

Anti Academies Alliance



www.antiacademies.org.uk

“A good
local school
for every
child”

Who are the New Schools Network

And who will profit from running their schools?

Education Secretary Michael Gove is driving through his ‘schools revolution’. This includes opening Swedish style ‘Free’ Schools. 24 opened in September 2011 and 55 are due to open in 2012.

The ‘Free’ schools proposal is new to Britain. It is modeled on the Swedish and American experiences with ‘Free’ and ‘Charter’ schools.

This proposal is being driven by the New Schools Network.

The supposedly independent New Schools Network was founded by Rachel Wolf, a former advisor to Michael Gove and Boris Johnson! When asked to identify their backers they refused, yet they have been given £500,000 by the government to help promote ‘Free’ Schools.

Their Trustees and advisors are typical of the people queuing to get hold of our schools – Academy chains, Charter schools, big business.

These dangers are typical of the effects that ‘Free’ schools have had in Sweden and America. They are about introducing the market into the heart of the education system, with competition, school closures, increasing segregation and big profits.

The government scrapped the Building Schools for the Future programme, meaning many schools in poorer areas that are desperate for rebuilding or renewal will be left as they are, while money is poured into ‘Free’ schools for middle class children. This will literally create a two tier education system, in

The first ‘Free’ Schools

24 ‘Free’ schools opened in September 2011. They include:

- The West London Free School. This is run by Stockbrokers, Economists and Executives. It will teach compulsory Latin.
- The Maharishi school in Lancashire will include daily transcendental meditation.
- Kings Science Academy, Bradford, will teach etiquette, fine dining, horse riding and archery.
- Two are run by ARK, the Academy sponsors who are made up of Hedge Fund managers, the people who pushed the economy into crisis.
- The Aldborough E-ACT primary school in Redbridge will have a 10 hour day and 4 week summer holiday.

bricks and mortar.

When the government say they want parents and pupils to have choice, what they mean is middle class parents who know how to use the system.

Patrons: Lord Roy Hattersley, Tony Benn, Fiona Millar, Professor Gus John, Michael Rosen, Alan Gibbons, Joan Sallis OBE
National Trade Union Affiliates: TUC, NUT, NASUWT, ATL, UCU, UNISON, UNITE, GMB, FBU, MU, PCS

• PO Box 14412, Birmingham, B11 9DZ • office@antiacademies.org.uk • 07528 201 697

Anti Academies Alliance

There are a number of troubling organisations now waiting in the wings to take on our schools.

Babcock International, formerly Vosper Thornycroft, which made £23.6 million out of Education in 2009. It's managing director for education Marcus Watson wants to run 1,000 schools "I don't think 1,000 schools is unrealistic," he told *The Times*.

Serco is another multinational with its fingers in Education, when it isn't running prisons.

All parties on Bradford Council recently decided not to renew Serco's 10 year contract to run a wide range of education services in Bradford. This followed a stakeholder consultation which showed near unanimity for ending the contract.

Edison is a US company with a growing empire in the UK. It's £1 million, three-year contract - the first and only of its kind - with Turin Grove School in Edmonton, North London, has not been renewed. Martin Cocks, the chair of governors, said that dealing with a company instead of a single headteacher had not been "without difficulties".

In 2002 Edison USA was caught in the stock market meltdown, with its shares plummeting from over \$21 to under \$1. The company solved this by selling off its books, computers, lab equipment and musical instruments!

In Philadelphia 4 of its schools have been taken back into district hands, after the schools it operated failed to deliver higher test scores than district schools, despite costly interventions.

GEMS education runs schools in Dubai, and aspires to run 200 schools in the UK. Its managing director, Anders Hultin recently asserted, "*Only the profit motive will drive the level of expansion and innovation that education services require*".

Kunskapskolan run 30 schools in Sweden, the biggest For-Profit chain, with an operating profit of SKr65 million. It has recently taken over its first Academy in Richmond.

While we do not yet have a significant for-profit sector in education it is clear that this is the direction in which the Tories and big business want to travel.

What are 'Free' schools?

The Tories claim that Swedish 'Free' schools hold the key to a successful education system.

'Free' Schools are often opened in empty office blocks, industrial estates or other cheap accommodation. They often have very few facilities. They rarely have libraries, sending pupils to local municipal libraries instead. They rarely have Art, Design & Technology, Cookery or Sports facilities, as these take up space and are expensive. Instead they send pupils away on courses to study these areas of the curriculum.

75% of Sweden's 'Free' Schools are run for profit. This is achieved by the economies of scale described above, and by the use of untrained teachers. The number of qualified teachers in 'Free' schools is a little over 60% compared to 84% in public schools.

Ann-Christin Larsson, a senior officer at Swedish teaching union Lararförbundet spoke at a Seminar organised by the Anti Academies Alliance and the TUC in March 2010. She said "*Independent schools have also created more segregation. Pupils attending these schools are from better off, more educated families. It's because they are more informed and they know how to work the system better.*"

One of the most respected international bodies that measures student performance is TIMSS – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. IN 2007 TIMSS reported on trends in average scores from 1995 to 2007. Its conclusions make interesting reading.

Science		Maths	
England	+8%	England	+16%
Sweden	-42%	Sweden	-48%

Yet Michael Gove insists that we should be looking to the Swedish education system for inspiration.