

Mr Redwood's intervention during the Estimates Day debate on Education, 3 July 2018

Robert Halfon (Harlow) (Con): I am concerned that the Department's estimate is not strategic enough to deliver the outcomes we need. Let me take, for example, the recent announcement on grammar schools. I am not against grammar schools—I believe in parental choice—but I am not sure why spending up to £200 million over the next two years on expanding grammar schools is more important than spending £200 million on looking after the most vulnerable pupils. We could look after hundreds of thousands of vulnerable pupils with tuition for 12 weeks a year and transform their life opportunities.

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Surely we have to do both. Expanding grammar schools provides opportunities, and this expansion will particularly target those from disadvantaged backgrounds, which is a great idea in support of it, but we also need to do what my right hon. Friend says for other children. I hope that he, like me, would welcome more rapid progress on better and fairer funding for all our schools, because it is still very low in areas such as mine.