of schools. Local management of schools 'took financial control away from LEA's by delegating the spending budget directly to schools.' (Ward, 2004, p:83). This meant that schools were now in charge of their own budgets and what the money they were assigned was spent on.

'Such decisions were now to be taken by the headteacher and governing body of the school, not by local authority officials.' (Ward, 2004, p:83).

Ward goes on to say that this was a very controversial policy as the government were still in charge of the curriculum and tests that students took, however schools were now in charge of their own funding. From a teachers point of view this must have been very empowering. They now had more of a say in what the schools budget was spent on. This may allow them to employ new staff with different skills or buy new resources to promote a more interactive learning style. On the other hand, budgets may be mis-spent or not distributed fairly leading to conflict between teachers and teaching staff. It is therefore debatable as to whether this policy would have a positive or negative impact on teachers.

The New Labour came into power in 2005. Their policies had arguably the biggest effect on education ever. Labour came into power 'after 18 years of opposition a very changed party from when it left office.' (Murphy et al, 2009, p:53). They did not waste any time before establishing their new educational policies. Their first policy involved OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education). OFSTED are an examining body who observe schools and rate them on how effectively they are educating students. 'They set targets for schools to achieve in SATS for their pupils. If a school was rated as being successful they could proceed with minimum Government intervention. This would have put teachers under great amounts of stress. This new high level of scrutiny will have put pressure on teachers to teach to the best of their ability as they will not have wanted to be seen as a failing teacher.

Next from New Labour came the idea of Intervention.

The conservative government had originally set up the National Literacy Project, it was New Labour who went on to implement the National Teaching Strategy. The National Numeracy Strategy and eventually the Key Stage 3 Strategy quickly followed this. (Murphy et al, 2009, p:54). This upped the pressure on teachers even more. Murphy et al (2009) states quality lessons had to be planned in advance for every lesson if a teacher wanted to survive inspection. This new

pressure may have driven some teachers/ trainee teachers out of the profession as they felt to scrutinised upon. However, with such high levels of inspection, lessons will have been very effective therefore benefitting pupils learning experience.

The close management of what went on in schools was at the same time linked to choice and freedom for parents to select a high achieving school. (Murphy et al, 2009, p:54).

This is suggesting that through this intervention parents were able to evaluate which schools were the most high achieving and had the best teaching and which would be most appropriate to send their children too.

The next initiative introduced by New Labour was Academy schools. Academies do not differ significantly from Conservative Government City Technology Colleges. This is because they are linked to business and in control their own finance, admissions and curriculum according to Murphy et al. Therefore, there will still be motivation for teachers as they are still in charge of financial matters and to an extent the way in which they teach their students. 'The policy for Academies suggests that they will replace failing schools in difficult social areas.' (Murphy et al, 2009, p:55). This again puts teachers under excess pressure to perform to the best of their ability in order for their school not to be classed as 'failing'. 'Academies are allowed to opt out of national agreements on wages and working conditions of teachers. This could lead to a more empowered workforce as they have more freedom in decision in the environment in which they work and how much they get paid. However this could go completely the wrong way if it is decided to pay teachers less. This is demotivating and may be reflected in the way they teach and the effort they put into the profession.

New Labour believed heavily in the idea of faith schools. This is the idea that children are segregated into different schools regarding religion.

There are about 14,000 non-religious schools, and nearly 7,000 faith schools. This year the figure has risen again as new academies open: a third are faith-run - and religions have taken over some community schools. (Toynbee, 2008, p:1).

'Faith schools have proved to be popular to parents as they seem to gain good examination results.' (Murphy et al, 2009, p:55). This will promote teachers in a positive light and possibly empower them as they feel they are fulfilling their profession to the best of their ability. But this does 'impact the social cohesion of society. (Murphy et al, 2009, p:55). Therefore children of different races and religions are unable to socialise with each other.

Labour believe in "The Whole Child.' This has been implemented through the policy 'Every Child Matters'. This policy aims to allow all children an equal opportunity to education. Newcombe states that it applies to children from when they are born up until the age of 19. It 'is based on the idea that every child, regardless of their individual circumstances or background, should have plenty of support throughout their life.' (Newcombe, 2017, p:1). Although this policy is brilliant in that it gives every child regardless of their upbringing or background an equal chance it may put a strain on teachers. Children from a worse upbringing or who suffer from special educational needs may be more challenging to teach and therefore take up more of the teachers time and attention than the rest of the class. This issue therefore needs to be addressed in order for all children to get the same amount of attention and support they need and deserve.

In 2008 an educational policy was introduced which stated that pupils now had to 'stay in education or training until the age of 18.' (Condrón, 2007, p:1). This policy could lead to the demand for a larger teaching force due to more students needing to be educated. This could give more opportunities to trainee teachers and also those aspiring to be teachers. 'Some 330,000 teenagers will be affected by the plan, which is aimed at tackling the problem of an unskilled workforce.' (Condrón, 2007, p:1). This plan is very effective, however there may be a problem if there are a lack of teachers who are able to teach at a higher level (16+). Consequently teachers may have to take part in extra training in order to be able to teach at a sixth form/ college level. According to Tickle a problem with this is that it will lead to teachers becoming ill. She states that teachers will now be 'facing a roomful of stropky 17-year-olds who very vocally don't want to be there.' (Tickle, 2011, p:1). This is very true as a lot of students may see this policy as pointless and

therefore will make it clear that they do not want to attend classes. This will be degrading for the teacher and make teaching very difficult.

The Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification was introduced in 2013 according to Dauncey and was made available to all schools in 2007. 'The WBQ is not statutory for learners to undertake nor compulsory for centres to provide, although the Welsh Government strongly encourages them to do so.' (Dauncey, 2015, p:2). The Welsh Baccalaureate qualification is a combination of general and vocational learning. The idea being that students are equipped with key skills that will assist them when they leave school. Consequently teachers are now not just teaching the standard curriculum (English, Maths etc), they are now preparing children for later life through the learning of other skills states Daucey. The Welsh Back 'gives broader experiences than traditional learning programmes, to suit the diverse needs of young people.' (Daucey, 2015, p:2). Theoretically due to this children will now be leaving school better equipped for later life.

'The Welsh Baccalaureate is a great event for teachers to learn new skills and improve their confidence in the teaching and assessment of the individual project and global citizenship challenges.' (Diment, 2016, p:1)

Thus teachers are gaining a wider range of skills broadening their profession and allowing them the ability to prepare pupils for life not just in school but after they have left. In 2016 the success of the Welsh Baccalaureate led to more workshops for teachers. These included hands on activities and support. As stated this will provide teachers with the skills they need to give their pupils the best possible chance when leaving school and moving into the world of work. On the other hand, this training may be time consuming. Teaching is a profession which demands a lot of time and effort e.g. lesson planning. A consequence of this is that teachers may find it hard to find time to fit in this additional training needed to be able to teach the Welsh Baccalaureate effectively and to the best of their ability.

Conclusively, policy has had a massive impact not just on teachers in general. However, it could be argued that, teachers have been affected most as educational professionals. For example the New Labour policies and the Welsh Baccalaureate has meant teachers have had to undergo new training and modify their teaching methods in order to keep up policy change. New policy are always being implemented and education as a whole is constantly changing. Thus it is uncertain how educational policies will effect teachers in the future.

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