



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

6 July 1983

John Peter,

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE SURVEY 1983

The Department's contribution to the PESC Report, which is now with the Treasury, includes substantial additional bids both in 1984-85 and in later years. My colleagues here and I have probed in detail, in the course of several meetings, the figures originally submitted to us by officials; and we have made significant reductions in them. I believe that, in their reduced form, the bids are necessary to sustain the policies in our Manifesto. You will be aware of some of the background from my letters of 20 June to Patrick Jenkin about local authority current expenditure and of 21 June to you about capital expenditure; but I should like you and others to have a fuller explanation.

2. The table in the Annex compares the actual and planned movement in expenditure in cost terms set out in the last Public Expenditure White Paper Cmnd 8789, the baseline for the Survey, with the movement in pupil and student numbers over two successive four year periods.

3. The first line in the Table shows that in the four years from 1978-79 expenditure on education and science fell in cost terms by 1 per cent and the weighted average of pupil and home student numbers by 2 per cent. The rise in unit costs in primary and secondary schools, largely due to diseconomies of falling rolls, was partly offset by the fall in further and higher education, including student grants, which reflected economies of scale and tighter staffing ratios as student numbers (and productivity) increased in those two sectors. It was this which

/enabled

The Rt Hon Peter Rees QC MP
Chief Secretary
Treasury
Parliament Street
LONDON SW1P 3AG

enabled us to point in the Manifesto to better pupil teacher ratios, higher spending per pupil in real terms and more students in higher education. The second line of the Table presents a very different prospect for the four years from 1982-83. The Survey baseline provides for an 11 per cent reduction in expenditure in cost terms while the weighted average of pupil and student numbers falls by only 5 per cent. Within the total of pupils and students, the demand from those aged 16-19 for non-advanced further education will show a sharp increase (partly as a result of the bleak prospects for employment in these age-groups) which we ought to meet on political and educational grounds alike. Without additional resources average unit costs would fall by some 6 per cent over the period. This would mean a sharp fall in standards of provision at all levels: there would be a severe deterioration in pupil-teacher ratios and less access to post-compulsory education, where student-staff ratios, which we already plan to squeeze sharply, would deteriorate even further.

4. This general picture, which I do not believe we can accept, is the result of a number of different factors. First, the baseline for education does not include any part of the unallocated margin for local authority current expenditure - whereas of course a significant part of this margin is intended for education. A substantial element of the additional resources that I am seeking for 1984-85 thus results from the way in which we plan and is not actually a bid for extra cash for local authorities.

5. There are two other factors which between them account for most of the rest of my proposals on local authority current expenditure. Pay settlements in 1983 averaged 5 per cent instead of the 3½ per cent which we assumed - partly with an eye to influencing pay negotiations - in our expenditure plans. This means that the baseline for 1984-85 represents a 1½ per cent reduction in cost terms compared with those plans. Moreover, cost increases generally in 1984 and later years are now expected, on the basis of the GDP deflator, to be rather higher than those assumed in the baseline. And cost increases of a special kind - an increase in contributions to teachers' pensions as a result of the Government Actuary's quinquennial review, on which we shall shortly have a detailed report - will almost certainly add about £100m a year to local authority expenditure from April 1984. The figures already allow for teacher numbers to fall half as fast again as in 1982-83, and I judge that we cannot go even faster to offset these cost increases without serious dislocation and educational damage.

6. For this part of the education programme, our plans to cap the rates in selected areas and to abolish or reform some of the larger local authorities will help in 1985-86 and beyond. But for 1984-85, as I said in my letter of 20 June to Patrick Jenkin, our position will be unrealistic without a substantial increase in our present cash plans for local authorities, accompanied by an RSG settlement which will bear severely on the over-spenders and help those other authorities, especially the shire counties,

/which

which have co-operated with us. Patrick referred to this general issue towards the end of his letter of 28 June to you about local authority capital expenditure (on which I commented in my letter of 1 July). I agree with what he says there about current expenditure; and I would only add that what we decide about 1984-85 must take account of the needs of individual local services as well as our plans for the total. That is why I believe that those of us concerned with those services must discuss the issues very soon.

7. On Vote expenditure, which accounts for only a quarter of my programme, my main concerns are to maintain and improve the quality of our scientific research, especially in areas of economic importance, and of the universities. Some extra resources are also needed to meet exceptional cost increases outside the control of the institutions concerned. I am not seeking more money for student support except for the bid that is formally required to transfer to my programme the agreed savings on social security resulting from larger student numbers. I consider that any alleviation in the parental contribution will have to be financed by a reduction in the level of the grant itself, even though this has not kept pace with the cost of living.

8. Finally, the baseline for capital expenditure on education contains no increase in cash over the whole period up to 1986-87. The stock of school and college buildings has deteriorated sharply in the last few years and we need extra investment both to remedy this and to enable authorities to re-organise their schools in response to falling rolls. This extra investment now would make it possible later both to cut current expenditure and to improve the educational return for the money spent.

9. The performance of the education service is patchy, and we are pledged to improve it. This certainly cannot be done by money alone but the cuts per child at school implicit in our baseline would make it impossible to maintain even present standards. But I am intensely aware of the fiscal problems created by the cost of the service. We should not only go on looking for savings and for productivity increases, but also consider whether the costs of post-school education can be reduced by transferring part of them to the consumer. One element in this approach could be student loans, to which I am sure we shall have to return, for educational as well as for financial reasons. We must, in preparation for the time when demand for higher education begins to fall in the second half of the 1980s, look afresh now at the scope then for closing and amalgamating institutions, especially in the local authority sector where the weakest of them are to be found. In addition we ought to consider whether more income can be raised by charging fees in this sector or raising those that now exist, but the obstacles are real. I am considering how studies in this area might best be launched.

10. I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, Nigel Lawson, Jim Prior, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards and Patrick Jenkin.

*Yours ever,
Ken*

ANNEX

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

	(1) Expenditure in cost terms	(2) Primary Nos	(3) Secondary Nos	(4) NAFE Nos	(5) HE Nos	(6) Weighted average (2)-(5)
With 1978-79=100						
1982-83	99	83	94	112	113	98
With 1982-83=100						
1986-87	89	96	87	106	102	95

Sources

Col (1) 1978-79 - 1985-86 Chief Secretary's Written Answer, 17 March. 1986-87 assumes 3 per cent increase in cash on 1985-86, 4½ per cent increase in costs.

Col (2)-(5) 1978-79 - 1982-83 Actuals
1986-87 Tables 1 and 2 of draft chapter for 1983 Survey.

Col (6) Nos in Cols (2)-(5) weighted by numbers and unit costs in each sector.



GENERAL ELECTION 1983
Finchley Constituency

Polling Day 9th. June 1983

Agent: Andrew Thomson
Campaign Headquarters:
212 Ballards Lane, Finchley N.3. 2LX

Conservative Candidate:
Margaret Thatcher



7 June 1983

Dear Mr. Hennessy,

Thank you for your letter of the 27 May. I am happy to state my opinion on the four matters you raise.

1. Funding for the university sector in general and those institutions in the London area

After decades of expansion, there has been scope for the elimination of waste and the more effective use of resources both in universities and in polytechnics and colleges. Given this fact, and the general need to contain public spending, the Government decided in 1981 that, (in addition to removing indiscriminate subsidies for overseas students), spending on higher education over both sectors should be reduced by about 8½% in real terms over three years. The University Grants Committee - a body composed largely of independent academics - has made use of this contraction to increase the proportion of science and engineering and encourage the pruning of overlapping courses.

But the period of contraction is now nearing the end. In 1983/84, we are spending £2.75 billion on higher education; and the intention is to hold the level steady in real terms after 1984/85. The Government is also making £100 million available over three years to create 700 new posts for outstanding young academics, as well as 130 new jobs in information technology; this will serve to protect the standards of our universities in years to come.

These general observations apply as much to London as to other areas. The reorganisation of the University of London has provided a remarkable example of the way in which the Government's policies are bringing about a more effective use of resources. The University has also received a considerable share of the newly created academic posts. The Colleges of the University, in their new form, can look forward to a thoroughly healthy future.

.....



GENERAL ELECTION 1983
Finchley Constituency

Polling Day 9th. June 1983

Agent: Andrew Thomson
Campaign Headquarters:
212 Ballards Lane, Finchley N.3. 2LX

Conservative Candidate:
Margaret Thatcher



-2-

2. Increasing access to university courses for those living in the London area and, in particular, those groups traditionally under-represented in the student body

One of the main tasks of the universities in London, as elsewhere, is to carry out research: it is therefore important to ensure that university staff do not bear too great a load of teaching. Recognizing this, the Government has taken action to ensure that the contraction in the numbers of academics has been matched by a comparable contraction in student numbers. It has not been necessary to do the same in the public sector, because public sector institutions, including polytechnic are primarily devoted to teaching rather than to research. Indeed, there has been scope for slightly increasing the teaching load of polytechnic and other public sector lecturers, thereby ensuring an increase in the total numbers of students gaining access to higher education. This increase has given opportunities to many young people who are members of groups that have not in the past been well represented in institutions of higher education.

3. The provision of places for all those qualified and desiring a place in higher education

We do not believe that the Universities or public sector institutions should be compelled to accept students who have the minimum qualification of 2 'A' levels; and without such compulsion, it cannot be guaranteed that every student possessing these qualifications will find a place in higher education. But 81 per cent of those qualified now find places; and there are over 550,000 students in higher education, as compared with 510,000 in 1979.

4. What is your policy on the provision of student loans?

The Conservative Party has at present no plans to replace any

.....



GENERAL ELECTION 1983
Finchley Constituency

Polling Day 9th. June 1983

Agent: Andrew Thomson
Campaign Headquarters:
212 Ballards Lane, Finchley N.3. 2LX

Conservative Candidate:
Margaret Thatcher



- 3 -

part of the student grant for first degree course by a loan.

I hope that these answers will be of interest to your members.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

W F Hennessy Esq
Regional Official
Association of University Teachers

2.10 Education and Science

Table 2.10

£ million cash

	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83 ⁽¹⁾	1983-84 ⁽²⁾	1984-85 ⁽²⁾	1985-86 ⁽²⁾
Department of Education and Science									
Education									
10.1 Schools									
Under fives									
Capital	7	13	10	9	10	10	11	10	
Current	128	146	177	222	241	258	254	260	
Primary, secondary and other									
Capital	323	276	313	376	300	254	229	220	
Current	1,369	1,506	1,706	2,086	2,258	2,400	2,371	2,430	
Secondary	1,817	2,057	2,354	2,952	3,306	3,590	3,625	3,730	7,930
Special schools	187	214	249	309	345	377	368	380	
Other (supporting services, and fees at non-maintained schools)	124	119	130	150	166	172	177	190	
Transport	99	117	136	160	174	198	202	210	
Meals ⁽³⁾	352	376	409	391	391	400	266	260	
Milk ⁽³⁾	12	12	12	6	6	7	7	10	
10.2 Higher and further education (including teacher training) ⁽⁴⁾									
Universities									
Capital	75	82	106	115	120	120	120	120	
Non-University sector	63	61	78	109	90	82	74	70	
Universities	574	644	779	1,005	1,036	1,253	1,320		
Voluntary and direct grant	51	51	61	79	82	95	97	2,850	4,150
Maintained sector advanced	295	322	370	444	487	547	560		
Student awards	472	541	629	771	891	762	769		
Maintained sector non-advanced (except adult education)	449	495	581	713	813	892	877	890	
Adult	45	53	63	69	73	81	65	70	
10.4 Miscellaneous educational services, research and administration									
Youth service									
Capital	4	6	8	8	5	7	7	10	
Current	48	53	65	78	88	92	87	90	
Research and other services									
Capital	4	5	7	14	4	4	4		
Current	33	34	41	47	56	57	59	60	700
Administration									
Capital	251	277	322	396	436	490	491	510	
Current									
Total education									
Capital	476	442	522	631	529	477	446	450	460
Current	6,305	7,017	8,085	9,877	10,849	11,670	11,597	11,920	12,310
Total education	6,781	7,459	8,607	10,508	11,378	12,147	12,043	12,370	12,780
Science									
10.5 Research councils, etc									
Capital	36	50	64	72	68	75	81	90	90
Current	223	246	276	321	383	406	436	460	480
Total science	258	296	339	393	450	481	517	540	560
Total education and science									
Capital	512	492	586	702	597	551	527	530	550
Current	6,528	7,263	8,361	10,198	11,231	12,076	12,033	12,380	12,790
Total programme	7,039	7,755	8,946	10,901	11,828	12,628	12,560	12,910	13,340

(1) The 1982-83 figures incorporate a provisional distribution by sector of total current spending by local authorities on education based on their budgets.

(2) From 1 April 1983 Departments will repay PSA for accommodation and certain other services, under the new Property Repayment Service (see chapter 2.14). Prior to that date the relevant expenditure is comprised within programme 14.

(3) The figures for school meals and milk exclude EC subsidy in respect of milk and milk-based products which was transferred in Cmnd 8494 to Programme 3 (Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce) to reflect adoption by the Board during 1981 of responsibility for administering the subsidy. Expenditure on school meals and milk including the EC subsidy is:

	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
Meals:	352.4	378.7	414.6	397.9	397.7	407.8	274.9	270
Milk:	14.0	20.9	22.0	12.3	12.2	13.2	15.2	20

(4) The change in the trend of higher education and student awards figures between 1981-82 and 1982-83 reflects the reduction in tuition fees described in Cmnd 8494.

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PLANS

Public expenditure on schools is planned to increase from about £5bn in 1979-80 to more than £7½bn in 1985-86. During the same period pupil numbers will fall by about 15%.

EXPENDITURE PER PUPIL

Local authorities' expenditure per pupil in primary schools and in secondary schools was at record levels in 1981-82, and the indications are that the trend has continued in 1982-83.

PUPIL-TEACHER RATIOS

The pupil teacher ratio has improved each year since the Government took office, is now at its lowest ever level.

POOR SCHOOLS

The Government's public expenditure plans refer to the education service in England as a whole. Expenditure in individual schools is the responsibility of the local authority concerned.

'MORE CHILDREN, FEWER SCHOOLS'

The number of pupils of compulsory school age peaked in 1977. Since then it has been falling and will continue to fall for the rest of the decade. Fewer school places will be needed. This will not always involve the closure of entire schools. But whatever the means, there can be substantial educational as well as financial benefits from taking surplus accommodation out of use. It cannot be right that authorities should devote scarce resources to the upkeep of places which are surplus to requirements.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES' COSTS

The level of service which local authorities can afford will depend crucially upon their ability to contain costs generally, including in particular pay settlements.

BACKGROUND NOTES

Expenditure per pupil (£)

	England and Wales				England	
	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82
Primary (a) cash	296	323	367	429	547	619
(b) Nov 1981 prices	551	560	581	601	600	618
Secondary						
(a) cash	443	478	534	612	771	868
(b) Nov 1981 prices	826	828	845	856	862	868

The Government's Public Expenditure Plans (Cmnd 8789)

Table 2.10

£ million cash

	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83 ⁽¹⁾	1983-84 ⁽²⁾	1984-85 ⁽²⁾	1985-86 ⁽²⁾
Department of Education and Science									
Education									
10.1 Schools									
Under fives									
Capital	7	13	10	9	10	10	11	10	
Current	128	146	177	222	241	258	254	260	
Primary, secondary and other									
Capital	323	276	313	376	300	254	229	220	
Primary									
Current	1,369	1,506	1,706	2,086	2,258	2,400	2,371	2,430	
Secondary									
Current	1,817	2,057	2,354	2,952	3,306	3,590	3,625	3,730	7,930
Special schools									
Current	187	214	249	309	345	377	368	380	
Other (supporting services, and fees at non-maintained schools)									
Current	124	119	130	150	166	172	177	190	
Transport	99	117	136	160	174	198	202	210	
Meals ⁽³⁾	352	376	409	391	391	400	266	260	
Milk ⁽³⁾	12	12	12	6	6	7	7	10	

Pupil Numbers

Academic Year	Actual			Provisional		Projected			
	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86
England									
Total school population (including special schools)	8666	8562	8397	8185	7973	7726	7510	7351	7227
Pupil numbers:									
Under fives	415	429	429	428	437	430	420	420	420
All other primary	4275	4138	3980	3797	3619	3432	3317	3275	3290
Secondary									
Under school leaving age	3577	3589	3573	3530	3457	3403	3318	3206	3075
Over school leaving age	275	283	293	310	341	345	341	336	332
Total (excluding special schools)	8542	8439	8275	8065	7854	7610	7396	7239	7117
School participation rates per cent									
Under fives	34.4	37.3	39.0	40.2	40.4	37.7	35.2	35.0	36.2
Over school leaving age	19.3	19.2	19.4	20.1	21.9	22.4	22.4	22.5	22.6
Teachers: numbers employed (f.t.e)	436	441	438	429	420	411	up to 400	390-	380-
Pupil, teacher ratios overall	19.4	18.9	18.7	18.6	18.5	18.3	18.2	18.0-	18.2-
								18.3	18.4
Special schools									
Pupils	124	123	122	120	119	116	114	112	110
Teachers	17	17	18	17	18	18	17	17	17

LEARNING IN THE SARDINE CAN

HEADMASTER David Pritchard rings the Victorian bell and 270 boisterous boys and girls leave the wetness of the playground to squeeze into their school. It was built for 100 children.

Alphington School, on the outskirts of Exeter, in Devon, has been dubbed the "sardine can." I'm here for a lesson in learning in that cramped can.

David, 38, says: "We may be falling over each other and the buildings may be in shambles but we try to keep up standards. We're proud of our school."

He leads me across the school yard and flings open a heavy door. A class of youngsters are at work in a washroom.

It has been raining, so rows of soaking-wet coats hang on pegs.

A monotonous drip-drip-drip from the taps on half-a-dozen miniature wash basins along one wall accompanies two girls being coached in their reading by a part-time teacher.

Elsewhere, in the crowded corridor, children slap paint on pictures or put together imaginative models from kits.

"This," says David, "is what we call a multi-purpose area."

Obvious educational jargon used in official reports for a cover-up

EXETER

that children are being taught in corridors and washrooms.

David says: "This is our worst example of overcrowding. We have to use the space, there's nowhere else left."

The architecture of the main school—built in 1876—is what David calls "cottage-style."

The red-brick front, tall Gothic windows and steep roof is a pretty facade that hides the clutter of prefabs, sheds, huts and makeshift buildings.

David says: "Six of our ten classrooms were put up as temporary structures but they've become permanent."

Alphington is one of

200 Devon schools built before the turn of the century. Like the village of Alphington, it has been swallowed up by Exeter City's suburban sprawl.

"Unlike many schools our roll is going up, I'll have 280 pupils next year," says David.

He's been in charge for five years and is full of praise for his eleven staff who manage against all the odds.

He would break the law by not providing children with morning prayers. He would also break the fire and health laws if he squeezed too many children into the main hall.

David says: "We hold staggered assemblies because I can't put more than 120 kids in the main hall

Hygiene is also a problem. Across the yard David points out the crude, unheated, loos.

He flings open another classroom door. "Look at this little lot," he says. "They're still optimistic about the world. It's all in front of them."

David's hopes are pinned on a new school—but will it materialise?

"We're told building could start in 1985. They've got a site, not far from here.

"They've even costed the new school—about £688,000. Doesn't sound a lot, does it?"

What happens, if the new school is not provided?

"We are professionals paid to cope with the situation," says David. "But it is difficult keeping up the morale of the staff and parents."

GEOFFREY LAKEMAN

SCANDALOUS NEGLECT

WHEN a roof caved in at St Stephen's school, Bradford, little Ann Marie Hanson (pictured on the Front Page) escaped without injury.

But Ann Marie and the 150-year-old school are both victims of the neglect of education in Bradford.

"It's scandalous. Schools are inadequate, old and under-supplied," said John Lambert, Labour's education spokesman in the city.

There is a £20 million backlog of repairs in schools like St Stephen's and the cut-back on education spending this year is £3 million.

Sid Matthews, a teacher in Bradford for twelve years, says: "My classroom has been leaking for as long as I can remember.

"There are schools still open in this city which were condemned fifty years ago. "The equip-

BRADFORD

ment is clapped out and so are the buildings, there are more temporary huts than schools.

"This winter the heating packed up and the temperature in my classroom was 40 Fahrenheit."

One headmaster begged the council to help. He wrote: "The days of one pupil for one book are a distant dream."

One teacher started an O-level course without one book for the thirty pupils.

Another class had eight spelling books for a class of thirty.

They can't do their sums in Bradford. No investment in education means there will be no profit in the pupils' future.

STEPHEN WHITE

ARSON!

The growing menace

PETERLEE

ending last October, 25 of the 34 school fires were the work of young arsonists.

Earlier this year the 1,200-pupil Shotton Hall comprehensive school in Peterlee, Co. Durham, was ravaged by fire.

A small blaze, believed to have started in the headmaster's office, was whipped up by gale-force winds into a massive £1½ million blaze and reduced the school to the ruin (left).

Now three teenagers have been charged in connection with the fire and committed for trial at the Crown Court.

JOHN GILBERT

NO CHANCE FOR SARAH

DAILY MIRROR

SARAH BLEWITT could become a world class ballerina.

A former member of the Royal Ballet thinks she has the talent and potential to go right to the top.

But 11-year-old Sarah lives in Dudley, in the Midlands, which is run by a Tory council. And those who control the education purse strings have said No to the grant Sarah needs to take up the place she has been offered at a professional ballet school in Chester.

The education committee has never given a grant for ballet and hasn't the resources to allow it the luxury of changing its mind, says a spokesman.

It also believes if it gave Sarah the cash then every parent of every half-talented dancing child in the district would try to clamber on the bandwagon.

Sarah needs £3,500 a year for four years—a total of £14,000.

Now that the Daily Mirror has spoken to Dudley council, Sarah's parents will formally appeal against the decision and their daughter will dance in front of the Council of Dance Education and Training—the toughest judges in the country.

Should they be as impres-

DUDLEY

sed with Sarah as her teachers they will urge Dudley to change its mind.

Sarah's parents—hairstresser Paul, 37, and Pat, 34—would pay for her tuition themselves, if they could afford it.

But Paul is currently in hospital and Pat can't work for a year after having two major operations in the last twelve months.

Perfect

"We obviously couldn't find anything like the money needed to pay for the school fees," says Pat.

"But even before we knew that a grant was a possibility Sarah was saying 'mum please let me go, let me try.'"

Sarah's present teacher, former member of the Royal Ballet, Olga Gwynn has no doubt about her talents.

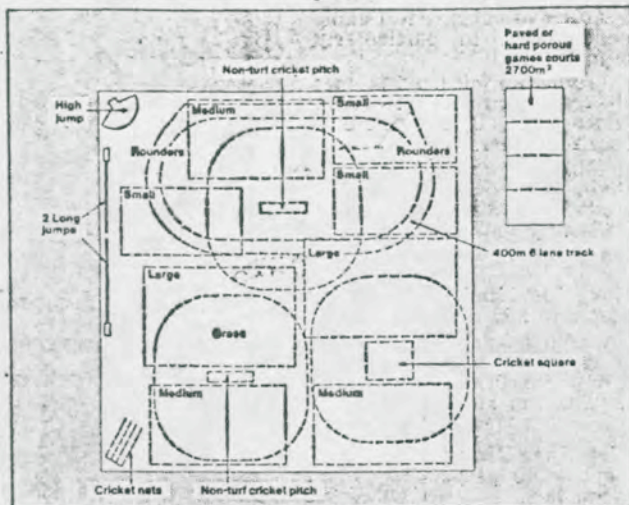
"She really is just one girl in a thousand" says Olga. "Sarah has a perfect neck, face and spine."

Says Sarah: "I would like just to dance. Nothing else."

"Whatever else happens I just don't see myself working in a shop."

DOUGLAS BENICE

MacFARLANE'S MAD MAZE...



THIS is the sports field they call Macfarlane's mad maze.

It's the brain child of Sports Minister Neil Macfarlane and a statistical example of how to cram 1,200 pupils into 12 acres.

But teachers say it's impossible, unworkable and dangerous.

Now the Education Department, and the Government are using plans like the one above to justify selling off thousands of acres of school sports fields.

Central Council of Physical Recreation general secretary Peter Lawson says: "They're talking nonsense."

"This plan is either an architect's blueprint for Hampton Court Maze or a

map of Spaghetti Junction.

"When you have kids throwing things around you need SPACE or you are going to have an accident or an injury."

"Bureaucrats who know nothing about sport are drawing up regulations which are incomprehensible and impractical."

"It may be that some schools no longer need all their land."

"But we could scrap Wembley and Wimbledon's Centre Court if we used the same argument that they were under-used."

"Thousands of acres of playing fields will be lost to the nation forever if the Government has its way."

SCROUNGING FOR BOOKS

SCHOOL staff and children are patching up old text books and making do with others better suited to the bonfire.

Yet, in a publishers' warehouse, school books are piling up in their thousands, waiting to be sold. There just isn't enough money to buy all the books schools need.

And, with the spending cuts, things are getting worse. Many publishers who once specialised in text books have got out into other, more lucrative, areas.

Chris Lloyd, sales manager of the Dorset-based Blandford Press, which once had a large educational books department, said: "We have suffered a terrible cutback. We just don't publish as many school books as we did five years ago."

"A few years ago we had a mountain of unsold school books that we had to dump into the bargain book market. It was easy to see this coming when Mrs Thatcher's Government came to power. Libraries and schools just haven't got the money..."

So children, like those at St. Peter's Church of England School at Farnham, Surrey, make do with worn and out-of-date books.

Headmaster Roger Ellis said: "Staff and parents are constantly repairing books. We are turning ourselves into scroungers and having to adjust our activities around the materials available."

Meanwhile, some of the country's biggest publishers find school books stockpiling in their warehouses.

Roger Watson, managing director of Longman's School Division in Harlow, Essex, admitted: "Our stocks are higher than we would like them to be. Schools just haven't got the money..."

BARRY WIGMORE

● THE staunch Tory parents of Bournemouth have a battle on their hands.

They are fighting to save State-run Beaufort School and its acres of playing fields.

Now the school is under threat and the angry parents are convinced the main reason Beaufort is for the chop is the sports fields.

They say Dorset County Council wants to sell the land for £550,000 so that houses can be built there.

The trouble is that by 1987 Bournemouth will have too many schools for its dwindling population.

One of them has to go.

The council's own chief education officer Roy Price was in no doubt about which school should close.

He recommended another boys' school with no playing fields.

But the county council decided Beaufort must go.

Now the Beaufort parents plan to ask Education Minister Dr. Rhodes Boyson to overrule the council.

Merthyr

THERE'S a grim merger of past and present in the Welsh town of Merthyr Tydfil where a school shares the ground floor of a crumbling mansion with a museum and art gallery.

Cyfartha Lower Comprehensive School is, in the words of a local councillor, a clapped out scandal.

Yet it's a home for 300 schoolchildren still being taught in the towered and turreted mock castle built nearly 160 years ago.

Bridgwater

RACHEL COLLINS was about to take her third grade cello exam when Somerset education authority sacked its 12 instrumental teachers in a bid to cut costs.

And 13-year-old Rachel, who lives in Bridgwater, was forced to give up her music after two years of lessons.

She is just one of hundreds of children throughout the country who have been forced to give up playing musical instruments because of education cutbacks.

Carlisle

TEENAGE unemployment is making John Thoburn a Head of a comprehensive school in Carlisle daily more difficult.

A worrying number of pupils are taking look at the dole and deciding there is point in working school-leaving exams.

"There is no doubt it is having an effect on their attitudes, particularly of those who achieved least."

Of the 150 school leavers seeking employment last year, only 37 got he says.

by BARRY WIGMORE

TEACHING is no longer a pleasure for Mike Wickles—it's a guerilla war.

Mike 29, has spent five years at the sharp end of his profession as a part-time "supply teacher."

They are the people called in when regular teachers go sick. And in the jungle of London's schools Mike has never been short of work.

He has spent his career working in some of the roughest schools in London where the stress and strain of the job often causes teachers to take time off.

Mike said: "I really became aware of how chronic teacher truancy is."

"It's a bit like fighting a guerilla war... and the kids are winning."

Mike has worked in eight schools over the past five years. The worst, he says, was in North London.

"There just seemed to be a total breakdown in teaching."

"The headmaster told me they had no special rules, the object was to avoid confrontation and jolly them along."

While he was there the deputy head, who was usually called in to sort out trouble, was attacked and had to go to hospital.

It is not only the schools in "tough" areas that have problems, however.

Mike told of an incident at one trendy London school—when two boys were attacked by other



WICKLES: In the wars

pupils wielding razor-sharp Stanley knives.

Knife attacks in playgrounds happen much more frequently than the authorities admit, he said.

Mike said: "There are some very violent kids in school—almost psychopathic."

"It isn't like Grange Hill. This is really serious, dangerous. Some of the children are lethal."

MORE and more teachers are cracking up under the strain of heavy work loads.

Many have nervous breakdowns because they simply cannot cope with the burden of extra work and longer hours thrust upon them by the Government's spending cuts.

Many middle-aged teachers are also queening to take early retirement.

A spokesman for the National Union of Teachers said: "In some areas it is a stampede."

WRONG

by FRANK PALMER

DENZIL UNDERWOOD runs the sort of comprehensive the system's critics love to knock—huge (2,200 pupils and 133 staff) and on two sites a mile-and-a-half apart.

It has no corporal punishment, no rigid uniform rules.

He operates like a chief executive with a time-table covering 20ft by 4ft on a deputy's wall. It has different coloured buttons for subject, teacher and room. "Yes," he agrees, "it does look like the signal box at King's Cross."

After school prayers ("I'm a practising Christian"), the first problem.

A senior master reports two girls truanting the previous day. "Send them home and ask their parents to call," he says.

With attendances averaging 97.6 per cent, absences at Wolfreton School, outside Hull, are easily spotted and parents always informed.

Then on to the headmaster's study in the upper school. Inside is a cabinet for the trophies his pupils have won, including one for computer sciences.

At 58, Mr. Underwood goes back to night school once a week for computer studies. One of his own staff teaches him.

"I have to keep up with these whizz kids. Then they can't blind me with science. I reckon I'm heading for a CSE—Grade 2."

Mr Underwood goes on his rounds. No one stands up. "I put a stop to it when I arrived four years ago. It just interrupts work."

Corridor walls are

GETTING IT RIGHT!

HULL

covered with paintings and murals, many based on current studies. "It's probably against regulations, but still"—he shrugs—"they get fed up with bare walls."

He notes a girl with dangling ear rings, which are banned for safety, but does nothing. "We'll point it out privately. Why embarrass her?"

Then he spots a youth with his arm round a girl on a bench in the quad

and quietly asks him to remove it.

"He is a boy who has left but cannot get a job, poor sod." That is the nearest he comes to swearing all day.

"You don't know where public displays of affection will lead to. Or am I being too pernickety?" He is genuinely concerned that he may have mis-handled it.

After lunch he inspects the handiwork of three 16-year-old boys who will leave at Easter without taking any exams.

All have opted out of lessons—"no point" they say, so he has set them on

repairing broken seats in a changing room.

"They are good with their hands and there's nothing in the curriculum for them. That's our fault, and we'll try to put it right next year."

After a two-hour break at home, he's back that evening to meet first-year parents. "It's time-consuming having concerned parents—but it's great," he says.

"I love coming to this school. The sound of the children gives me a warm feeling."

Three hours later he drives home. A 13-hour day is over.

'More children, fewer schools'

THE number of schools dropped by 395 between 1971 and 1981. In the same ten years, the number of pupils rose by 1,013,000. Secondary schools dropped from 4,984 to 4,654, secondary pupils went up from 2,953,000 to 3,840,000. Primary schools fell from 21,083 to 21,018. Pupils rose from 254,000 to 380,000.

IN the last Labour government's final year, £500 million more was spent on education than on defence. By 1985 the present Government plans to spend £4,000 million less on education than on defence.

SCRIPTWRITER Phil Redmond, who created Grange Hill school for BBC TV, is an old boy of St Kevin's comprehensive in Kirkby, Liverpool. He is half way to becoming a millionaire and says he would buy private education for his own children if there "wasn't a good State school around." Headmaster Ken Masters reckons the Grange Hill staff would not stand a chance at St. Kev's.

BETWEEN 1971 and 1981 the number of pupils taking O-levels increased by only 2 per cent—from 38.5 per cent to 40.5 per cent. And those sitting A-levels increased by just 3 per cent.

PRIVATE education is thriving despite fees which range from £1,500-£4,000 plus a year. In 1976 there were 414,756 pupils at fee-paying schools. By last year the number had risen to 522,377.

ACCORDING to a Mori poll commissioned by the independent schools three out of five people support the Government scheme to pay the fees of bright children whose parents cannot afford a private education.

CHARLES LYTE

Page 11

EVERY day, some 100,000 children in Britain are truants. That's enough to fill fifty of our biggest comprehensive schools. A growing number are fifteen-year-olds in their last year at school. Some are "unteachable" who don't want to learn. But many are intelligent pupils who see no future and ask: "What's the use?"

DAILY MIRROR
THE TRUANT

SHOCK ISSUE

HE was sitting on a wooden bench watching the Mersey tide go out and wondering whether to go back to school that afternoon.

He had idled away the morning by tramping through Liverpool's St. John's shopping precinct and down to windy Pier Head.

But now it was getting cold and somehow double Physics seemed more appealing than truancy.

The weather forecast has had more influence on sixteen-year-old Peter Nugent's classroom career—or lack of it—than any teacher.

"They got it wrong this morning. I always listen. You don't want it cold if you're going to take the day off school."

Peter is one of Britain's 100,000 or so truants. Not one of the down-and-out, glue-sniffing skinhead types, but a boy who feels his school has dumped him.

Fading

At eleven, he shone brightly enough in primary school to win a £40-a-year scholarship to the famed but fading Liverpool Institute High School for Boys.

In a letter congratulating Peter's parents, the school told them: "The purpose of the scholarship is to pick out at the age of eleven boys who, by reason of their ability, their character and their parents' ambition and support, are likely to proceed in due course to universities."

Loafing round Liverpool, Peter and his education are clearly not proceeding anywhere.

"I started playing truant in the third year. I was hardly ever in for the whole of the year. You took three weeks off and went back for one, else the attendance officers collared you.

"That year I just wandered round town. Me mam and dad were divorced and I lived with me dad. He went to work. He never knew I wasn't at school.

"I went to live with



PETER: He skips school if the weather is fine. Picture: CHARLES OWENS

LIVERPOOL

by ALISTER MARTIN

me mam for the fourth year and I got going back to school. But the teachers didn't want to know. They said I'd blown it.

"One, the geography teacher, said he was going to drop me. Well, I felt pleased when I got through me mock O-level in geography.

"But it shouldn't be like that, getting on to spite the teachers instead of to please them."

Peter is studying for O-levels in five subjects, English Language, Physics, Maths, Biology and Geography, and for two CSEs, in Chemistry and English Literature.

"Although I'm sagging school, I'm getting me revision done. I'm pretty confident I'll pass me exams. If I don't I'll have to stay here another year. Don't want that, do I?"

In the five years that Peter has been, as he puts it, "kicked around" by the Institute, the school itself has been a political football.

The city council is split three ways between Labour, Liberals and Conservatives, with no party strong enough to take firm control.

Every May, after local government elections, a shift in the balance of

power brings a new plan for the future of the 158-year-old Institute. It is never acted on before the next election.

Twice the school has been under sentence of death from the Labour councillors, to be repealed by the Liberals.

Because of the uncertainty the council refused to appoint a full-time headmaster. Peter has known five "acting" heads.

The fourth, 59-year-old Maurice Devereux, resigned last month on the day Government schools inspectors were ordered to begin an emergency inquiry into poor exam results and discipline.

Decline

Mike Storey, the current Liberal chairman of the education committee, accepts the authority's share of responsibility for the decline of the school.

He says: "Although I don't condone truanting I must say that if I were a bright young lad trying to get on at the Institute I would be frustrated. I would probably be sagging."

In his last word on Peter, former head Maurice Devereux wrote in a school report before he resigned: "He should be achieving more."

So, feels Peter, should the Liverpool Institute and City Council.

A GOOD education is not only right for every child. It is a necessity. The nation's future depends upon it.

But millions of British children today do not get the education they need. The state of our schools is vividly set out in the pages of this Daily Mirror.

Of course, there is another side to it. There are many good schools. Many good teachers. Many children benefiting from the right kind of education.



But they are the lucky ones. They thrive not because of the Government's policy but despite it.

For far too many, the story is of overcrowded schools, buildings condemned years ago in which children are taught in the corridors and the washrooms.

There are too few textbooks. Classrooms which let in the rain. Violence. Truancy. Teachers unable to cope.

The poorest areas, which need better, suffer worse.

Future

Equality of opportunity, for them, is a slogan and not a reality.

Education is becoming narrow. Playing fields are sold off to property developers. Pupils with a talent for the arts are denied the skilled teaching they need.

Meanwhile, the Government tinkers with plans to subsidise the well-off who send their children to private schools.

Education is not a charity, a welfare benefit for the needy. It is the foundation of the future. The best long-term investment we can make.

And we are not making it. The obsession with saving money has become an obsession at any price.

By cutting our costs today, we are cutting our own throats tomorrow.

Page 14