

General Election 2015: Policy guide

Note: every political party that won at least one seat in the 2010 general election was included in this policy guide. The order that the parties are in represents how many seats they won in the 2010 general election (and then alphabetical order if tied). For more information: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/current-state-of-the-parties/>

The Conservative Party

Manifesto: <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/manifesto2015/ConservativeManifesto2015.pdf>

Giving your child the best start in life (pages 33-35)

Education:

- “We will start by introducing tough new standards for literacy and numeracy in primary schools.”
- “We will continue to expand academies, free schools, studio schools and University Technical Colleges ... And we will introduce new powers to force coasting schools to accept new leadership.”
- “The amount of money following your child into school will be protected.”
- “We will continue to improve Further Education through our network of National Colleges.”
- “Our reforms to university funding mean you do not have to pay anything towards tuition while studying ... We will ensure the continuing success and stability of these reforms.”

Teachers:

- “We will expect every teacher to be trained not just in how to tackle serious behaviour issues, but also in how to deal with the low level of disruption that stops children from learning properly ... we will recruit the best teachers by reducing the time they spend on paperwork, introducing bursaries for the most in-demand subjects, paying good teachers more, further reducing the burden of Ofsted inspections and continuing to encourage the growth of Teach First.”
- “We will let our best head teachers take control of failing primary schools, by expanding the National Leaders of Education programme.”

Language Policy:

- “We will require secondary school pupils to take GCSEs in English, maths, science, a language and history or geography, with Ofsted unable to award its highest ratings to schools that refuse to teach these core subjects.”
- “We will increase the number of teachers able to teach Mandarin in schools in England.”

The Labour Party

Manifesto: http://b3cdn.net/labouruk/e1d45da42456423b8c_vwm6brbvb.pdf

A high quality education for all our children (pages 37-40)

Education:

- “We will protect the entire education budget ... so that it rises in line with inflation.”
- “We will raise the standard and status of vocational and technical education, with a high quality vocational route from school through to employment.”
- “We will transform high performing Further Education colleges with strong links to industry, into new specialist Institutes of Technical Education.”
- “Labour will introduce new Directors of School Standards at a local level to monitor performance, intervene in underperforming schools and support them to improve.”
- “We will end the wasteful and poorly performing Free Schools programme, and switch resources to where they are needed, allowing us to cap class sizes.”
- “As a condition for continued business rate relief, private schools will be required to form a meaningful partnership with a school, or cluster of schools, in the state sector.”
- “Labour will cut tuition fees from £9,000 to £6,000 a year.”

Teachers:

- “Every teacher will need to gain qualified teacher status. We will encourage teaching quality by creating new career routes for teachers who are expert in their subject ... We will support plans for a new College of Teaching.”
- “We have supported the successful ‘Teach First’ since its inception and will continue to do so.”
- “A new School Leadership Institute will support head teachers and improve school leadership.”

Language Policy:

Not mentioned specifically.

The Liberal Democrats

Manifesto:

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/libdems/pages/8907/attachments/original/1429028133/Liberal Democrat General Election Manifesto 2015.pdf?1429028133](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/libdems/pages/8907/attachments/original/1429028133/Liberal_Democrat_General_Election_Manifesto_2015.pdf?1429028133)

An Opportunity Society: World class education for all (pages 50-61)

Education:

- “Protect early years, school, sixth form and college budgets – investment from nursery to 19 to raise standards for all.”
- “Introduce a minimum curriculum entitlement – a slimmed down core national curriculum, which will be taught in all state-funded schools.”
- “Establish an independent Educational Standards Authority (ESA) entirely removed from Ministerial interference. The ESA will have responsibility for curriculum content and examination standards.”
- “Strengthen school leadership and governance. We will provide rapid support and intervention to help ensure that all schools become good or outstanding.”
- “Establish a review of higher education finance within the next Parliament to consider any necessary reforms.”

Teachers:

- “Guarantee all teachers in state-funded schools will be fully qualified or working towards Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) from September 2016.”
- “Help establish a new profession-led Royal College of Teachers, eventually to oversee Qualified Teacher Status and professional development.”
- “Tackle unnecessary teacher workload, including by: avoiding policy changes while children are within a key stage. Establishing the right accountability framework for schools. Ensuring Ofsted inspections are high-quality, fair to all schools and focus on outcomes and not processes.”

Language Policy:

- “Set a clear ambition for all children to achieve a good grasp of Maths and English, aiming to eradicate child illiteracy and innumeracy by 2025. We will set an interim goal that all children should start school with good language skills by 2020.”
- “Maintain funding for people to develop and improve their English language skills to enable them to fully participate in society and achieve their potential.”
- “Encourage schools with high numbers of children with English as a second language to host English lessons for parents.”

Democratic Unionist Party

The manifesto was not available at the time of publication and this information is quoted from the party website: <http://www.mydup.com/policies/education>

Education:

- “Produce a comprehensive long-term plan for the education sector including a roadmap to create a single education system.”
- “Introduce an Individual Education Plan for every pupil based on a simplified Pupil Profile.”
- “Preserve and promote grammar schools, with Boards of Governors free to determine admissions criteria.”
- “Promote education ambassadors and role models in areas of educational underachievement.”
- “Continue to oppose any rise in student fees beyond the routine year-on-year inflationary uplifts.”

Teachers:

- “Review the Revised Curriculum with a view to giving principals and teachers more freedom to adapt their offering to suit the pupils’ particular circumstances.”
- “Assist unemployed teachers to take training modules permitting them to attain experience in the preschool sector or similarly in reading recovery schemes until they obtain a teaching post.”
- “Encourage stronger collaboration between the different teacher training institutions with the aim of consolidating into a single teacher training system.”

Language Policy:

- “Support the work of the Ulster-Scots Academy in developing the culture, heritage and language.”

Scottish National Party

Manifesto: <http://votesnp.com/docs/manifesto.pdf>

Education (pages 30-31)

Education:

- “Through our £1.8 billion Schools for the Future programme we will continue to invest, delivering almost 100 more new and improved buildings by 2020.”
- “Continue to keep university education free.”

Teachers:

- “We will deliver increased investment in the year ahead to fund an additional 250 teacher training places.”
- “Our new Education (Scotland) Bill will focus on ways we can improve attainment, especially among Scotland’s most disadvantaged children ... ensure all teachers are appropriately trained and qualified.”

Language Policy:

- “Focus on Gaelic education by placing a duty on councils to assess the need for Gaelic medium primary education following a parental request. As part of our ongoing support for Gaelic, we will ensure funding for Bòrd na Gàidhlig is protected.”

Sinn Féin

Manifesto: http://www.sinnfein.ie/files/2015/Westminster_Manifesto_2015_web.pdf

Education (pages 7-8)

Education:

- “Continue to oppose austerity and protect core public services such as health, education and welfare.”
- “Retained the Educational Maintenance Allowance to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to stay in education.”

Teachers:

Not mentioned specifically.

Language Policy:

- “The implementation of an Acht Gaelige as agreed to promote the Irish language and safeguards the rights of Irish speakers.”

Plaid Cymru

Manifesto:

https://www.partyof.wales/uploads/Plaid_Cymru_2015_Westminster_Manifesto.pdf

Working for our Children's Future (pages 20-25)

Education:

- "A new National Curriculum will ensure that all children leave education with a positive understanding of the history of Wales and the cultures of their communities"
- "We will set the learning outcomes to be achieved by schools, ensuring the best possible English, Welsh and Mathematics GCSE results, but will allow schools themselves to determine how to achieve those outcomes."
- "A single consistent framework will be introduced for assessing children's progress throughout their school career."
- "We will create an independent examination regulator to restore faith in the Welsh examination system."
- "Plaid Cymru will continue to oppose the 'free school' model of education."
- "Further Education Colleges play an important role in providing education and training for young people aged 16 years and over, and we will work with colleges to ensure that the sector continues to offer excellent education."
- "Plaid Cymru believes that, in principle, higher education should be free for all, and we will continue to work towards this aim."

Teachers:

- "We will give our teachers and classroom assistants the time to teach so that they can focus on ensuring the development of core skills in schools."
- "We will transfer powers over teachers' pay and conditions to the National Assembly for Wales, as recommended by the Silk Commission."

Language Policy:

- "To counter the growing deficit in language skills, Plaid Cymru will ensure that modern foreign languages are taught from an early age, and introduce a compulsory modern language GCSE."
- "All local authorities will be required to have an accurate and up-to date Welsh Education Strategic Plan to meet the call for Welsh language education."
- "Plaid Cymru will increase the provision of Welsh language courses and tutors in Further Education across Wales."
- "We will give the Welsh language official status within the UK Parliament."

Social Democratic & Labour Party

Manifesto: http://www.sdlp.ie/site/assets/files/42192/westminster_manifesto.pdf

Jobs and Education (page 6)

Education:

- “Support positive school reforms while protecting schools from arbitrary closures.”
- “Improve focus on literacy and numeracy skills in the primary cycle to prevent educational inequalities developing at later stages.”
- “Build upon the cross-border cooperation between colleges and universities to meet the needs of students and business.”
- “We believe that barriers to accessing education must be removed.”

Teachers:

- “Continuous training for Irish teachers in schools.”

Language Policy:

- “The SDLP continues to promote the Irish language and proposes the establishment of an Irish Language Act to preserve and encourage the language. It is imperative that a rights-based Act supports speakers in the freedom to use the language in public life, without constraints.”

UK Independence Party

Manifesto: <http://ukip-serv.org/theukipmanifesto2015.pdf>

Education (pages 28-31)

Education:

- “UKIP will abolish Key Stage 1 SATs, set at the age of seven.”
- “UKIP will push for a range of different types of school, including grammar, vocational, technical and specialist secondary schools within a geographical area.”
- “Reintroduce the Intermediate tier at GCSE Mathematics, to ensure Foundation and Intermediate tiers are skills-based and that the Higher tier is a rigorous preparation for A Level.”
- Abolish the AS level exam as a stepping stone to a full ‘A’ level, while retaining it as a standalone qualification in its own right for those who choose to approach it as such. If young students want to take a full ‘A’ level, they may as well start the essential in-depth learning immediately and escape the stressful treadmill of continuous examinations from 16 onwards. This move has the additional advantage of releasing an extra six weeks of lessons during the summer term between GCSEs and A levels.”
- “Fund all secondary schools according to a single formula, taking into account Special Educational Needs.”
- “UK students taking approved degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM), mainly at universities funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, will not have to repay their tuition fees. This is on condition that they work in their discipline and pay tax in the UK for at least five years, after they complete their degrees.”

Teachers:

- “We will decrease the amount of paperwork teachers deal with ... The plethora of centralised targets will be streamlined and lesson observations limited to a maximum of one each term.”
- “We will scrap teachers’ performance-related pay.”

Language Policy:

- “We are also committed to promoting the English language as a common ingredient that will bind our society together.”

Alliance Party

Manifesto: <http://allianceparty.org/document/manifesto#document>

Education (page 22)

Education:

- “Work for the introduction of an Integrated Education Bill. This Bill will provide a clear framework and system of support for the implementation of integrated education.”
- “Develop a formal definition of ‘shared education’.”
- “Set a minimum number of shared learning hours and contact between schools in a shared facility.”
- “We also believe that work can be done to improve the educational outcomes by children from across the community.”
- “In order to provide an education system that reflects the needs of pupils we will: Retain legal statementing for students with special needs. Work to address poor levels of literacy and numeracy.”

Teachers:

- “Modernise and improve teacher training by promoting sharing and inclusion across the system.”

Language Policy:

- “Promote a single Comprehensive Languages Bill to establish the need for service provision in both indigenous and minority languages.”

Green Party

Manifesto:

[https://www.greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/manifesto/Green Party 2015 General Election Manifesto.pdf](https://www.greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/manifesto/Green_Party_2015_General_Election_Manifesto.pdf)

A place to learn: education (pages 36-40)

Education:

- “A broad, balanced and enriching curriculum, including creative and vocational areas ... with a coherent 16-19 qualifications framework allowing a real choice of academic and vocational areas.”
- “A comprehensive system of local schools offering mixed-ability teaching and staffed by quality teachers, and the integration of grammar schools into the comprehensive system.”
- “Restoring education current and capital funding to 2010 levels in real terms ... and distributing it fairly among local authorities.”
- “The abolition of SATS and league tables and the evaluation of schools by parents, teachers and the local community, not Ofsted ... which we would abolish, reducing the accountability-related workload.”
- “Class sizes of 20, costing £1.5 billion over the Parliament.”
- “Connect universities with local schools and colleges through nationwide Widening Participation programmes.”
- “We will phase out public funding of schools run by religious organisations.”
- “Ending undergraduate tuition fees.”

Teachers:

- “Action to reduce teacher workload and introduce professional pay levels for all teachers.”

Language Policy:

- “Assist integration by making available free or affordable English or Welsh language lessons to all new immigrants who want them.”

Respect Party

The manifesto was not available at the time of publication and this information is quoted from the party website: <http://www.respectparty.org/>

Education:

- “Respect campaigns for an end to tuition fees ... and for a free education from the cradle to the grave.”

Teachers:

Not mentioned specifically.

Language Policy:

Not mentioned specifically.

