

RSB Policy Briefing

General Election 2017 Education and Science Policies

The education priorities and science priorities identified in the 2017 general election manifestos. As education is a devolved issue, there is additional information specific to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Conservatives

Science

- Theresa May's Conservatives will deliver growth across the country through our modern industrial strategy and major investment in infrastructure, skills and research and development.
- We will spend more on research and development, to turn brilliant discoveries into practical products and transform the world's industries – such as the batteries that will power a new generation of clean, efficient, electric vehicles.
- We will deliver this and ensure further growth so that overall, as a nation, we meet the current OECD average for investment in R&D – that is, 2.4 per cent of GDP – within ten years, with a longer-term goal of three per cent.
- We will increase the number of scientists working in the UK and enable leading scientists from around the world to work here. We will work hard to ensure we have a regulatory environment that encourages innovation.
- We want universities to enjoy the commercial fruits of their research, through funds that are large enough to list, thereby giving British investors a chance to share in their success.
- A global Britain should aspire to do even more: we will significantly increase our funding of UK-led medical and technical research into the biggest threats to global health and prosperity.
- We will establish new institutes of technology, backed by leading employers and linked to leading universities, in every major city in England. They will provide courses at degree level and above, specialising in technical disciplines, such as STEM, whilst also providing higher-level apprenticeships and bespoke courses for employers. They will enjoy the freedoms that make our universities great, including eligibility for public funding for productivity and skills research, and access to loans and grants for their students.
- We will continue to support research into the diagnosis and treatment of rare cancers and other diseases, including Genomics England's work in decoding 100,000 genomes.

Education

Early years

- Thirty hours of free childcare for three and four-year-olds for working parents who find it difficult to manage the costs of childcare
- Institute a capital fund to help primary schools develop nurseries where they currently do not have the facilities to provide one

Schools

- Continue with our programme of free schools, building at least a hundred new free schools a year.
- We will prohibit councils from creating any new places in schools that have been rated either 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' by Ofsted
- Allow opening of new faith schools - require new faith schools to prove that parents of other faiths and none would be prepared to send their children to that school
- Work with the Independent Schools Council to ensure that at least 100 leading independent schools become involved in academy sponsorship or the founding of free schools in the state system
- Open a specialist maths school in every major city in England
- Allow opening of new selective schools
- We will make sure that no school has its budget cut as a result of the new fair funding formula
- Increase the overall schools budget by £4 billion by 2022
- Protect the Pupil Premium
- Remove free lunches for all infants instead offer a free school breakfast to every child in every year of primary school, while children from low-income families will continue to receive free school lunches throughout their years in primary and secondary education.

School Curriculum

- Strengthen the teaching of literacy and numeracy in the early years
- Expect every 11-year-old to know their times tables off by heart
- Improve schools' accountability at key stage 3
- Expect 75 per cent of pupils to have been entered for the EBacc combination of GCSEs by the end of the next parliament, with 90 per cent of pupils studying this combination of academic GCSEs by 2025

Teachers

- Provide bursaries to attract top graduates into teaching
- Offer forgiveness on student loan repayments while they are teaching
- Dedicated support to help teachers throughout their careers.
- Bear down on unnecessary paperwork and the burden of Ofsted inspections
- Create a single jobs portal to advertise schools jobs

Technical Education

- Replacing 13,000 existing technical qualifications with new qualifications, known as T-levels, across fifteen routes in subjects including construction, creative and design, digital, engineering and manufacturing, and health and science
- Increase the number of teaching hours by fifty per cent to an average of 900 hours per year and make sure that each student does a three-month work placement as part of their course
- Invest in further education colleges to make sure they have world-class equipment and facilities
- Create a new national programme to attract experienced industry professionals to work in FE colleges
- Establish new institutes of technology, backed by leading employers and linked to leading universities, in every major city in England
- Launch a major review of funding across tertiary education as a whole
- Ensure that colleges deliver the skills required by local businesses through Skills Advisory Panels and Local Enterprise Partnerships working at a regional and local level.
- Introduce a UCAS-style portal for technical education

Apprenticeships

- Create 3 million apprenticeships for young people by 2020
- Allow large firms to pass levy funds to small firms in their supply chain, and work with the business community to develop a new programme to allow larger firms to place apprentices in their supply chains
- Explore teaching apprenticeships sponsored by major companies, especially in STEM subjects
- Introduce significantly discounted bus and train travel for apprentices to ensure that no young person is deterred from an apprenticeship due to travel costs

Higher Education / Universities

- We will make it a condition for universities hoping to charge maximum tuition fees to become involved in academy sponsorship or the founding of free schools
- Launch a major review of funding across tertiary education as a whole
- Toughen the visa requirements for students
- Expect students to leave the country at the end of their course, unless they meet new, higher requirements that allow them to work in Britain after their studies have concluded
- Overseas students will remain in the immigration statistics

Lifelong learning

- A new right to request leave for training for all employees
- National retraining scheme. Under the scheme, the costs of training will be met by the government, with companies able to gain access to the Apprenticeship Levy to support wage costs during the training period
- Introducing a right to lifelong learning in digital skills, just as we have done for literacy and numeracy