

Anti Academies Alliance



Briefing

www.antiacademies.org.uk

“A good
local school
for every
child”

Forced Academies

Michael Gove has announced that there are 200 ‘underperforming’ primary schools in England. He has produced legislation to force these schools to become academies. This is being used to coerce many more schools into converting into academies voluntarily.

Are these schools ‘underperforming’?

Many of the schools that Gove has identified are schools in areas with significant deprivation. Many have significant numbers of pupils on free school meals or whose first language is not English. Far from underperforming many make incredible strides forward with their pupils but not sufficient to meet Gove’s criteria.

While the ‘underperforming’ schools are overwhelmingly in poorer areas, the 500 highest performing schools are overwhelmingly in richer areas.

Do Academies work?

The government claims that academies are ‘proven to succeed’. Primary schools have only begun to convert to academies recently, so there is no evidence that they work.

However there are all-through academies which have a primary intake. Looking at the KS2 results for 12 academies which opened before 2009 and have had time to demonstrate improvement, 9 out of 12 pupils are making less than average progress in English or Maths or both.

Enough secondary schools are academies for an analysis. 274 academies entered pupils for GCSEs in 2011 and 212 of these had entered pupils in 2010, allowing a comparison of their results. This comparison shows 27% saw their results decline or remain the same.

Who’s schools? Our schools

This is the slogan used by parents and pupils on the 1,000 strong march through Haringey in January against their schools becoming forced academies. In forcing schools to become academies against the wishes of parents, staff, governors and headteachers Gove is trampling over their democratic rights.

Gove is handing these schools over to academy chains which are not accountable to the local community. A growing number of organisations are lining up to take over schools, many of these want to run schools for a profit.

How do we improve schools?

The real debate here is about how to improve schools. This is about teaching and learning. Research and practice show how to improve schools. There is abundant evidence from here and abroad - "the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers".

School improvement is about improving the quality of teaching. Supporting our heads, teachers and support staff in improving teaching and learning. It is the best way and incidentally the most cost effective.

Yet Gove insists school improvement is simply a matter of turning a school into an academy.



Campaigns can win

If your school has been told that it is on Michael Gove’s ‘list’ here are some of the things you can do:

- Contact the Head and Governors to see if they will oppose the proposal
- Organise a petition
- Hold a public meeting
- Contact the Anti Academies Alliance
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