

Lord Agnew speech at the Festival of Education

It's great to be here at Wellington College and also to be the warmup act for Amanda, our HMCT. I want to thank you Amanda for the important work that you and Ofsted do. For your personal commitment to educational rigour.

I know you've already heard from some excellent speakers today and that this festival is always a fantastic opportunity to debate the big ideas when it comes to education.

It's a privilege to be surrounded by those who share a passion for this subject. Events like this are essential in bring together the big thinkers in our education system.

At times like this, with so much uncertainty in the air it's important that we all take the time to reflect on where we are going.

By its nature, education is about the long term. At its heart, the work that all of you do is about shaping the minds of the next generation. A great education is fundamental to success – the individual success of all those who study, whatever their age and success for our country.

A great education system can, and should, be geared towards tackling the big, long term challenges our country faces.

One of these great, generational challenges is productivity. It's not an abstract concept. We should care about productivity because it decides not just the size of our economy but our quality of life. Higher productivity means more fulfilling, higher paying jobs. It means new investment, leading to greater prosperity.

Productivity matters because it's about people being able to fulfil their potential. Economically, we can't afford to waste the talents of young people held back by the circumstances of their birth. This is why social mobility has always been critical to my vision for education and inseparable from the goal of raising productivity.

But when it comes to productivity, we lag behind. Badly. Our key competitors such as Germany, France and the US – all produce over 25% more per hour than the UK. This didn't happen overnight. The productivity gap with our European competitors opened up in late 1960s, and earlier still the US.

Just as the gap has been around for some time, the gap won't be closed unless we take the long term view. To fix Britain's productivity we need a major upgrade in the nation's skills. That should start with an honest assessment of where we are.

Across the UK as a whole we have a large number of people who either never progressed beyond GCSEs or gained low level vocational qualifications. 65% of

our working population have completed upper secondary education (that's Level 3). When you consider that the equivalent in Germany is 87%, it's clear we have our work cut out.

The answer lies in our schools and our colleges. As part of the review of the national curriculum which began in 2011, we benchmarked our curriculum against those of high performing jurisdictions and found that they set higher expectations without compromising curriculum breadth.

We reformed the national curriculum in 2014, and then GCSEs qualifications, so that we set world-class standards across all subjects. We've removed hundreds of pointless and unproductive qualifications.

When you look at how productivity differs between places in the UK, the picture is stark.

According to the CBI the most productive area of the country is almost three times more productive than the least. Educational attainment is the single most important driver of those differences.

Of course the gap between Britain and Germany, or between one region of the UK and another, isn't a reflection of the innate talents of our young people.

Instead it's a challenge to us all to ensure that our system is delivering the opportunities for education and training across the whole country.

We have made progress. The industrial strategy sets out a plan to invest in the three engines of productivity – individuals, innovation and infrastructure. Through our Opportunity Areas programme we're investing £72m in some of the places with the biggest challenges, to make sure our efforts are focused on eliminating the productivity gap between different parts of the country.

In order to transform Britain's productivity and set our young people up for the future, the goal of building a world class education system drives everything we aim to do at the DfE.

This is why we've focused on school autonomy and trusted leaders to run their schools, because that's how you raise standards

It's why we've focused on teacher retention. This includes our Recruitment and Retention Strategy. This provides a commitment to develop world class training and development together with strong career pathways.

It's why we are committed to reducing the workload of teachers and supporting school leaders to create the right culture in their schools.

We know that more schools are taking action to tackle workload. We have seen over 150,000 collective downloads of our workload reduction toolkit in less than 18 months.

We are working with Ofsted to simplify the accountability system. The new Ofsted framework will have an active focus on reducing teacher workload.

An education system can only ever be as good as its teachers and its leaders. We are very lucky to have some of the very best. They, indeed you, are the fulcrum of the system

We have been rigorous about the curriculum so that young people are prepared for adult life; reforming GCSEs and introducing the EBacc. We will continue to pursue the manifesto target of 75% EBacc entry at GCSEs.

These are subjects which form part of the compulsory curriculum in many of the highest performing countries internationally, at least up to 15 or 16.

We have focused relentlessly on social mobility and disadvantage. Narrowing the gap between children from well off families and their less well-off peers so that every young person has the opportunity to make the most of their talents.

We have made progress. I could stand in front of you and reel off more statistics on how far we've come. But I want, instead, to talk about where I think we need to go from here. Not in the short term but the long term, so we can confidently continue to build the world class education system our country needs.

To do that we must be ambitious for the future of our schools and colleges, not just for the next year but for the next generation.

That requires a vision for how we continue to raise school standards. How we ensure that we have the very best teachers for our children and how we will fix technical education. We owe it to the next generation to confront the big choices, not to duck them.

Yes it's true that we live in a time of uncertainty, at home and abroad, but that uncertainty makes it more urgent, not less.

I want to reassert our long-term vision for an education system that achieves these goals, and the challenges we must overcome in order to get there.

Part of the reason we've made such progress since 2010 is that we know what works: school autonomy, great teachers, and a rigorous curriculum.

That is why we want to see us finishing the reforms we began in 2010. That means continuing to be ambitious about academisation by growing the best trusts, where teachers and leaders are already making an extraordinary difference to the lives of children. We must do that in the parts of the country where the need for those teachers and leaders is greatest.

Our ambition remains for all schools to be academies, working in partnerships in great school trusts. This year we hit the milestone of 50% of pupils taught in academies.

Looking to the long term; 10 years from now, we want to see the vast majority of schools becoming academies and joining strong academy chains.

To achieve this we will build on the experience of previous capacity funds

for academy trusts. We will shortly be announcing a fund that will boost the growth of our strongest academy trusts allowing them to support a greater number of schools across the country.

The fund will increase the capacity of academy trusts to grow partnerships that support the development of teachers and leaders and the education of children. We have learnt from earlier growth funds what works best and we intend to build on this.

The fund will support smaller school trusts that wish to merge into existing or new academy groups, and providing high-potential academy trusts with funding to meet the challenges they face as they grow.

Local authorities have an important role to play and we are committed to working with them to consider how this will evolve as we move towards the vast majority of schools becoming academies.

This will include exploring how they might support the growth of academy trusts in their areas. As we think about the future, we must take a long-term view of how to attract more high calibre teachers into the profession.

We won't get the teachers we need unless we focus on creating the right conditions for them to excel. There is clearly a strong case to explore reform of teacher pay to ensure that the money schools spend on pay is targeted where it will have the biggest impact on recruitment and retention.

We must be bold about the offer that we make to new teachers. We recently announced the Early Career Framework – in itself the most significant reform to teaching since it became a graduate profession.

We will build on this by introducing a new, rigorous core content framework for Initial Teacher Training to align with the Early Career Framework.

Taken together, this will create an entitlement for new teachers to 3 years of structured training and development, backed by the best available research.

In doing so we aim to ensure that people enter teaching in a manner that reflects its position as one of the most important professions in our society.

Alongside this we will deliver the other commitments in the Recruitment and Retention strategy, including the expansion of flexible working and more diverse career pathways.

We know that our economy has evolved in its ability to accommodate flexible working and we need to help the schools system do more to support teachers who want this.

We must be relentless in ensuring that our reforms are always improving the odds for young people. Where you end up in life shouldn't be determined by where you start, and yet many disadvantaged young people lose out by not having a parent or guardian who is 'in the know' about what to study.

Central to a world class system in the long term is ensuring that children are setting themselves up for success with their subject choices, which is why EBacc is so important.

Participation in creative subjects such as music and the arts is vital, particularly up to Key Stage 3. The DfE is committed to supporting both participation and progression – most notably in music.

Alongside this it is vital that we ensure that pupils are encouraged to study the core academic subjects at GCSE – English, maths, science (including computing), foreign languages, history and geography.

Schools previously entered many more pupils in these subjects. In 2000, three quarters [76%] of pupils entered a language GCSE. By 2011, however, the proportion of pupils entering science, a foreign language and geography GCSEs had fallen to less than a quarter.

These subjects are essential if young people are to succeed in the knowledge economy, particularly if they are considering a good university. They are also at the heart of a well-rounded education.

Since our reforms began in 2010 we have seen entry levels for science increase dramatically from 63% in 2010 to 95% in 2018.

The proportion of those taking history or geography has increased from 48% to 78%. The proportion of pupils taking the EBacc combination of subjects as a whole increased to 38% in 2018. But we need to go much further.

In particular, we want to focus on languages. While we have seen a rise in the number of pupils taking at least one language from 40% in 2010 to 46%, there remains much more to do.

It is vital that children should be given the opportunity to learn languages to prepare them for a world that is more connected than ever. It's why almost three-quarters of parents and carers [73%] said they would advise their child to take a foreign language GCSE.

As part of a long term approach to education we will keep up the focus on language curriculum programmes and continue to recruit and train more MFL teachers.

We would like to work with schools to do more to strengthen opportunities for more children to learn a foreign language.

Our Free School programme has led the way in deploying a rigorous knowledge rich curriculum with over 400 now open and many more in the pipeline.

We all know that digital skills will become increasingly critical, whatever career path a young person chooses. That is why we reformed the computer science GCSE, with input from leading industry experts, to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they will need for the high-tech jobs of the future.

Computer science will become an essential skill in the digital era and already leads to a wide range of careers. We want to see more pupils, including girls, follow this path.

To support this, we launched the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) in November 2018, backed by £84 million of government funding to ensure pupils are better prepared for further study and employment in digital roles.

To deliver on these promises, schools and colleges need to have the resources to support the development of healthy, happy children.

From my conversations with heads and colleges principals – I have heard first-hand about the pressures you face.

You will have heard the Secretary of State promise that he would back teachers to have the resources they need and would make the strongest possible case for investment in our schools and colleges. The Secretary of State has asked me to make that commitment to you again today.

It must be right that in a world class education system, there can be no people or places left behind. We must look again at how we can be bolder in supporting the schools facing some of the greatest challenges, in our plans to help schools tackle behaviour and attendance and for the future of our successful Opportunity Areas programme.

As the Secretary of State set out in his speech on Monday, in all our reforms we must bring to bear a new focus on Children in Need and recognise the changing face of disadvantage.

Alongside this, we must find ways to work with heads and principals to support schools in making every pound count in the classroom.

There are many lessons to take from the 2016 referendum on Britain's membership of the EU. But a clear lesson is that we must turn our attention to making all parts of the country engines of productivity and places where there are plenty of high quality, well paid jobs.

The most productive parts of the country benefit from a virtuous circle, where strong schools with great teachers lead to strong skills with investment following behind as the skilled workforce is in place.

That is why – to create that virtuous circle everywhere – we want to do more to incentivise the best teachers and leaders to work in parts of the country and the schools where they are most needed. We want the best Trusts to expand into areas that some would describe as being “left behind”.

But we have no chance of providing the next generation with the skills to succeed if we do not get serious about investing in technical education.

Which is why we will continue to pursue the reforms of technical education, including the delivery of T-levels and the NRS, which have already been announced.

Colleges are the critical infrastructure of the Industrial Strategy. Last month the Prime Minister was right to say that we have fallen behind our competitor nations when it comes to technical education as successive government have failed to give FE colleges the support they need.

The Post 18 review argued compellingly for much greater investment in further education – both talented teachers and the essential infrastructure, such as buildings and equipment, that underpins the sector. Working in partnership

We are clear on where we want the schools system to go, but we plan to listen to your advice on how to get there.

We want to work with teachers, governors and school and college leaders to turn this vision into reality, just as we worked with you to produce our teacher R&R strategy

Now is the time to think big, not small. Long-term not short term. To ensure that we can fix the generational challenge of productivity and that our world class education system continues to improve and be available to all children.

[CMA expects Facebook and eBay to tackle sale of fake reviews](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has found troubling evidence that there is a thriving marketplace for fake and misleading online reviews. After web sweeps performed in the period November 2018 to June 2019, the CMA was concerned about over 100 eBay listings offering fake reviews for sale. It also identified – during the same period – 26 Facebook groups in total where people offered to write fake reviews or businesses recruited people to write fake and misleading reviews on popular shopping and review sites.

It is estimated that over three-quarters of UK internet users consider online reviews when choosing what to buy. Billions of pounds of people's spending is influenced by reviews every year. Fake and misleading reviews not only lead to people making poorly informed choices and buying the wrong products, but they are also illegal under consumer protection law.

The CMA is not alleging that Facebook or eBay are intentionally allowing this content to appear on their websites. Since the CMA wrote to the sites, both have indicated that they will cooperate and Facebook has informed the CMA that most of the 26 groups have been removed. The CMA welcomes this, and expects the sites to put measures in place to ensure that all the identified content is removed and to stop it from reappearing.

Andrea Coscelli, CMA Chief Executive said:

Lots of us rely on reviews when shopping online to decide what to buy. It is important that people are able to trust that reviews are genuine, rather than something someone has been paid to write.

Fake reviews mean that people might make the wrong choice and end up with a product or service that's not right for them. They're also unfair to businesses who do the right thing.

We want Facebook and eBay to conduct an urgent review of their sites to prevent fake and misleading online reviews from being bought and sold.

This is the first phase in a wider programme of CMA work aimed at tackling fake and misleading reviews. It builds on previous action in this area to protect shoppers from misleading information on the internet, including enforcement action taken against an online marketing company to stop it from writing fake reviews and demand it removed those it had posted.

For more information, [view the case page](#).

Notes to Editors

1. The [Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008](#) (CPRs) contain a general prohibition on unfair commercial practices, requiring traders to exercise professional diligence towards consumers. They also prohibit commercial practices that are misleading or aggressive and set out 31 'banned practices' which will be unfair in all circumstances, regardless of their effect on consumers. For example, it is a banned practice to falsely claim or create the impression that a trader is not acting for purposes relating to his trade, business or profession, or to falsely represent oneself as a consumer.
 2. The CMA wrote to Facebook and eBay on 20 June 2019 to inform them of the CMA's concerns and tell them immediately to remove the content identified and put measures in place to stop such content reappearing.
 3. On eBay the fake review services are offered for sale/auction as listings in the same way as other items are sold on the website.
 4. Data on the number of people who use online reviews is available in Ofcom's Adults' media use and attitudes report, 2017: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/102755/adults-media-use-attitudes-2017.pdf
 5. Information about the CMA's previous work on online reviews and endorsements is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-reviews-and-endorsements>
 6. All media enquiries should be directed to the CMA press office by email on press@cma.gov.uk, or by phone on 020 3738 6460.
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Queen's birthday celebration 2019 in Mogadishu, Somalia: Ben Fender's speech

Prime Minister, Mr Mayor, Ministers, Senators and Members of Parliament, Ambassadors, friends,

Soo dhawaasho diraan. A very warm welcome to the Queen's Birthday Party.

This is a British tradition. We don't have a National Day. So we celebrate the Queen's Birthday instead.

The Queen was born in 1926, so this year she is 93. I realise that if she came from Erigavo, she might still be considered young. But in Britain she is our oldest ever monarch. She was crowned in 1953, and has been Queen for over 67 years. That makes her by a long way the world's longest serving Head of State.

In the UK, she has been served by 13 Prime Ministers, starting with Winston Churchill. She has reigned over the end of our Empire; Britain joining the EU in 1973; and, in 2016, voting to leave it again. She has known – really known – every US President since Harry Truman.

I start with that because I think it helps put events in Somalia here in perspective.

In my room, I have a poster. It must date from the 1970s. The poster promotes Somalia as a tourist destination. It features a rather contented looking cheetah. I have it there for a reason. It reminds me not to think of Somalia as a place of troubles, but as a place of unspoiled beaches and of rock art, of poets, of frankincense, of camels and of spicy tea. It reminds me that the sad events of the last few decades do not – must not – define Somalia. Somalia was not like that then and will not be in future.

For more than half the time that the Queen has been on the throne, Somalia was the land on the poster.

Britain is a medium sized country a long way away. But I am proud of what we achieve here. Some here might say that we are at times challenging partners. But that's because we are true friends, who want Somalia to be the best it can be.

Somali Prime Minister addressing guests at Mogadishu Queen's Birthday party celebration

I am proud that we gave shelter to tens of thousands of Somalis during the difficult times and are now helping them to come back with their skills and their ideas, to build a better future. Prime Minister, some of them work in your office and are here today. Please know how much your government and your

leadership inspires them, but also how much hope they have invested and how disappointed they will be if we fail to live up to our ideals.

I am proud we are your development partners. We have championed the cause of debt relief, now within reach. A million Somalis have sustainable access to clean water thanks to DFID. We reach 3.6 million with humanitarian assistance, and are the biggest donors in sectors like health. We helped lead the response to the 2017 drought, and were the first to surge funds again this year.

I am proud we are helping you plan and deliver the first Somali-led military operations against Al Shabaab. We are the only country training the Somali National Army at scale outside Mogadishu. I've just been with the Minister of Defence to open our new facility in Baidoa; in a few days we're about to start building a new barracks there so we can scale up further. The training is having a real effect: I've seen soldiers there learning to build better defensive positions; they have built three on the roads into Baidoa that have sharply cut the number of attacks in the city.

We are among the biggest supporters of the police. I am proud of the armed counter-terrorism units we train who saved so many civilian lives during the complex attack on Maka al Mukaramah Road in February. And of our stabilisation experts who are the only ones to travel with the army into newly recovered areas. They provide support to communities within days, like the 70 houses they built in Sabiid to replace those destroyed by Al-Shabaab.

I am just as proud of smaller things; the individuals we touch.

The entrepreneurs building app based businesses in which the Somali diaspora can invest.

Those installing solar lighting that is helping girls in IDP camps finish their homework and thus complete schooling.

The Chevening scholars – we're doubling the number this year – now studying in the UK so they can bring back the ideas from some of the world's best universities.

Those helping to give girls being forced into marriage the freedom to decide for themselves what life they should lead.

The people helping Somali fishery companies find new export markets, or providing cold storage to farmers so they can get their food to market before it rots.

Many of those involved are here. Please talk to your fellow guests today, they have some incredible stories. What our countries do together changes lives.

Finally, a word on media freedom, our official theme. One of the things I love most about Somalis, like the British, is their robust democratic spirit. Every day, on twitter, I witness that. Frankly, and I suspect the Prime Minister will agree, it's not always comfortable. But a country where people

question and debate will always be free and will one day be strong. A free media is the best way to check abuses of power and root out corruption.

Crowd gathered at the British Embassy in Mogadishu during Queen's birthday party celebration

This year, the Embassy is supporting Somalia's journalists, to develop their talent and help them find their voice. We want them to tell positive stories about Somalia to the wider world. So we have organised a competition for young reporters to tell inspiring stories that ought to be better known. The winners will go on a work placement with BBC Africa.

I've loved looking at the photos and watching the videos. They are about IDPs investing in their education. About a disabled man determined to play football. About women who want to be car mechanics. About an elderly man here in Mogadishu, who sweeps the streets every day for no pay because he loves this city.

They are displayed on the walls, so please have a look. They leave one clear impression. Of people across Somalia striving every day to make their country or community a better place.

Lastly, let me thank you all. Because today is really about thanking you, and through you other friends, colleagues and partners who help make the UK-Somalia relationship what it is.

Through our joint efforts, my hope and conviction is that we will one day bring back the land on the poster, with its rather contented cheetah.

Mahadsaniid.

Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Belarus – August 2019

2018 to present Full-time Language Training (Russian) 2013 to 2018 Kuwait, Deputy Head of Mission 2011 to 2013 FC0, Head of Partnerships Team, Arab Partnership Department 2008 to 2010 FC0, Strategic Policy Adviser (Middle East and Counter-Terrorism) Strategy Unit 2003 to 2008 Bahrain, Regional Adviser, Engaging with the Arab World 1999 to 2003 Cairo, Head of Political, Economic and Development Section 1998 to 1999 FC0, Head of Public Diplomacy Section, European Union Department 1998 FC0, Research Analyst, Middle East and North Africa Research Group 1997 to 1998 FC0, Youth Project Officer, European Union Department 1995 to 1996 FC0, Head of Germany/Austria Section, West European Department 1992 to 1995 Abu Dhabi, Second Secretary (Information) 1990 to 1992 Full-time Language Training (Arabic) 1989 to 1990 FC0, Assistant Desk Officer, East Africa Department

Homes England deal with Keepmoat Homes sees work begin on 598 new homes at Northfleet Embankment

- Keepmoat Homes will build 598 homes over six years, after striking a deal with Homes England for the land.
- The development will also include a primary school, open space and other amenities.
- The site forms part of Ebbsfleet Garden City.

Almost 600 new homes are on the way as work begins on site at Northfleet Embankment, following a deal between government housing accelerator Homes England and developer Keepmoat Homes.

Keepmoat Homes will purchase the 11.6 hectare site from Homes England for the residential development, which alongside 598 homes will include a new primary school, local amenities, open space and a Fastrack bus connection. 224 of the homes will be affordable.

Homes England has undertaken extensive remediation work to prepare the land for development and after working with key stakeholders Gravesham Borough Council and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, planning permission was granted last year.

This important milestone sees work on the new homes now beginning on site, with the first homes expected to be complete by May 2020. The rest of the development is expected to be complete by 2025. As part of the deal, Keepmoat Homes has agreed to build the homes at an accelerated rate of over 100 units per year.

Stephen Kinsella, Executive Director for Land at Homes England, said:

“Getting homes built on public land is at the heart of our mission so we’re delighted to see Northfleet Embankment now start on site.

“This was a complex site and the joint efforts of partners will now be rewarded with a high-quality development to meet the housing needs of local people.”

Tim Beale, Chief Executive of Keepmoat Homes said:

“As Homes England’s largest delivery partner, we’ve worked together to deliver over 11,000 quality new homes across the country as part of consecutive Delivery Partner Panels since 2009.

“We are delighted to have completed this new deal with Homes England and are

looking forward to starting on site at this transformational development in Northfleet, where we will create a thriving new community on the banks of the River Thames that is only 20 minutes from central London via Ebbsfleet International station.”

Housing Minister Kit Malthouse MP said:

“Not only does this deal deliver hundreds of much-needed homes, but it’s another step towards building a vibrant garden community on London’s doorstep.

“With a new school, transport links and green open spaces, it will be a place to live, learn, work and play for generations to come.

“This new deal is all part of our ambition to deliver 15,000 new homes in Ebbsfleet as we build more, better, faster.”

Cllr Jenny Wallace Cabinet Member for Housing Services, Gravesham Borough Council said:

“We are pleased that work is to begin on this key site. Gravesham urgently needs more homes, especially affordable homes. It is really important to us to be able to assist people that have grown up in Gravesham to be able continue to live here as a part of our community, as well as improve and regenerate the area.”

Ian Piper, Chief Executive of Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, said:

“This new development by Keepmoat will transform this important waterfront area and make a great contribution to Ebbsfleet Garden City, by bringing new homes and community facilities to Northfleet.”

ENDS

For more information contact Sarah Tucker, PR and Media Officer at Homes England on 020 7393 2261 or sarah.tucker@homesengland.gov.uk