

Devon County Teachers' Association



NEWS RELEASE

DEFEND GOOD LOCAL SCHOOLS FOR EVERY CHILD

The announcement by Devon County Council that it is supporting the bid of six community schools (the highest number in the country) to gain Trust status will have alarm bells ringing for those who believe that every child should be able to attend a good local school which is of high-quality, well-resourced, non-selective and accountable to the local community.

'This development poses a serious risk to the future of comprehensive community schools in Devon', said Devon NUT Secretary, Dave Clinch: "If these bids are successful the schools will have self-governing bodies with private companies and faith groups, for example, exerting their influence. They will not be democratically accountable. Public assets will be irreversibly transferred into the hands of these organisations. Trust schools will have their own legal status as employer and provider of education outside Local Authority control in the style of the controversial City Academies."

Selection of pupils through individualised admissions policies will be divisive, and, according to the recent research by the Sutton Trust could lead to segregation by race and family background.

The trade union rights of teaching and non-teaching staff in these schools will be diminished as they are forced to deal with individual school employers rather than the Local Authority. Mr Clinch added, "It is highly significant that the trade unions were excluded from the secretive consultation process during the Summer Term. If this is a taste of what is to come, with a lack of openness and accountability, it begs the question, what have they to hide?"

Trust schools, in line with the current Education Bill proposals, will create a vocational /academic divide at 14, reducing every child's entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum well into their teens. Thus parents will have less real choice for their children.

Following the Government announcement of the schools piloting trust status, NUT General Secretary Steve Sinnott said: "If the Government wants to tackle the problem of social exclusion and deprivation, setting up a network of Trust schools will not achieve that. The scheme will be wasteful in terms of duplication of provision and dysfunctional in terms of co-ordination."

The NUT will continue to campaign against the establishment of trust schools. It will defend the right of every child to attend a good local school.

Please note my contact details below.

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