

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)

The policy of closing special schools will be reversed. Every child is unique and the needs of each child should come first. Those who learn better in a tailored, non-mainstream environment should have the opportunity to do so.

OFSTED

Ofsted inspections will be streamlined to focus on the quality of teaching, learning and the overall wellbeing of children, rather than paperwork, school policies or tick-box targets. Inspections will be shorter, classroom-orientated, and more transparent. We will continue to monitor British values, but with a view towards combatting extremism and radicalisation, rather than criticising widely-held Judeo-Christian beliefs.

Teachers with at least fifteen years' successful classroom experience will be prioritised when Ofsted inspectors are recruited: teachers are right to question whether they should be judged by those who have less classroom experience than themselves.

Schools will be subject to additional investigations by Ofsted if 25 per cent of parents or governors present a petition to the Department for Education.

An independent body will hear complaints about an Ofsted inspection. We will remove Ofsted's right to investigate itself.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Previous government policies of pursuing higher education targets and introducing tuition fees have had a crippling effect on our young people's finances and job prospects.

The average student now leaves university with a debt of £44,000, yet students are less likely to find a graduate-level job than ever before. 47 per cent of recent graduates were 'under-employed' in 2013, as opposed to just 37 per cent in 2001. This marks a 27 per cent increase in the inability

of graduates to get a job utilising or requiring their degree qualification.

The taxpayer fares little better: 45 per cent of all student loans have to be written-off. To combat this growing problem, UKIP will drop the arbitrary 50 per cent target for school leavers going to university. We will not increase the current level of undergraduate courses until we can be sure there are sufficient vacancies in the economy to provide at least two-thirds of students with skilled graduate jobs.

We will also encourage students to choose careers that will help fill the current skills' gap, to both benefit Britain and set them on the path to a solid, prosperous career.

UK students taking approved degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM), mainly at universities funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, will not have to repay their tuition fees. This is on condition that they work in their discipline and pay tax in the UK for at least five years, after they complete their degrees.

Accordingly, UKIP will adjust the number of STEMM subjects funded to allow for a greater uptake of these subjects.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

We are currently obliged to give tuition fee loans to EEA students as a condition of our EU membership, but as of March 2013, only 11 per cent of EU domiciled students were making any repayments. As student loans include a huge subsidy from the taxpayer and because repayment rates are so low, we will not give tuition fee loans to EEA students when we leave the EU. They will of course be welcome to apply for places at UK universities as self-supporting international students.

PARENTAL CHOICE

UKIP supports the right of parents to home-school their children, if they choose to do. We will support and fund free schools, provided they are open to the whole local community, uphold British values and do not discriminate against any section of society.