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SSAT Business and Enterprise Head teacher Steering Group

Position paper The case for business and enterprise education as an entitlement for all young people

The Business and Enterprise Head teacher Steering Group (B&E HTSG) embraces many of the education reforms being introduced by the coalition government as an opportunity for schools to ensure children and young people receive the very best education. We wholeheartedly accept the need to benchmark our education performance against the very best that is available globally; indeed business and enterprise education has always aspired to benchmark nationally and to increase participation and performance in mathematics and numeracy as a key part of the specialism. However, we do have some concerns about the apparent lack of consideration being given to the promotion of employability and entrepreneurial skills, economic and business understanding and personal finance education as part of the future curriculum for all young people. Whilst the recent White Paper, *The importance of teaching*, makes very little mention of these crucial aspects of young people's education, we recognise and will fully utilise the opportunity to provide evidence to the Curriculum Review Expert Panel. This position paper sets out a case for consideration.

Much has been achieved in recent years in helping to equip young people with the sort of employability and entrepreneurial skills, economic and business understanding and financial awareness required for the 21st century. Nonetheless, the evidence from Ofsted and the wider community of practice indicates that much remains to be done to achieve consistently good provision across all schools. Such provision is vital if young people are to become effective consumers, producers and citizens. The B&E HTSG believes this view enjoys widespread support from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Institute of Directors (IoD), professional organisations, leading business people, consumer groups and schools. The group perceives a real danger that much of the excellent work that has taken place will be lost, rather than being built on and sustained. It is vital for future national economic prosperity that the education system in England prepares young people effectively for employment and self-employment. This requires developing pupils' capabilities to turn creative ideas into commercial and social enterprises. As future citizens, young people also need to understand the moral and ethical dimensions of the decisions they make and how they might influence the powerful economic forces that will shape their future lives.

The B&E HTSG is fully cognisant that current economic circumstances mean future government funding to support such work will be severely restrained, but believes that the recommendations that follow do not require any substantial or additional resource. Rather, they need a clear mandate that will underpin the essential nature of these propositions.

Recommendations

1. A coherent programme to promote employability and entrepreneurial skills, economic and business understanding and personal finance education should be part of the entitlement for all secondary aged pupils.

This view is strongly supported by the CBI, leading business people, consumer groups and the great majority of schools.

2. Work-related learning remains a statutory requirement at Key Stage 4 for all pupils and consideration is given to extending it to Key Stage 3.

Work-related learning is currently a statutory part of the curriculum for all 14-16 year old pupils. It includes the development of employability skills and an understanding of the world of work. There appears to be no compelling reason to remove this requirement as it is generally supported by schools and seen as being important by young people. There is also a strong case for extending the statutory requirement to Key Stage 3 to bring it in line with that for careers education and guidance (CEG). Consideration might also be given to combining work-related learning and CEG as there is considerable overlap between the two.

3. Ofsted should continue to inspect the extent to which schools prepare young people for future employment and adult life.

The current framework for the inspection of schools includes an evaluation of how well pupils are prepared for adult life. The guidance to inspectors requires them to consider how effectively schools are promoting employability skills and developing economic and business understanding and personal finance education for all their pupils. This is a powerful way of encouraging schools to give these aspects of their work the status they deserve. Similarly, the triennial inspection of subjects/themes provides a usefully informative 'health check' for individual components of the national provision.

4. Encouragement should continue to be given to promoting employer engagement in education.

There is strong evidence that effective employer engagement in education raises pupils' aspirations and motivation by making learning more relevant and meaningful. It promotes a better understanding of employment and helps to develop the right attitudes of young people to the world of work. Most employers are keen to support education as they see it as mutually beneficial and many are actively involved. However, there is considerable scope for involving more employers, particularly from small and medium sized businesses. This is wholly congruent with the position taken by the Institute for Education Business Excellence and the Education and Employers Taskforce.

5. Support should continue to be given to providing work experience opportunities for all secondary school pupils.

Systems are in place to enable the overwhelming majority of pupils to benefit from work experience during their compulsory education. The great success of work experience in the UK is the envy of many other countries. However, this provision is threatened if future reductions in funding make it difficult for schools to secure the health and safety of their students while on placements.

6. The accountability measures for schools should include the progression of young people into post-16 and post-18 education, training and employment.

This measure is one used in other countries, for example in Australia, and encourages schools to place appropriate emphasis on developing young people's employability skills and their understanding of progression routes, as well as promoting basic skills in literacy, numeracy, science and information technology.

Supporting evidence

'Too many school leavers leave education without the skills, knowledge and attitudes to work employers are looking for.'

CBI, Fulfilling Potential, September 2010

The CBI sets out what it sees as the essential features for the success of our future system of education. These include: enabling all young people to develop a broad range of **employability skills**, defined as 'team working, problem-solving, communication, customer and business awareness and self-management'. The CBI also stresses that a **positive attitude** is the key foundation for employability. It sums this up as developing a 'can do approach', a readiness to take part and contribute, an openness to new ideas and a drive to make those ideas happen.

The B&E head teachers' steering group fully endorses the CBI's view and believes that business and enterprise education has a vital role to play in helping equip all young people with the knowledge and skills they need for future **employment** and **self-employment**.

Much has been done in recent years to promote enterprise capabilities and enterprising attitudes in schools which are very much in line with those set out by the CBI. Where enterprise education has been embraced fully, it has permeated **teaching and learning** across the curriculum and has impacted on the quality of **leadership and management**. There is strong evidence, particularly in specialist business and enterprise schools, that enterprise education has been an important influence in raising achievement across subjects because it has led to more innovative teaching and made learning more relevant.

Of the 4.8 million enterprises in the UK, around three-quarters of them are sole proprietor businesses. The great majority of the rest have between two and four employees and only around 6000 enterprises have more than 250 employees.

Enterprise education helps young people develop the skills and capabilities needed to become future entrepreneurs by providing opportunities for them to set up and run mini businesses, including social enterprises. While relatively few are likely to become entrepreneurs in the true sense, many will end up working in small businesses or be involved in business start-ups. A basic understanding of how businesses function is therefore vitally important. Yet, in a recent survey of employers, 70% expressed dissatisfaction with the level of business awareness shown by school leavers, so there is

clearly much that still needs to be done, particularly as there is very wide variation in the quality of provision made by schools.

Work experience has a key role to play in preparing young people for the adult world. It is an opportunity to bring home to them the attributes, skills and knowledge they need to succeed throughout their working lives.

Time Well Spent, CBI 2007

Around 90% of students currently go on **work experience** during their time in compulsory education. The great majority feel they benefit from this experience and most employers view it as being important. Many employers are also involved in mentoring schemes or in helping to support aspects of the curriculum and these are again well received and regarded as valuable by both students and employers.

'I believe that teaching young people about the economy will help them to understand a key aspect of the way our society works, how we each contribute, and how it affects our everyday lives.'

Dr Andrew Wardlow, Secretary of Bank of England, (from Towards Consensus? Ofsted 2006)

Education is clearly not just about preparing young people for adult working life. Business and enterprise education, including economic and financial awareness, is also an important part of **empowering** them as **consumers** and as **citizens**. It helps young people makes sense of the rapidly changing and often confusing world they live in, including issues such as poverty, globalisation and sustainability. It is now even more imperative that all young people develop an understanding of the very powerful economic forces that shape their lives and are made aware of how they can influence them through the choices they make. The case for students developing economic understanding must surely be as strong as that for developing scientific or historical understanding.

Recent history demonstrates the vital importance of **financial awareness** if young people are to spend and save their money wisely, make effective use of financial services and avoid getting into large debts which they are unable to repay once they have access to credit. Much has been achieved in recent years to promote personal finance education in schools but the evidence indicates that much still remains to be done.

Accountability measures need to be in place that ensure that all schools give appropriate emphasis to equipping young people for their adult working lives and to function effectively as consumers and citizens. Ofsted currently evaluates the extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being when it inspects schools. This includes the development of enterprise skills, economic and business understanding and personal finance education. This is a very powerful incentive for schools to make provision for these aspects in the curriculum. It is also suggested that accountability measures take into consideration how well learners progress to post-16 and post-18 education, training and employment. These measures are standard in other countries, for example in Australia, and have been found to be effective in helping to ensure high quality vocational education, rather than attempting to give them credibility by making them equivalent to GCSEs and GCEs. The recent education White

Paper appears to support this view. However, it is not proposed that schools are set targets for progression and account needs to be taken of local and national economic conditions.

The business and enterprise education curriculum

The B&E HTSG suggests that all pupils aged 11-19 should be entitled to the following.

- High quality provision in the core curriculum of economic, business and enterprise education. This should include: the development of enterprise and employability skills (including self-employment and entrepreneurship), economic and business understanding and personal financial education. This would include a strong body of essential knowledge and conceptual understanding, as well as the development of vital analytical and evaluative skills to empower young people as consumers, producers and citizens. It would draw on existing guidance for work-related learning, careers education, information and guidance and personal finance education.
- It should be left up to schools to decide how they organise the teaching of this but evidence from Ofsted suggests it is best delivered through a combination of specifically timetabled lessons, work through a range of subjects, suspended timetable or 'drop down' days and extra curricular activities.
- A high quality programme of work-related learning, which would incorporate aspects of the economic, business and employability/enterprise curriculum identified in (1), as well as careers, education and guidance. This would include an entitlement to work experience and individual advice on progression routes to further education, training and employment. The programme would be supported through partnerships with employers.
- The option of studying an accredited business-related course at Key Stage 4, such as applied business, business studies, the diploma in business, administration and finance (BAF) and business with modern foreign languages.
- The option of studying a range of broad based business-related course post-16, such as GCE business, GCE economics and BTEC/OCR national awards in business, the BAF diploma or more specifically vocational courses, such as accounting and retailing.

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