



## A CfSA Manifesto for 2017

The Council for Subject Associations (CfSA) is an independent organisation which acts as a single voice for subject teaching associations in the UK. CfSA has three major roles in the short time available, leading up to the General Election in June 2017 and in the immediate months afterwards:

- **Communication** – CfSA will bring the collective concerns and views of the subject associations to the attention of all political parties, educational organisations and other influencers
- **Connection** – CfSA will bring the subject associations together to discuss the issues which are of concern following the result and throughout the length of the parliament
- **Collaboration** – CfSA will facilitate the meeting of subgroups of the Association to bring together work, for example on membership and CPD (including online CPD).

Subject Associations are normally membership organisations, often registered charities, whose mission is to promote and maintain excellence in the teaching and learning of their subject in schools, colleges and universities. Subject Associations have a unique wealth of deep experience in the pedagogic subject knowledge of their specialism. Many of them have been active for over a century and some are linked with the learned body for their subject. Subject Associations develop and provide professional learning for their members and the wider teaching profession through publications, research journals, courses and conferences both online and face to face. Their expertise derives from informed, experienced and committed members who are based across the sector; in the classroom, in teacher education and in consultancies.

The Council for Subject Associations (CfSA) is a membership organisation, recognised as charitable company limited by guarantee. The CfSA was officially launched on 20th September 2007. It has a voluntary Board of Directors, elected by the membership, with a Chair and a Company Secretary but no paid staff. The CfSA currently has a membership of over thirty associations, specialising in over twenty different subject areas.

During Autumn 2016 and Spring 2017, CfSA Directors and members continued to identify and discuss educational priorities for the next Government. The issues which concerned members were consistent and urgently in need of attention. Therefore, we consider that the priorities for the next Government should be:

### 1. Teacher recruitment and retention

Any education system is only as good as its teaching workforce. The recruitment of sufficient, well trained and qualified primary and secondary teachers has to be the main priority of the new Government, ahead of any systematic changes. This needs to be complemented with a programme of effective and ongoing generic and subject-specific support (see 2 below). This would have a significant and positive effect on retention of teachers in the profession.

## **2. Initial teacher education and continuing professional development**

A commitment by government, NCTL and Ofsted to high quality subject training by all providers of initial teacher education, including an acknowledgement of the important role played by Higher Education Institutes and subject associations. The country needs well prepared beginning teachers, with a secure, subject pedagogical background. It should be expected that all teachers will have, or be working towards Qualified Teacher Status.

Leading on from their initial teacher education, all teachers should be entitled to high quality subject based professional development, throughout their career and their achievements in this should be fully recognised. For school based ITE, this will require excellent subject mentors, who should be properly trained and rewarded for the role they play.

We ask policy makers to be mindful of the unintended consequences of any changes made to elements of the education system. For example, journal and textbook writing together with CPD, is usually undertaken by subject experts who have gained deep expertise through initial teacher training, advisor and CPD roles. They are in contact with many schools and national and international experts. The financial impact of any proposed changes should also be worked through. For example, it is not normally cost effective to teach small groups of student teachers.

## **3. Curriculum balance**

To ensure that all young people have access to a broad and balanced school curriculum that acknowledges and caters for their differing individual interests and aptitudes. Government should clearly acknowledge the aims of the National Curriculum and these should be an entitlement for all pupils in all schools.

The CfSA as a voice for all subjects, is concerned to see that subjects which are essential to children's broader and balanced development, are being squeezed or lost from the curriculum in some settings, as a result of poorly thought-through accountability measures such as the English Baccalaureate. This should be addressed urgently.

## **4. School inspection**

Inspections in both primary and secondary schools should report on curriculum breadth and balance. The same inspection framework should be used by inspectors of both state funded and independent schools. Inspections should be conducted by inspectors who have subject knowledge in the subject/s that they are inspecting and are able to help schools develop their subject teaching expertise. A return to the publication of annual subject inspection reports would be welcomed (for all subjects).

## **5. Educational reform**

A commitment to the considered introduction of educational reform and careful management of change. The policy should be transparent, consultations must be valued, their outcomes taken account of and change should be monitored and reviewed. Reforms should be informed by evidence and piloted with due consideration for learners and teachers. Dissemination systems must be considered in advance of the introduction of change and in consultation with school leaders and classroom teachers.