

Greens challenge emphasis on Maths & English targets and testing and oppose forced academisation of schools



28 March 2022

- **No evidence that academies and free schools raise standards overall.**
- **A comprehensive recovery plan would include a focus on the real needs of children and students and an inclusive, creative and collaborative curriculum**

The Green Party has responded to the government's new white paper on education which calls for all schools to join a multi-academy trust by 2030 and to be open for a minimum 32.5 hour school week [1]. Greens are backing teaching unions in challenging the lack of ambition for young people in this document, the focus on academic targets without the extra resources and oppose the academisation of schools.

Green Party Education spokesperson, Vix Lowthion, who is a working secondary school teacher, said:

"The government is using the disruption caused by Covid as a way to push through their damaging educational agenda of tough academic targets and more testing, rooted in a longer school week and Ofsted inspections.

"This White Paper also resurrects the previously unpopular policy to force the academisation of our schools, when there remains no evidence that academies and free schools raise standards overall. By contrast, there is plenty of evidence that multi academy trusts, in particular, are syphoning public money without the accountability offered by local councils.

"This is not the way to support children and teachers to recover from the

disruption caused by the pandemic. A comprehensive recovery plan would include a focus on the rounded needs of children and students and an inclusive, creative and collaborative curriculum. Instead, we will see even more pressure heaped on teachers and students to achieve higher targets in English and Maths, resulting in even more school hours spent away from lessons in music, PE, humanities, technology and the arts. Young people need to be offered a broad and balanced curriculum to learn, show their potential and to succeed.”

Young Greens co-chair Kelsey Trevett said:

“A focus on maths and English means the government once again fails to recognise the value of creative and humanities-based subjects, creating exam factories for the sole purpose of preparing young people to enter an exploitative profit-driven workplace.”

Young Greens co-chair Jane Baston added:

“These standards also place an extra burden on teachers, taking them over their annual hours and placing them under even more pressure within a system which only sees academic achievement and grades, not people.”

Notes

[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/mar/28/plans-for-englands-schools-include-national-behaviour-survey>

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