

Has the Love of Learning been lost? **Call for Evidence**

Deadline for submissions: Tuesday 22 April 2025

In recent years, the number of children being homeschooled has surged to over 100,000 children, while at the same time, a crisis of attendance has gripped schools across the country. One increasing reason for this is the wellbeing of pupils, as parents report mental health issues as one of the primary reasons for keeping their children out of a school environment. For many children, school seems to no longer be a place of learning, but one of anxiety, with intense social and attainment pressure undermining their desire to learn. Indeed, anxiety is the most common reason given by parents for removing their children from school.

At the same time, large class sizes can make it difficult for already overworked teachers to fully cater to all their students in the class. Thus, some students are not challenged in an appropriate way, whilst others are left behind, as teachers spend time controlling the class and giving more broad 'stock' exercises. And as teachers are forced to deliver these more standardised lessons, thus undermining students' curiosity by preventing questions being asked. A huge factor has been the proliferation of the quantity and type of tests and exams as teachers are then compelled to 'teach to the test' and repeatedly revisit the same topics to ensure learning has been embedded for all students (regardless of those who got it the first time).

Placed altogether, this poses certain key questions. Do some of these issues suggest a decline in our love of learning amongst our children and teachers? Does this decline speak to certain structural issues in the educational system that must be reformed? Does this point to wider societal issues around youth mental health that schools must adapt to? Is the load on teachers undermining their capacity to teach and foster a love for learning?

This inquiry will focus on the impact of the Love of Learning from KS1 – KS5/Post-16 FE

This APPG for Education inquiry will examine what is happening to our love of learning, addressing the numerous potential factors at its heart.

If we want to improve our educational system, how can we stimulate our children and teachers to love learning once more? What influences are undermining this love? Are schools providing an adequate learning environment for children? Or are schools actually undermining student's learning by causing undue anxiety amongst children and teachers? How can we ensure that all children are catered for in the educational system so they enjoy and feel stimulated by their lessons?

We intend to develop a clear set of practical recommendations, so that the inquiry is useful to educators and policymakers, parents and young people.

The APPG is keen to engage with a wide range of organisations and individuals including schools, colleges and universities; teachers, lecturers and education professionals; young people and representative bodies; employers and representative bodies; parents and carers; educational publishers and suppliers; and other stakeholder organisations.

Terms of Reference

The Inquiry seeks written evidence in response to the following questions:

1. Is there a current decline in the love of learning amongst students and teachers?
2. What are the key factors involved in this decline, and are they more structural or societal?
3. How can schools adapt to a changing society to serve as a better learning environment?
4. How can we take pressure off teachers to facilitate better class time, and what are the opinions of teachers on this point? If so how?
5. How can technology be harnessed to support richer and more engaging educational experiences.
6. To help the APPG create a practical set of approaches and recommendations:
 - a. What examples are there of schools doing particularly well in fostering a good learning environment for students and teachers?
 - b. What examples are there of schools dealing with youth mental health in a particularly cogent way

In addition, the APPG for Education would welcome details of any relevant research carried out by your organisation which it would be willing to share with the Inquiry.

How to submit evidence

The APPG for Education welcomes evidence in response to the terms of reference from individuals and organisations. Submissions should include a contact name, contact details and organisational details as appropriate. The deadline for submissions is 22 April 2025.

We would prefer responses to be submitted by email to educationappg@ranelaghuk.com as an attachment in MS Word format, although you can send your evidence to: APPG for Education Love of Learning Enquiry Inquiry c/o Ranelagh Ltd, 3.1 Central House, 1 Ballards Lane, London N3 1

Modules

The inquiry will be conducted over four modules:

- Module 1: The Current Landscape of Engagement in Education

This module will explore the factors contributing to a perceived decline in the love of learning. This module will analyse emerging issues in the education sector, such as persistent absence, the rise in homeschooling and the teacher workforce crisis. This module will assess the scale of the issue at hand and inform subsequent lines of inquiry, hearing from stakeholders across the sector including teachers, school leaders, suppliers, subject associations, and pupils.

It will assess how various recent events, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, exacerbated the decline in the love of learning.

- Module 2: Curriculum Design and Engagement

This module will focus on how curriculum design could be adapted to foster a love of learning and will explore emerging themes from the Department for Education's Curriculum & Assessment review revolving around the rebalancing of academic, creative and technical knowledge.

It will look at what is meant by curriculum overload and will evaluate how reducing the amount of content in the curriculum could facilitate more in-depth teaching and learning experiences. Focusing specifically on core curriculum subjects and whether the existing curriculum is a barrier to young people gaining a love for the subject.

This module will also examine the role of creative subjects in developing a love of learning and look at how creative studies can help build resilience and wellbeing. It would consider how practical life skills and soft skills such as communication, discussion, critical thinking, and resilience could be strengthened and woven through subject areas.

- Module 3: Assessment Practices and their Impact on Engagement

This module will focus on how assessment practices can be reformed to support a love of learning. The module will investigate the problems with high levels of assessment at the end of the main phases and explore the benefits of alternative approaches to England's predominantly summative system of assessment.

This module will also look at the accountability measures which surround the assessment system – such as Progress 8 measures – to understand the effect these have on schools and their students. In particular, this element will investigate why measures such as Progress 8 have contributed to a narrowing of the curriculum within schools and explore whether alternative forms of accountability measures are possible.

- Module 4: Supporting Teachers in the Love of Learning

This module will look at the importance of supporting teachers to re-ignite their passion for the profession. The module would explore why teachers and why an increasing number of teachers do not stay in the workforce longer than five years and why an increasing number of school leaders put teacher wellbeing as one of major concerns facing their school.

Inquiry timelines

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>
Jan – April 2025	Terms of Reference circulated, and written evidence received
April - May 2025	Panel discussion sessions
June 2025	Report drafted
July 2025	Report published

The final report and its recommendations will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Education for consideration and response.

About the APPG for Education

The APPG for Education explores how maintaining a dialogue between the education sector and Parliament can support improvements in schools and colleges. The British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA) provides the Secretariat of the APPG.

Any questions?

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Anna Wolffe, APPG for Education Secretariat, by emailing educationappg@ranelaghuk.com or calling 020 78281603.

For updates on the progress of the inquiry please visit www.educationappg.org.uk.