

**OXFORD UNIVERSITY NEWS RELEASE: Launch of final report by Nuffield Review**  
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**Largest review of 14-19 education and training in England and Wales for 50 years**

A report, to be published today, is the largest independent review of education and training for 14-19 year olds in England and Wales since the Crowther Report in 1959. The review (funded by the Nuffield Foundation) by a Directorate led by Professor Richard Pring from the University of Oxford, will be presented at a conference in London. Responding to the Report will be Barry Sheerman, chairman of the Commons Select Committee on Children, Schools and Families.

Summarising its significance, Professor Pring said: 'The Crowther Report, 15-18, recommended the raising of the school leaving age to 16, but still saw post-16 education to be for the small minority in the sixth-forms of grammar schools. We now live in a different world where most young people participate in some form of post-16 education and training. The Review welcomes this, but shows that much more needs to be done if **all** young people are to live fulfilling lives and if the social and economic problems of the community are to be met. Too many young people are failed by the system and, in the current recession, feel even more frustrated and let down.'

Professor Ken Spours, of the Institute of Education, concluded: 'Governments, now and future, must ensure that all learners, from the brightest to the weakest, can gain the skills they need to reach their potential. This would be helped by a broad baccalaureate-type programme which could be both general and vocational.'

The Nuffield Review, funded by the Nuffield Foundation and started in 2003, is an independent review of all aspects of 14-19 education and training including: aims; quality of learning; curriculum; assessment; qualifications; progression to employment, training and higher education; institutional provision; governance; and policy.

The key question asked by the Report is: *What counts as an educated 19 year old in this day and age?*

The 230-page report praises aspects of government education policy, in particular:

- The aspiration in England to involve all 16-18 year olds in education and training by 2015.
- The creation of 'entitlement' for all young people to a broader range of learning opportunities.
- The development of collaborative partnerships between schools, colleges and employers (14-19 Learning Networks in Wales) to meet that entitlement.
- The massive investment in schools through 'Building Schools for the Future'.
- A more holistic and flexible framework for learning through the Welsh Baccalaureate.

However, the Review also sets out the following recommendations:

- A high priority must be the relatively large number of young people presently 'Not in Education, Employment and Training'. Despite much investment, there are poor rates of participation and low levels of attainment.
- The involvement of all 16-18 year olds in some form of education and training would be better achieved by enticement rather than coercion – as in Wales. It is crucial that relevant and appealing learning opportunities are offered to those who might otherwise choose not to participate.
- The English government's vision of learning is too narrow – a broader one must recognise the importance of practical capability, active learning, social development and moral commitment, not just 'academic success' or 'skills for employment'. Wales' *Learning Pathways* has this broader vision.
- This narrow vision of learning with its targets and inspection criteria focuses on what is easily measurable and encourages teaching to the test. Future assessment must recognise the totality of achievement.
- Collaboration between schools, colleges and work-based learning-providers is essential if the future needs of 14-19 are to be met. Policy in both countries recognises this, but that policy is undermined in England by the creation of different types of school, underperforming 6<sup>th</sup> forms and the establishment of league tables.

- The present ‘three-track’ Framework of Qualifications in England, with its GCSE/A Levels, Diplomas and Apprenticeships, is obsolete. What is required is a more unified and flexible system, recognising all types of learning, varying levels of achievement and different learning styles.
- Employers should be encouraged by clear well-funded policies to encourage a better provision of work-based learning. Level 3 apprenticeships should be maintained as a brand name, as a licence to practise and as an alternative route into higher education.
- The micro-management of central government in England has become damaging. Education professionals should have a greater say in policy and curriculum, especially at a local level.
- The language of policy makers and their advisers undermines the educational engagement of teachers and learners. The language of performance management – ‘outputs’ against ‘inputs’, ‘targets’, ‘performance indicators’, ‘audits’, ‘efficiency gains’, ‘customers’ (not ‘learners’), ‘curriculum deliverers’ (not ‘teachers’) is inappropriate in deliberations about aims of education and the development of young people.

The Nuffield Review Directorate is led by Professor Richard Pring (University of Oxford). Other members of the Directorate are Dr Geoff Hayward (University of Oxford), Professor Ann Hodgson and Professor Ken Spours (Institute of Education, University of London), Mrs Jill Johnson (UCAS), Professor Gareth Rees and Professor Ewart Keep (Cardiff University School of Social Sciences).

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**Notes to Editors:**

\*To obtain the Report: <http://www.routledge.com/books/education-for-all-isbn9780415547222>

\* For the Executive Summary, contact [joanne.hazell@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:joanne.hazell@education.ox.ac.uk)

\* For more information about the Nuffield Review, go to [www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk](http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk).

\*The Nuffield Foundation is one of the UK's best-known charitable trusts and was established in 1943 by William Morris (Lord Nuffield), the founder of Morris Motors. Lord Nuffield wanted his Foundation to 'advance social well being', particularly through research and practical experiment. The Foundation aims to achieve this by supporting work which will bring about improvements in society, and which is founded on careful reflection and informed by objective and reliable evidence.

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