



A CfSA Manifesto for 2015

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 period leading up to the General Election in May 2015:

- **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 in the run up to the election and immediately following the result
- **Collaboration** – CfSA will facilitate the meeting of subgroups of the Association to bring together work, for example on assessment.

Subject Associations are normally membership organisations, often registered charities, whose mission is to promote 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, journals, courses and conferences both online and face to face. Their expertise derives from informed and experienced 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 the summer and early autumn of 2014, CfSA Directors and members took part in a discussion about their priorities for the next government. The issues which concerned members were consistent and urgently in need of attention by the next government. Therefore, we consider that the priorities for the next government should be:

1. 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 and change 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.

2. Teacher education and supply

A commitment by government, NCTL and Ofsted to high quality subject training by all providers of initial teacher education. 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 in the classroom and their achievements in this should be fully recognised. This will require excellent subject mentors, who should be properly trained and rewarded for the part they play in school-based ITE.

Addressing issues of initial and on-going support would have a positive effect on retention of teachers in the profession, with one of the many resulting benefits being a general reduction in workload.

3. Curriculum balance

To ensure that all young people experience a balanced and broad school curriculum in all schools. Government should clearly acknowledge the aims of the National Curriculum and this should be an entitlement for all. The CfSA, as a voice for all subjects, is concerned to see that subjects which are essential to children's broader development are being squeezed from the curriculum in some settings as a result of poorly thought-through accountability measures and a National Curriculum which is over-prescriptive in some subjects. This should be addressed urgently.

4. Assessment and accountability measures

External assessment formats which accurately reflect the balance in different subjects between what is appropriate for teacher assessment (or Non-Examination Assessment) and what is appropriate for written examination. The introduction of revised assessment arrangements should comply with the requirements for the introduction of change outlined above and all officials and politicians should recognise the crucial value of formative assessment, the limits of written examinations and the existence of new and developing formats for assessment.

5. School inspection

To ensure that school inspections are both robust and supportive with a grading system which supports schools' on-going improvement. The planned revisions to the inspection regime should include knowledgeable subject inspection to help schools to develop their subject teaching expertise.

6. A College of Teaching

The next government should encourage the establishment of a College of Teaching while adopting a “hands off” stance. For such a body to succeed it must be independent of government and driven by members. The CfSA has been involved from the beginning in discussions about a member-driven college of teaching and strongly urges close involvement of the individual subject associations and ourselves to form the subject expertise for such a body. There will need to be a suitable structure in place to encourage subject association support to continue alongside that for the proposed College.

**The Council for Subject Associations
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