



Education Committee

Oral evidence: [Ofsted Annual Report on Education 2012–13](#), HC 1065

Wednesday 12 February 2014

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 12 February 2014.

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Members present: Mr Graham Stuart (Chair); Neil Carmichael; Alex Cunningham; Bill Esterson; Siobhain McDonagh; Mr David Ward; Craig Whittaker

Questions 1-166

Witnesses: **Sir Michael Wilshaw**, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills, Ofsted, and **Matthew Coffey**, Director, Learning and Skills, Ofsted, gave evidence.

Q1 Chair: Good morning and welcome to this session of the Education Select Committee. It is a pleasure to have you both with us, Sir Michael and Matthew, so thank you for coming. If I may, I will begin by talking about careers advice. Given the disastrous and lasting effect of unemployment on the young, is it any longer acceptable for a school whose careers advice and guidance is not even good to be given an overall outstanding grade?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We are looking at that, Chair. You have seen the very critical report that we produced on careers education in schools. It was pretty damning. My view is that careers education is absolutely vital to school performance and to the performance of children—particularly the less able. I speak as an ex-head teacher on that one. If we are going to motivate children, they need to see the end result of their endeavours. One of the ways that teachers and heads do it is by showing them what job opportunities and what pathways are in front of them. Careers education is absolutely vital in motivating children to work hard.

Q2 Chair: Are the incentives there for school leaders to deliver it? Are you part of the problem, in a way, as an inspector, in failing to give it sufficient emphasis so that we have a narrower focus on qualifications rather than the rounded child, including the whole child, and including, of course, an understanding of, and information about, the world of work?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The two are linked. You are only going to get youngsters to achieve well, particularly, as I say, in the average-to-lower-ability range, if you show them what the end result of their studies is going to be. That is why it is so important and that is why this report was really worrying. That is why we are going to place much more emphasis on it in future. We have toughened up the guidance on that one.

We are also going to introduce—and we are consulting on this at the moment—a sub-judgment for the sixth form in schools, so that we ensure that schools think carefully about entrance into school sixth forms. They need to show inspectors and, more importantly,

their students and their governors that they are being fair about this and not taking anyone just to fill seats in the sixth form—that they are providing a good, broad and balanced curriculum, and that they are pointing the way for alternative pathways well before that. We are producing this sub-judgment with a view to doing that and we will be looking at destination data in careers education in a much more thorough way in future.

Q3 Chair: You make a good point. It is interesting to hear about the sub-judgment about the sixth form. Why is there so little in your report about post-16 academic provision and, in particular, A-levels?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is there in the data and our reports are supported by detailed data tools, but it is really about the issues that underpin school improvement: teaching, leadership, governance, support from local authorities and other agencies; academy chains and so on. We want our reports to be easy to read, focusing on the big issues.

Q4 Chair: In post-16 education generally, do you have the skill set in your inspections to be able to evaluate fairly and effectively all post-16 providers? There have been different measures used to look at FE and schools.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We want a level playing field. We are introducing this sub-judgment because of concerns from the FE sector, and particularly colleges, that we were not operating on a level playing field on this one. By doing this, hopefully, we can also focus on careers education and progression, and say some tougher stuff about it. I do not know if you want to say anything about post-16.

Matthew Coffey: The Further Education and Skills HMI, who inspect sixth-form colleges and general further education, also inspect the sixth form in schools. We have increased the number of opportunities for that to take place. Of course, over 50% of all of our additional inspectors are from the front line. They are current practitioners from sixth-form colleges and from schools with sixth forms as well.

Q5 Chair: Sir Michael, you have given quite a number of high-profile speeches suggesting certain directions of travel in policy terms, whether it is about the reintroduction of national tests for children at ages seven and 14, or more low-income children being admitted to grammar schools. Is there a danger, in your role as Chief Inspector, that, by engaging in such heavy policy areas, you will be seen more as a player than a dispassionate provider of information as objectively as possible about the systems that it is your job to inspect?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: There is a danger in that, and I am conscious of the dividing lines between talking about policy and inspection, and inspection outcomes. Nevertheless, the two are linked. If we see persistent and consistent failure or underperformance because of structural problems, I think it is incumbent upon me to point those out.

Q6 Chair: In your North of England conference speech last month, you reported that 40% of teachers leave the profession within five years, and you described this as “a national scandal”, yet I am told this is a figure that the National College does not recognise. Can you tell us where you got that figure from?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: From the TDA—the old TDA figures. I should point out that the five-year period I mentioned in my speech is from the beginning of training.

Q7 Siobhain McDonagh: Good morning, Sir Michael and Matthew. Can I ask: were you consulted on the sacking of Sally Morgan as Chair of Ofsted?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I was consulted by the Secretary of State on his wish to do something about the chairmanship of Ofsted, yes.

Q8 Siobhain McDonagh: Would you have been happy to continue working with Baroness Morgan in your respective roles?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I have enjoyed, in the two years I have been in post, a really good relationship with Sally Morgan. Particularly, when I was first appointed, various storms broke around me when I removed “satisfactory” and introduced “requires improvement” and said there was going to be a shorter notice for inspection, we were going to insist that outstanding schools should have outstanding teaching, and that the report itself would be much blunter, etc., etc. There was a huge amount of criticism about Ofsted, particularly about me, and she stood four-square by me, and gave me a huge amount of support and advice.

She is a very good Chair of the Ofsted board. She has their trust, and she has the trust and confidence of the executive board—my senior colleagues within Ofsted. She is very knowledgeable about education. She is a big supporter of academies and free schools, and diversity and reform. I did say to the Secretary of State that I would want her to continue, that she was a very good Chair, and my working relationship with her was very strong.

Q9 Siobhain McDonagh: Sorry to ask such a personal question, but, after 30 years of knowing her, you describe exactly the person I know. How do you feel about the allegations that you overreacted to the report of research by two think-tanks? Do you fully accept the assurance of the Secretary of State that no one in his team had briefed against you and that he will sack any adviser who seeks to undermine you?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I was extremely angry—and that probably came through—to read that report, which talked about Ofsted being mired in 1960s child-centred ideology, stifling creativity. I am old enough to remember what it was like teaching in the 1960s. Very few people are these days, but I am old enough to remember what it was like teaching in Bermondsey in the 1960s and in the 1970s in inner London, and in the 1980s, when standards were extremely low. When people talk about child-centred learning, I am not sure what that actually means, but it means low expectations and low standards. There were low standards in those three decades, and generations of children over those decades were failed. That is my view, and the view of many head teachers and teachers I talk to who were teaching at that time.

It was the coming of Ofsted in the early 1990s, and other accountability measures that were put in place at about that time, that improved the life chances of our children and improved standards. No, they are not as good as we would want them to be, but Ofsted made a huge difference. To say that Ofsted and Ofsted inspectors are mired in that 1960s ideology was an absolute outrage. That is why I was so angry.

I was also angry, and so were my HMI, who were incensed by that sort of category, or putting them in that sort of category of being rather soft, woolly inspectors. These are people who are working incredibly hard, all hours, to support “requires improvement” schools and failing schools. The reason why we are seeing improvement is down to that work that they are doing. They are as tough as teak, believe you me, and they certainly do not want to be tarred with that sort of brush. I was angry about the criticism of them and also the damage it does to our authority.

Q10 Chair: Sorry, I am going to take you back to the question, which is: do you accept the Secretary of State's assurances that none of his team briefed against you?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am just coming on to that, if I may, Chair. I am just explaining my anger and why I had this explosion. I was very angry that the authority of Ofsted had been damaged and undermined at a time when we are holding the ring in an increasingly autonomous and atomised system.

The Secretary of State saw me and said that no briefing had taken place and there was no dirty-tricks campaign or anything like that, and that he would take action with anyone who was involved in that. He is an honourable man and I accepted his word.

Q11 Siobhain McDonagh: Thank you. It is natural for there to be a debate over the future development of Ofsted in light of the changing school landscape. How do you see Ofsted developing? Do you intend to initiate a public debate of your own on this, or is it a matter for the Ofsted board only?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think it is an issue for the Ofsted board, it is an issue for me and it is an issue for the Secretary of State. We have changed over the last 25 years in a whole host of ways, and we will continue to adapt and to change. As you probably know, we have moved to a regional structure, and I think that is working very effectively. The intelligence that we have of what is happening on the ground is pretty good. I have made it clear to the Secretary of State I think we should move much more to HMI-led inspection and to much more risk-based inspection as well. That is something we are looking at very closely over the coming year.

Q12 Chair: I will just take you back to that spat. What made you believe that the Department had anything to do with undermining you in the first place?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It was suggested in the article that was written in *The Times* at the time that there had been links between the Department and the think-tanks.

Q13 Chair: Practically every news story I have ever had any personal knowledge of has had inaccuracies in it. It would not occur to me to start claiming against someone until I had checked with them whether or not the article was true. Did you make an error in not doing so?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: In retrospect, I probably did, but, nevertheless, it was a spontaneous act of fury.

Siobhain McDonagh: Which is not necessarily a bad thing.

Q14 Chair: I do not particularly want to tease you, but some of your opponents would see a delicious irony in your outrage at having your motivation and capability impugned by some third party on the outside—just sticking you in a category, as you described it—when so many people outside feel that is exactly what Ofsted do to them?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I would want teachers and head teachers to be able to complain to us when they think we have been unjust, and they do—and they do in their thousands. If I feel that we have been badly treated—and, when I say “we”, inspectors have been badly treated—I will, obviously, be vocal on it.

Q15 Bill Esterson: Coming on to the thousands of teachers who feel they have been treated unjustly, can I first ask you about the evidence you have that Ofsted grades and inspections in themselves lead to better outcomes for children? Can you tell us also how you benchmark your effectiveness?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think the change to the grading structure that we have introduced over the last two years has made a profound difference. I have said so on numerous occasions. Removing “satisfactory” and introducing the “RI” judgment, saying schools have got limited time in which to improve, and ensuring that HMI work closely with them over a period of time has made a big difference. One of the big problems in the English education system has been the “satisfactory” grade and schools coasting along year after year after year—something like 2 million children. We know—and if you talk to heads and you talk to HMI—that the change to the grading structure has made a big difference. It has focussed minds, it has injected much greater urgency into the education system and, as a result of that, we saw last year schools improving at a faster rate than at any other time in Ofsted’s history.

The big challenge for us is to make sure that progress is maintained. It is revealed in the figures in last year’s report, which showed that there were 23 local authorities where less than 60% of primary schools were judged “good” or “better”; now, it is only three. That has been an amazing rate of progress over the last year.

Q16 Bill Esterson: Sure, but the ASCL tell us that many schools indicate that the “requires improvement” judgment has been damaging for them in terms of teacher recruitment, stability in the local community and reputation. In some cases, head teachers have been summarily removed in the wake of a “requires improvement” judgment, without sufficient evidence that the head teacher lacked the capacity to effect the required improvements. A lot of people disagree with you about the effectiveness of the impact of Ofsted on school improvement. Do you accept that you need the respect of the front line? Can you talk to us about why there appears to be that gap?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: First of all, in terms of capacity for schools to improve, that is a judgment for the governing board of the school and for the local authority or the academy chain. I write letters every week to head teachers in those “RI” schools, who are doing a good job, where the judgment, actually, is a 1 or a 2. Just because a school is put into that category does not mean that the leadership is poor. Inspectors judge that, although standards are lower than they should be and progress is lower than it should be, the head teacher is driving things forward, and that is good. It is really up to the governance of the school to make the decision on capacity.

Q17 Bill Esterson: Can I put another related point to you? I talk to a lot of head teachers—as I am sure colleagues here do as well—who tell me that their fear of ending up in a “requires improvement” category is hanging over them like a sword of Damocles, and they are actively considering alternative careers. They say it is not just them; pretty much every colleague in the profession who they know feels the same way. Does that cause you concern?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Obviously, if that were the case, it would cause me a concern, but, at the same time, when you talk to lots of head teachers in that category, they would say the work that HMI are doing with them to support them is having a profound effect on improving their schools. Schools from that “RI” category are getting into the “good” judgment at a faster rate than ever before. Certainly, if you are an ambitious leader or head teacher, I think you would want to go into an “RI” school rather than a good or outstanding school, because you can make the difference. I think it is much tougher to go into a school that is already “good” or “outstanding” and maintain those standards than to go into an “RI” school.

Q18 Bill Esterson: Just to come back to that point, the heads who are telling me this are heads in “good” and “outstanding” schools, not just schools that perhaps are in a lower category. Their concern is that it might happen to them, even though they are already doing a good job.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Leadership comes with responsibilities. No one wants to run a mediocre school. If you are a head wanting to run a mediocre school year after year after year, you should not be there.

Q19 Mr Ward: Just a couple of areas, first of all on inspectors. The proportion of school inspections with serving leaders on the inspection team has increased. I think it is nearer 50% and it was 25%, but that means nearly 50% have not. What is the goal? What is the aim in that area? What is the target?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: 100% is what I would like to see. I think it is really important for Ofsted—and I should have said this in relation to Siobhain’s point a moment ago—that the profession takes ownership of inspection. We want the best heads and the best leaders in our schools to take responsibility for evaluating the performance of other teachers, other head teachers and other schools. A few years ago—only three years ago—less than 10% of leaders were inspectors; now, it is 50%. I would like, each year, to see that incrementally grow. It is also good that we have something like 150—hopefully it will be 200 by the start of next year—national leaders of education inspecting schools. That is the direction of travel in which I want to go.

Q20 Mr Ward: Would it be one per team or would you be looking at more than one per team?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Hopefully, more. 10% of all inspections now are led by national leaders of education. The more people joining the inspection force, the better. I would like the National College—NCTL—to do something about this, to encourage their best leaders to join inspection, and to say, “You cannot become a national leader of education or a local leader of education until you do a spell at Ofsted.”

Q21 Mr Ward: The statistics on diversity are pretty dire. I think there is a very low proportion from BME communities. First of all, do you feel that is important? Secondly, if it is, what is the strategy?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is important, and having a diverse inspection force is important. Obviously, we want to go for the best people: people who are not only good leaders in their own institutions but can become good inspectors. It is something I worry about all the time, and the strategy is to do as much as possible in terms of attracting people to inspection. People perceive Ofsted in a whole variety of different ways, don’t they? I want them to see Ofsted as an attractive opportunity to develop their careers. We have just appointed a National Director of Recruitment for the first time at Ofsted. He is working with the regional directors to try to drum up support for Ofsted.

Q22 Mr Ward: There seems to be an increasing number of heads, certainly in Bradford, who come from BME communities, which is very welcome and increases the pool, presumably, that you will be focusing on.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes, absolutely. As I say, we want to ensure that people see Ofsted as a career choice, and I certainly want to see more head teachers who have done a really good job—not just heads but leaders in our schools—and spent 20, 25 or 30 years as good and outstanding leaders joining HMI at the end of their career, in their mid 50s. It is difficult earlier on because the salary differentials are still so great.

Q23 Mr Ward: Returning to those who complain in their thousands—
Sir Michael Wilshaw: Well, let's say "hundreds".

Mr Ward: There has been an increase in the number of complaints. Have you analysed what the reason for that is? Has the analysis identified particular trends?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: In answer to a previous question, I said that Ofsted has put pressure on schools to improve. We have challenged the system to do significantly better, and I would have expected more complaints. Although I said hundreds, I would have expected many more than that. The statistics have told us that it has only gone up by 0.5%, which I think is really good. When we surveyed something like 850 schools recently that had had an inspection in the last four months, the response was really positive, saying that the process had been really well done and efficient, that the leadership of the inspection was good, and that they had no problems with the outcomes.

Q24 Mr Ward: The figures we have do show an increasing trend in second-stage complaints: 24% of those about schools were upheld. It is quite a large number.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes, it is, and I would have anticipated more, given the extra challenge that we have introduced into schools.

Q25 Mr Ward: Is one of your KPIs an increased number of complaints?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: No, absolutely not. I think the system has settled down from the turbulence of last year, when there was a lot of sound and fury on this one. It has settled down and I think, as a result of that, schools are getting better. One of the things I am really proud of—and, no doubt, you will ask me more about consistency of inspection at some stage—is that, through the regional structure, we are focusing much more carefully on whether our inspections are being led well and whether the judgments are right. I think we are much quicker now in intervening in inspections we think are faulty or flawed.

Q26 Mr Ward: A question that I skipped was about the regional inspection providers and whether, in fact, you have the resources to ensure the training quality of those inspectors is at the high end.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We are taking back training from the contractors. Because I want to ensure greater consistency in the system, we have appointed dedicated trainers in each of our remits and we are training our inspectors centrally now, or in the regions, rather than relying on the ICiPS.

Q27 Chair: As of when?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It has started already.

Chair: When?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: A couple of weeks ago.

Q28 Mr Ward: One of the issues that you raised was consistency. Is there, again, any analysis carried out to identify the differences in the complaints about the consistency of inspections?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes. In the 20 years that we have been in existence, that has been the biggest complaint. This is not a recent issue but it has become more intense because of the challenges that we have introduced. Remember, however, that although data are important and data do drive inspection, it is not only data. This is a judgment by

professionals in the school as to where the school is. When head teachers say, “How is it that that school got a ‘good’ judgment when their results are lower than mine?” it could be that, in a primary school, for example, the Year 6 teacher had gone on maternity leave, with a succession of supply teachers, but the head was doing a good job, the quality of teaching elsewhere was good and the ethos of the school was good; or, conversely, in a school where the results have gone up, in Year 11, say, if it was a secondary school, there may have been a massive amount of intensive coaching work in that one year group to get youngsters to the threshold of a C grade, but teaching elsewhere was poor. It is really important that, when heads and teachers say, “Consistency,” and “Look at that school down the road,” they look very carefully at the report and what inspectors are saying.

Q29 Mr Ward: I think I might be pinching someone else’s question, but in terms of consistency, how important is looking at results over a period of time as opposed to a single year?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think it is very important. We look at data over a three-year period, but that should not stop us if we are seeing really good performance.

Q30 Mr Ward: You do have maternity leave and illness.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Absolutely, and that is why I made that last point about the primary school. We look at progress and outcomes over a three-year period.

Q31 Chair: Given that your judgments of achievement and teaching are near identical in your reports, should you not just merge them into one?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I refer to that last point I made: that you could have “good” achievement where there has been a lot of focus on one year group and a lot of intensive work but your teaching is not very good.

Q32 Chair: There does not seem to be evidence of that in your report. Practically never is there any difference between your assessment of achievement and teaching in reality, so, whatever the theoretical framework, if there is no difference in reality, why not just merge them into one?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We could do but it would not take into account that example I have just mentioned.

Q33 Neil Carmichael: We have talked about mediocrity quite a lot already, and you have quite rightly pointed out that the battle is against mediocrity. Can I ask how you envisage the regional commissioners joining this battle?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We have regionalised. We work with local authorities and academy chains, and we will work with these new regional commissioners. If their job is to track the performance of individual academies and academy chains, it is really important that we do work with them.

Q34 Neil Carmichael: Do you think they should be operating on a coterminous basis, as your structure does?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes.

Chair: This is covered later.

Neil Carmichael: I did not realise that. I might not be here. Graham has just been telling me we will be discussing that later, but I want to discuss it now in the context of mediocrity, because I think that the two bodies need to work together.

Mr Ward: We are getting to behaviour later on.

Q35 Neil Carmichael: Very funny. The issue that you have also raised is that about other people viewing our education system and the need for them to view it in the best light. Who do you think is going to do that viewing and whom are you comparing our systems with?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I suppose, at the end of the day, we have to compare well with other countries. Look at the fuss over the latest PISA results. The spotlight is on our performance as a nation, so we have to make sure that we do well internationally. We have to make sure that the regional differences that are highlighted in this report are addressed. China was pretty crafty: they put up Shanghai as an example of outstanding performance; if we had put up London, we would have been well up there in the PISA league tables. If we address regional underperformance, I am absolutely convinced that our position in the PISA league tables will go up very quickly.

Q36 Neil Carmichael: In your report about unseen children, you referred to rural areas and coastal areas. Are you still concerned about those particular areas, and is that what you have in mind when you talk about regional underperformance?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes, it is, and not just coastal areas and rural areas. We have some counties in England that are performing incredibly badly, Suffolk and Norfolk being two of them. The Regional Director for the East of England has his work cut out with those two areas. We have to have a national strategy to deal with this.

Chair: On the regional subject, we come to Craig, whose area of questioning this is.

Q37 Craig Whittaker: You have identified three factors as impeding educational progress, but attribute the difference in children's attainment to where they live in regions. How does your focus on white, working-class children fit into this analysis, and is it simply that they are more affected than other children by where they live?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: They are badly performing, boys and girls. It is not just a boys' issue. They are bottom of the league in terms of performance. The gap is wider in this social, cultural and ethnic group than in other groups. Two-thirds of youngsters on free school meals are in this category. Unless we sort this one out, unless we solve it and unless we are improve it, we are not going to close the attainment gap. It is as simple as that. There has to be, therefore, a national strategy to deal with this. I and Ofsted, in the *Unseen children: access and achievement 20 years on* report, made various recommendations, which, no doubt, you have seen, but Government has to take a lead on this one and I am clear what sorts of things should happen.

Q38 Craig Whittaker: It is interesting to say that you are clear. In fact, I think you said that you can attribute it to poverty of expectation in families, communities and schools. Why do you think the experts who came before us in that particular inquiry could not agree on what the causes were?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I cannot answer for them, but we have a number of schools in these white, working-class areas that are doing really well—both primary and secondary. In fact, we will be bringing out a report in the summer term that will analyse the reasons why those schools are doing particularly well. Most of them are primary, I have to say, but they are doing exceptionally well against the odds. Children do not turn up at school saying, "I am from a white, working-class background. Please have low expectations of me."

Q39 Craig Whittaker: In fact, the experts could not agree on what “white, working-class” was in some of the sessions that we had. Let me just tease out of you why you are so very clear as to the reasons why this group of young people are failing, where the experts could not be as clear.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Partly it is an issue that was neglected until it suddenly hit us, so there needs to be a political focus on this. Secondly, a lot of these youngsters are in areas of high levels of unemployment and deprivation; therefore, seeing the link between school attainment and a job is that much more difficult. That is why careers in a school are so important. That is why literacy is so important. We are doing a lot of work in Stoke at the moment on improving literacy levels, and it is making a big difference. When I say “we”, it is HMI working with a large number of head teachers in Stoke, and it is making a big difference to achievement in Stoke. There is a range of factors that can make a difference, but the most important one is to try to get the best teachers and the best leaders to work in these areas.

Q40 Craig Whittaker: Why do the experts not see the same evidence that you do to be so clear in what the focus needs to be?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is a question you are going to have to ask them. We are clear in the report what needs to be done.

Q41 Craig Whittaker: You are quite adamant that the evidence you have is around schools, families and communities.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes. I can take you to a school in Barking and Dagenham, whose head teacher I know well because I worked with him in previous schools. He has done a fantastic job in a difficult area and in a school that was languishing years ago. I can take you to a school in Sunderland doing exactly the same. It is a question of leadership and the quality of teaching.

Q42 Craig Whittaker: Let me ask you: how effective is the pupil premium?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is making a difference, although not at Key Stage 4, but I am not surprised at that, simply because I suspect that, in terms of youngsters at Key Stage 4—Years 10 and 11—all the measures that were taken by schools to use the premium did not have the same effect on older children as it did on younger children. We are seeing a difference at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Q43 Craig Whittaker: Do we, therefore, need a different model for that group or do we persevere with what we have?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think we persevere. Ofsted is focusing on this much more carefully now than ever before. If schools do not use the pupil premium well—or if we consider that they do not use it well—and are not demonstrating that they are closing the gap, and if head teachers and governing boards do not have a clear strategy, we are very critical of it. We are seeing 50 local authorities in the country where gaps have closed, and another 50 where it has not. I know the Minister, Mr Laws, is writing to those local authorities where the gap is not closing, but 50 local authorities have demonstrable progress, particularly in the South East, where we said, despite the relative prosperity and affluence, the gaps were incredibly large. Matthew, do you want to say something?

Matthew Coffey: Windsor and Maidenhead in particular has closed the gap nationally better than any other local authority. At Key Stage 2, that is by 14%; at Key Stage 4, it is by 9%. Milton Keynes and Bracknell Forest have closed it by 8%. I think that just underlines the regional structure and the ability to see what is happening in schools day in,

day out. That might be the difference between what the experts see and what we see on the ground, and where we are seeing the good practice.

Q44 Craig Whittaker: You have had 9% growth in Key Stage 4, yet Sir Michael says, generally, that is the area that is not working.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Other than in London.

Q45 Craig Whittaker: Does it need national guidance for the rest of the country, to show them how it is done?

Matthew Coffey: I think we need to be able to get underneath what has made that difference and share that good practice. The regional structure is allowing us to do that much more. For example, in the south-east, where I am Regional Director, we have a leadership conference in June, with all the local authorities coming together to lay out on the table both their challenges and how they have responded to them, and where they have been very successful. I think, certainly, regionally, there is an awful lot that we, as an organisation, can do and are doing.

Q46 Chair: Do regional directors have good contacts with the National College? Sir Michael is pretty clear that we need a national strategy, but it has to be implemented on the ground and we have to make sure we have local leaders in education and national leaders in education in the areas where they are most needed; otherwise, we are not going to get these gaps closed.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am really glad you mentioned that, Chair. We need to forge strong links with NCTL. Look at the number of teaching schools that there are. A lot of our problems are, as I have said, in the east of England: Norfolk, Suffolk, north-east Lincolnshire and so on. There is just one teaching school between the Tees and Ipswich—quite ridiculous.

Chair: Secondary, I think. I think there is a primary but only one secondary.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I will get back to you on that, but just one teaching school. In terms of the number of NLEs, there are three in Norfolk, three in places like Derby, and lots in places that do not need them, such as London and elsewhere. There needs to be better distribution and a national, co-ordinated strategy to get the best leaders into some of these areas.

Q47 Chair: Are your regional directors able to establish relationships with the National College and work to address these issues, whether they are in the East Riding or wherever they may be?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Not as well as we should do. As well as being the National Director for Learning and Skills, Matthew is Regional Director for the South East, so he can tell you what he does.

Matthew Coffey: The answer is yes. We have all forged relationships with the National College, and I meet them at least three times a year at a senior level. At a local level, however, my senior inspectors meet the co-ordinators for national leaders in education. We are working collaboratively to identify the best schools to pair up with those that are struggling and require improvement, particularly where the local authority has failed to identify that strong link and the system leadership. We are working very effectively locally but, as Michael said, I think there needs to be a greater strategic overview as to where these national leaders of education are.

Q48 Chair: Is the National College fit for purpose? Your job is to give a cold, hard, dispassionate evaluation of people's performance, so which of your four categories would you put the National College in, given the lack, so far, of a national strategy and the failure to get the right people in the right place in order to deal with the challenges?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We inspect lots of things but we do not inspect the National College. If the Secretary of State asked us to do that, we would gladly do it. When we have done it, we will certainly give it a grade. You would know the East Riding very well. There are 18 "outstanding" schools in East Riding, but only one national leader of education. How is that? This is an issue that the Select Committee have to address in terms of the National College.

Q49 Bill Esterson: The Secretary of State would not agree with you, of course, about a national strategy. Would you agree with that statement?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Possibly.

Q50 Bill Esterson: Free school meals are used as an indicator. We have come across a lot of people who point out to us that it is often children just outside of that category, who are not receiving free school meals, who need the greatest attention. Do you think there is another indicator? Do you think free school meals is the best one? For example, in Holland, we heard evidence that the qualifications of parents are the best indicator of where children need support. Do you support some kind of change from using free school meals as an indicator?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Possibly. The free-school-meal indicator can be a bit of a blunt instrument. In terms of what we have to do over the next year, with the abandonment of national curriculum levels, we are going to be spending a lot more time in schools, when we inspect, looking at how schools track the progress of all children—not just those on free school meals, because obviously they are getting the pupil premium money—across the age ability range, through formative and summative assessments and so on. It is just the responsibility of schools to make sure that all children do well. Good heads do that all the time.

Q51 Alex Cunningham: I just wanted to go back to the poverty-of-expectation thing in some families. You describe areas where there are very difficult intakes and very challenging circumstances where there has been tremendous success, so the mould must be getting broken. What is it that schools are doing or could be doing to break that particular mould?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It comes back to the last point: good head teachers know what to do. That has been my experience: they know what to do. They do a whole range of different things. If it is a tough area, they make sure they know the community really well. They make sure parents who may have had a bad experience at schools themselves get into the school and are welcomed into the school. They set up family-learning programmes for families with low basic skills. They are tough on behaviour. They set up various units in the school to deal with youngsters who find it almost impossible to behave in school. They recruit people around them—their praetorian guard—who help them to fulfil their vision. They make sure they run an extended school day for those youngsters who will not work at home. They do a whole range of different things.

Q52 Alex Cunningham: I am now asking you for a recommendation for a different inquiry from the one about working-class children. What would be your recommendation to help break that mould across the country where we have these issues?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The most important one is the one I have already mentioned: good heads know what to do. You need to get good head teachers into these areas, and good teachers into these areas—the sort of “national service” idea that I projected in the *Unseen children* report: people who can galvanise a whole area. What happened in London—and I was part of London Challenge—was that good heads challenged other heads to do better. It galvanised London in a way that improved performance in the way that we are seeing now.

Q53 Mr Ward: You are well known for your views on behaviour, and the report attracted, as usual, media attention. You refer to behaviour and say, “We have accepted for far too long minor disruption and inattention in schools.” You talk about a culture in some schools of “a casual acceptance of low-level disruption”. First of all, is it a culture thing or is an ability thing—the ability to deal with bad behaviour? Is it about skills or is it really a cultural acceptance of low-level disruption?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I do not think it is cultural; it is the expectations of the school and the leadership of the school. That is the biggest issue. Behaviour is better now in schools than it was 20 years ago. Inspectors do not see the outrageous stuff that we used to see. What we do see is, as I have described, low-level disruption and poor attitudes to learning, which is why I have signalled that Ofsted is going to be tougher on that. We have just announced that we are going into schools where we think it is a real problem, with unannounced inspection, and the results of that will be known fairly soon.

I think behaviour is so important—it is fundamental—and we do not talk about it as much as we should do. There was a survey a few years ago by Ipsos MORI that asked parents what their top priority was for their kids, and they said it was behaviour in schools. I suspect that, if Ipsos MORI conducted that survey now, parents would say exactly the same thing. When they questioned heads, behaviour was way down the list of priorities. We have to put it at the top, and the reason why it should be at the top is that, without good behaviour and without children respecting adults and teachers, good teaching will not go on. If I think of my experience as a head in tough areas, teachers with very different styles of teaching could teach effectively—young and more experienced—because they knew that the earth would fall in on any child who misbehaved.

Q54 Mr Ward: I just wonder how serious it is, because the inspection results show us that the percentages for “outstanding” behaviour are in excess of those for leadership and teaching and other areas. Is it a wide range, with too many who are bad but some very good ones at the other extreme? Just how serious is this as an issue?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think it is a serious issue. Unless we get good attitudes to learning and unless behaviour improves in all our schools, everything else will not happen.

Q55 Mr Ward: How much use of additional sanctions is required?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The sanctions are already there for people to use. If a youngster has to be detained without notice, that can happen.

Q56 Mr Ward: It has been argued by the academies, for instance, that one of the things that they introduced was sanctions that other schools do not have.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: All schools now can operate sanctions that work, such as detention without notice. We used to bring youngsters in on a Saturday morning to do a three-hour detention if they had behaved badly. Head teachers can impose all those sorts of sanctions. They can bring parents in, etc. It is, again, a leadership issue: leaders getting

out of their offices, pacing the corridors and making sure that children are behaving in classrooms.

Q57 Alex Cunningham: You are often critical of local authority support for schools. When you are critical, do you take into account the impact of academies taking out varying shares of the budget and the impact of central Government cuts on local authorities?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am not critical of all local authorities, just some that we have been into. I do not think this is a money issue anymore. I think good local authorities are looking at the new educational landscape and dealing with it very well. What they are doing is setting up clusters of schools, led by good and outstanding head teachers, and they monitor how those good and outstanding teachers are evaluating the performance of those constituent schools. That does not take a huge amount of money. The days of local authorities employing lots of school-improvement officers are over, but there is a new way of doing this now. I think the future for all local authorities, if they continue to exist—or any sort of middle-tier structure—is to get head teachers in clusters, evaluate how well the best heads are leading those clusters and monitor the performance of those individual schools.

Q58 Alex Cunningham: As you say, good local authorities are doing that. They are clustering and have been doing that for decades. Some of them, however, are being undermined by the reduction in funding and are no longer able to do that to the same extent, but you do not accept that argument.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am not saying money does not play a part, but it does not cost a huge amount to do that. You second a few head teachers for two or three days a week and pay them a bit more money to do that.

Q59 Alex Cunningham: Would you accept that the powers of local authorities are now simply too weak to allow them to play a full part in school improvement, particularly with the number of academies growing within their patches?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: If they are passionate about performance for children in their area, are really committed to it and want to see all schools, no matter what their status, doing well—why is it that London is doing well? Good political leadership, apart from other things. Why is it that Greater Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle are doing well? As well as good leaders in our schools and good teachers in our schools, it is dynamic local political leadership.

Q60 Alex Cunningham: Of course, that varies across the country as well. You have already addressed the issue of sub-regional challenges and a national strategy to address regional disparities, but how can this happen? What are you going to do to help drive that?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We cannot do anything.

Q61 Alex Cunningham: What do you want to happen?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is an issue you should address to the Secretary of State.

Q62 Alex Cunningham: Does the way that schools manage their admissions mean that some schools, even in poor areas, have a better intake than neighbouring schools? Are you happy that admissions are fair?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Schools—and academies are in this as well—have to abide by the criteria set by the local admissions authority. If that does not happen and schools adopt selective criteria, that is unfair.

Q63 Alex Cunningham: How do we overcome that? While we do not have evidence, anecdotal evidence would say that schools—academies and others—are being much more selective in the way that they are bringing pupils into their schools. How can we combat that?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The local authority would know if that was happening. I assume the local authority would inform the Department of concerns they would have about academies not abiding by the local admissions arrangements.

Q64 Alex Cunningham: I am grateful to Neil for asking the question about the Ofsted regions and the regional schools commissioner regions being coterminous. Are you doing anything about that? Are you encouraging the Secretary of State? Are you changing his mind to align them?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I have not had a conversation with him about this. If we felt that we could not work effectively, because we are working effectively now with local authorities and with regional officers from the National College, I would have that discussion with the Secretary of State.

Q65 Alex Cunningham: Would it not be better just to sort it now rather than wait to see if it works?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I will certainly have that conversation.

Q66 Alex Cunningham: Do you think London should be one DfE region?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes. We have a London regional office, given that it is such a big part of this country.

Q67 Alex Cunningham: What about as far as the commissioner regions are concerned?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It sounds sensible.

Q68 Bill Esterson: How do you see local authorities intervening, given that, although they have the responsibility, they do not have the power?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: With academies or with their own schools?

Bill Esterson: With academies.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Again, I have been quite public on this one that, under the 2006 Act, they have responsibilities to ensure that children in their area have a good education. If they know that they are not receiving that good education in an academy, they are responsible not for intervening themselves, because they cannot, but for writing letters to the sponsor and the trustees, copies of which should go to the Secretary of State, whose officers would then deal with it through these regional commissioners.

Q69 Bill Esterson: If a local authority is ignored, what then?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: They can write to Ofsted, and we will gladly inspect.

Q70 Bill Esterson: You mentioned in our last session Ofsted and school improvement. Could you just tell us how you see that working?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We do not see ourselves as school improvers but as brokers of school improvement. That is a subtle difference. When HMI goes into an “RI” school, it will monitor it very carefully, re-inspect it and broker improvement by pointing the head teacher and governing board in the right direction in terms of good practice: “There is a

school down the road that is doing very well with similar sorts of children.” We are also holding seminars on how to get to “good”, so we are not directly improving the school but brokering it.

Q71 Neil Carmichael: Moving on to learning and skills in the FE sector, in general terms you appear to be happier with the FE sector than last year, but you have identified some serious weaknesses. What sort of role do you think the FE Commissioner might play in dealing with some of these weaknesses?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Can I pass on to my colleague, who is a specialist in this area?

Neil Carmichael: Yes, absolutely.

Matthew Coffey: First of all, I am pleased that further education and skills is getting the attention that it rightly deserves. One of the responses to our very critical annual report last year was the introduction of the FE Commissioner, which we have welcomed and who I have met on a number of occasions. This year’s annual report did, indeed, celebrate a move in the right direction, particularly for teaching and learning. It also identified a number of providers that had fallen from grace from an “outstanding” previous inspection judgment down to “inadequate”. We identified that they should be the priority for the FE Commissioner, and they are indeed under close scrutiny by the FE Commissioner and their team.

Q72 Neil Carmichael: What sort of relationship do you think this FE Commissioner should have with the individual institutions through the principal or, indeed, the governors?

Matthew Coffey: I think that is a matter for the Government and for the FE Commissioner. The *Rigour and responsiveness in skills* document that Government produced as a result of what we found last year identifies when the commissioner will be deployed, the inspection grade of “inadequate” being one of those indicators, but financial concerns and failure to meet national benchmarks are other triggers of intervention. What the Commissioner will do as a result is entirely up to the Commissioner, but what I am pleased to see is that, as we continue to monitor “inadequate” providers, the FE Commissioner is taking note of what we are saying in terms of the direction of travel and the capacity to make improvements. It is right that stock is taken of what the experts are saying.

Q73 Neil Carmichael: The size of colleges varies, obviously, but some are huge. The question arises as to whether you think you have a big enough sample, when you are inspecting a very large college.

Matthew Coffey: It is a challenge, of course. We have much larger inspection teams when we inspect very large colleges. We group colleges into small, medium, large and extremely large, and we have exhausted even that final category in a number of cases. Where we do, we will look at what is fit for purpose. The largest institution we have inspected of late is the Newcastle College Group, which in a sense is three big institutions, plus a national training provider, all together. There was a team sized according to the requirements.

Q74 Neil Carmichael: You have some concerns about accountability and geographical areas. What would you like to say about that?

Matthew Coffey: The key area for us in this annual report is that we think the country is facing a skills crisis. There are 1 million unemployed young people. There are employers that continue to report significant skills shortages. Layered on top of that, we have a sector that has been given more and more autonomy, over the years. Looking at how they

were using their autonomy was a feature of last year's report, which we published in March. We visited 17 colleges, and we found that only three of those colleges had changed their curriculum, to any large degree, to meet the needs of the local area, as defined by the LEP—the local enterprise partnership. There is a real mismatch there.

The concern we have expressed in the report is that, with that autonomy, there has to be some oversight as to how the skills are being delivered to meet the nation's needs. Many commentators will say they are not being met, and particularly employer groups. The Government really has to take this very seriously now. We could have a situation where colleges are empowered to deliver whatever they want to deliver, and yet that does not meet the skills requirements of the country. Who is going to intervene? That is the key question. If it is the LEP, the LEP needs to use the “P” in its title—“partnerships”—and work very closely with further-education colleges. From our report, we found that relationship was in its very early stages, to be generous.

Q75 Neil Carmichael: Effectively, an inspection would want to take a look at the skills needs of an area, evaluate exactly what has happened and what is planned to happen, and match that up with the performance and delivery of the college. That would be part of your recommendation and grading process.

Matthew Coffey: Yes, and it already is. It is already part of the common inspection framework that we use for the inspection of further education colleges. To enhance that further, taking the value of leadership, management and governance of a large institution like that, in April, we are going to be launching a governors' data dashboard for not just colleges but the further-education sector particularly. That will reflect back to governors the curriculum of the college, and set alongside the skill priority areas that are identified and published by the local enterprise partnership. It does nothing more than that, but it does empower governors to ask the question, “Why does our curriculum not match the skills that are being identified for our local area?”

Q76 Neil Carmichael: All of that is, of course, predicated on there being a really effective and transparent understanding of the local labour market.

Matthew Coffey: Indeed, it is.

Neil Carmichael: We are giving a big challenge there to LEPs to make sure they provide that.

Matthew Coffey: The report did focus on the West of England LEP, and it did look at the data that had been produced. That data has been informed by research from the University of Exeter. I have no cause to question what they were saying, particularly as we enhanced that further by talking to the local employers within the south-west. There seemed to be a very clear correlation between what that research was saying and what the employers themselves were saying.

We cannot just rely on the LEP, though. I am really pleased that we have identified two “outstanding” colleges for the period of the annual report and more since. It is really important that we understand what makes them outstanding. That is their relationship with their employer networks, and their ability to understand what employers want and how they can best meet those needs.

Q77 Neil Carmichael: Surely, though, there must be a need for some sort of strategic overview of a series of LEPs. You have some colleges reaching out beyond certain

LEP boundaries. For example, in my own patch, we have two LEAs looking after a unified college: Filton and Stroud. That would not necessarily work terribly well, unless you had a strategic view of the labour market in that whole area.

Matthew Coffey: Yes, and we thought about that carefully when we designed the dashboard, because it will allow the governor to select, from all of the LEAs, the most appropriate for the particular inquiry. If it is a national organisation, very similar to the geographical spread of the Newcastle College Group, for example, you would probably want to see what every LEA had to say about the skills requirements to look at what that institution was delivering in those areas. There needs to be some clear oversight of this, though, because at the moment there is no intervention. Nobody is saying to a college or a training provider what they should be delivering, other than English and maths, as part of the study programme.

Q78 Neil Carmichael: To some extent, of course, the logic you are applying to colleges also applies to schools. We know there is a shortage of STEM subjects at A-level. Only 28% of A-levels currently are in STEM subjects. That is not enough, if you have a general understanding of the current labour market, especially in terms of engineering and manufacturing, for example. Would you be thinking in terms of looking at schools in a similar sort of way to the way in which you have just described you are looking at colleges?

Matthew Coffey: I would come back to Sir Michael's earlier point about the importance of careers advice and guidance. Getting that right at the forefront of decision-making within a school is really important, but so are the destination measures. An earlier question was about what will incentivise a school to start to think carefully about its curriculum other than just its attainment at GCSE. The answer to the question, I firmly believe, is around the destination measures.

The same applies to colleges as well. Once these destination measures become national statistics, we will start to use them very carefully.

Q79 Neil Carmichael: You would be encouraging schools to think about destination measures now.

Matthew Coffey: I absolutely would.

Neil Carmichael: And you would be signalling that through any further outpourings from Ofsted.

Matthew Coffey: Yes.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am a big supporter of what the Secretary of State is doing on the curriculum to make sure more youngsters go for strong, core academic subjects and achieve progress over the eight subjects within the accountability structure. Hopefully, over time, we will see improvements in the number of youngsters doing those core and STEM subjects and better outcomes.

Q80 Chair: Do we have mixed messages, though? On the one hand, the Secretary of State appears to feel the most successful jurisdictions internationally have an academic base pretty well all the way to 16, and then you specialise and/or do more vocational things. Yet, at the same time, under his watch, there is the development of UTCs, studio schools, direct admission to FE at 14. Is there not a certain incoherence between some who are pushing much more vocational education at 14, with institutions supported by the Government to do so, while the Secretary of State seems to believe, actually, you should do academic until 16.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The eight subjects, hopefully, in the fullness of time, will include vocational areas, as well. If youngsters are going to go down a vocational pathway at 14, go to a UTC or FE institution or college, they should do a strong core of English, maths and science, but also then follow a range of vocational subjects that could count in, let us call it, the EBacc. I do not see it as a real conflict.

Q81 Chair: Sticking with colleges, on the requirement for those who do not get a C or above in English and maths to continue learning, have we got the framework right of accountability for colleges? Do they have the capacity? We are going to have a big fat new maths GCSE, for instance, and we are going to have new core maths for those who get a C or above who want to continue with it to 18. They will be encouraged to do so. Then you have got those who have got to continue whether they like it or not, who have not got a grade C. There is a big issue around teacher supply in maths, and around the framework. Can you comment on how we get those things right and the risks involved?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am ambivalent about this. If, say, a youngster got a D grade and wants to get a C, over the next two years they should be given that opportunity, if they are taught well, to get that C grade.

Q82 Chair: Are they not going to be forced to do it? Have I got it right? If you get below a D, you can do functional skills, but if you get a D, you have got to do the GCSE again. After 11 years of full-time education, they are going to keep flogging what may or may not be a dead horse.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Exactly. That is my concern and it is the concern of the AoC as well.

Matthew Coffey: Neil identified at the outset that we identified a number of concerns in our annual report this year. The teaching of English and maths in further education is one of those concerns. Historically, it has not been the best delivered. Of those subjects that we inspected last year—let us take maths as an example—just 40% were judged to be good or better. I need to be really cautious about that because we have not been systematically inspecting it in every single institution, because, of course, there are 14 subjects and we need to sample. However, increasingly, we will be inspecting English and mathematics to ensure that what is being delivered as the outcome for the young person meets the needs of employers. Continually putting people in for re-sit after re-sit after re-sit is not going to give employers the skills that they require.

Q83 Chair: Are there any risks around perverse incentives? One of the issues that the college sector talk about is that they are picking up those young people who have been most let down by the school system. They see that as a role and part of what they do. Yet they feel as if the accountability framework can penalise them for that and makes it riskier for them to reach out to the very people that Government policy at high level says should be a priority for us.

Matthew Coffey: I think colleges do a really good job. It is really important to acknowledge, when we are talking about their academic offer, that they have much more openness in terms of their criteria for allowing people to have that second chance where they might have failed in the past. Equally, it is important that what is delivered is of a high quality. A real perverse incentive to this measure would be if a college said, “You’re not coming in unless you’ve got GCSE English and maths at grade A to C, because that’s a tough job for us.” We are monitoring that very closely, and that does not appear to be coming forward.

Perverse incentives are something we picked up on in last year's report. We have got to be really careful and make sure that we do not move people in an environment where it is safe to deliver qualifications that will convert into money for colleges. That is why I have really deep concerns about who is holding colleges to account for what they are delivering to meet the skills gaps of tomorrow.

Q84 Neil Carmichael: One of the problems we have got in this country is a gender imbalance between girls and boys being interested in engineering and STEM subjects. Is that something you would be looking to a college to improve on? Currently, only 17% of engineering positions are held by girls.

Matthew Coffey: It is certainly part of the inspection framework. Equalities is woven through teaching and outcomes. Inspectors will be looking at how all groups achieve across all subjects. Where we did not see a college was taking any particularly difficult decisions or trying to promote their particular courses to any under-represented groups, the inspection team would make comment.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think this thing about functional English and GCSE English is a difficult one. If you have a youngster doing, say, motor vehicle engineering, they may not want to study *Ode To Autumn* and *The Merchant of Venice* to 16. If they want to, that is fine, but they must know that they have to achieve a certain requirement in terms of the ability to read and write well for their job. That is a functional skill. Expecting all of these youngsters to achieve a C grade in English at 18 is probably a challenge too far.

Q85 Chair: Is there an issue around apprenticeships there as well? Again, there is a responsibility to ensure continuation, and is there a risk? We already have too few apprenticeships for young people. There are seven applicants for each one, as you say in your report. Are there risks around the fact that, again, it becomes even more selective? Perhaps in a previous generation, people would have been able to work from the ground up and improve their literacy and numeracy as they went in order to be able to do the job, but they are excluded because people feel it is too much of a risk, in case these young people do not deliver the requirements. How do we get that balance right?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Spot on—that is my concern as well. We want more youngsters because the take-up, as you have seen, has fallen this year. We want youngsters who desperately need an apprenticeship, and who would become a member of the NEET community if they did not go into an apprenticeship, to go for the apprenticeships that are on offer. That has a bearing on good careers advice as well.

Q86 Chair: I would be grateful if you would be so good as to write to us on the issue around these conflicting incentives and accountabilities, 16 to 19. As a Committee, we have wrestled with it but struggled to stay on top of it. Providers will look after their institutional interest as well as that of the child, and if they are incentivised to do something that is against the interest of the young people we most want to help, we need to understand that and do something about it.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The big issue—I speak as somebody who has struggled with this for years—is, in a well-led school with good teachers, etc., with a good balanced intake, you would expect to get 70% to 75% of youngsters with five A*-Cs who go on to level 3 courses. However, there is always going to be 20% or 25% for whom that is not an appropriate route. We have struggled with that for years and years and years. If there is going to be a parting of the ways at 14 for those youngsters and they are given really good rigorous, vocational pathways, that will help to heal the divide between academic and vocational, and will reduce the number of NEETs. We have never done it. What we have

done in the past is introduce all these useless, vocational qualifications that lack rigour, and are seen to lack rigour by both students and employers.

Neil Carmichael: That is accepted I think. Can I have one more question?

Chair: No, sorry. I was going to move on to David, so I am going to exclude you as well, Bill.

Q87 Mr Ward: I think we have covered many of the areas and have dipped in and out of various questions. One was to do with preparing young people for the local labour market and the role of the LEPs in that. Notwithstanding what you said about good colleges being able to carry out their own work in this area, there is a danger of the evaluation of the college, in effect, being the evaluation of just how good the local LEP is. Do you see that as a danger? There will be variability between the different LEPs in different parts of the country.

Matthew Coffey: I think the evaluation of the college has got to be firmly on how that college is meeting the local labour market needs. The national skills shortages are a really important factor. However, a local college that is serving its community needs to demonstrate to its students and to its governing board why that curriculum is as it is. Has that curriculum been the same curriculum for the last 20 years or has it changed to meet the needs of local employers? That is what inspections are going to be looking at. I just want to be clear that we are not going to be inspecting against a framework that is offered by the LEP. We will be deeply concerned if, after walking into a college and asking the question, “What informs your curriculum planning?” there is no evidence at all that says that the curriculum is designed to meet any of the skills shortage areas and there is no involvement of employers.

Q88 Mr Ward: The next area that, again, we have touched on is that of disadvantaged young people, the last chance saloon and what incentives there are—and the accountability system may not help this—for the colleges to take on people from deprived backgrounds. There also seems to be a problem with transferring information from schools to the colleges—even basic information about free school meals. Is there anything that can be done about that?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is a big issue. It relies upon the good will of both the colleges and schools to get this information. There needs to be a national database for youngsters who have special educational needs, for example, and who transfer to post-16 institutions.

Q89 Mr Ward: Would that be inspectable from the Ofsted point of view?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think it would be. If we went to a college and asked, “How many youngsters have you got here who are on Action or Action Plus or on these new health and education plans?” that should be immediately available. It should be incumbent upon the schools to deliver that data to the post-16 institution and it should be incumbent upon the post-16 institution to ensure they have that information.

Matthew Coffey: It seems to me that there are some real barriers to something that in my mind is relatively simple: to transfer this important data about students over to their next stage of education. I am constantly told about data protection issues preventing it, but I wrote to Minister Hancock last year to express concern about this and to ask for it to be freed up, because the better colleges really do push and get this information, but it should

not be like this. I am encouraged that we are moving in this direction, but I do want to see it soon.

Q90 Mr Ward: My last question is a topical question, because it is to do with the reduction in funding for 18-year-olds. We have already talked at length about the colleges providing a route for many who have been failed by the system in the past. Any comments on that?

Matthew Coffey: Funding decisions are for the Government, but it underlines the importance of getting careers advice right. If you look at the NEET population, 35% hold a level 3 qualification. This is not just a problem to those young people to whom a vocational route is more appropriate. We have got a problem here with young people who are going on to the academic route and then, at that point, deciding that they need to do something different. It is there that colleges will be hit by whatever the Government funding decisions are of the day.

Q91 Chair: What response has there been from Government to your lecture, Matthew, in October 2013? In particular, you were scathing—rightly scathing—about the quality of education provided in the secure estate. What response has the Government made to your recommendations?

Matthew Coffey: Very little—a very poor response. I am deeply concerned about what is going on in terms of prison education. If you saw what we saw in some of those establishments from an educational perspective in a school, I have no doubt it would be closed down. We have got a serious problem here. As the lecture focused on, this is about accountability. I see accountability as very firmly with the person who is seen as accountable for just about everything that happens in a prison: the governor. Yet those who are managing, co-ordinating and holding the contractors for education to account are 20 miles down the road at another establishment. We have got a huge, complex picture, and I think it needs to be resolved very quickly.

I have had no direct response from the Government. However, the Government plans that were already in place to create 70 re-settlement prisons are to be welcomed and, since the lecture, there has been confirmation that there will be the secure college, which I really welcome.

Q92 Chair: Good. My whole life, when watching television, seems to have been punctuated by reports about the appalling state of things within our prisons. How can we, in 2014, be in a position where the education and skills to allow someone to come out of prison and go straight are so poor? How can it be that it is so poor? It just seems remarkable.

Matthew Coffey: Chair, that is the question I posed at the annual lecture and I continue to ask the question. The governor of a prison is clearly focused on a number of different and sometimes conflicting priorities in an order of magnitude starting with zero escapes, but within that there has to be much more attention paid to rehabilitating offenders, so that they do not go through the spiral and back into prison.

Q93 Chair: I am no expert on the prison system. Reducing recidivism is not a central target of the governors of prisons, is it?

Matthew Coffey: Well, it is one of the governor's targets within a prison, and this is the issue. They are not accountable for the quality of the education that is being provided. I will give you a really good example. Sir Michael and I were at a prison inspection, being shown around the fantastic educational facilities of this particular establishment; there were teachers in classrooms, but nobody else there at all. There were a couple of prison

officers either side of the corridor. Why? Because the governor had prioritised for that day other activities, rather than getting prisoners into the classrooms. That is the fundamental challenge that we have here, coupled with some challenges with the quality of the education being provided. However, we have at least to get people to the classes.

Q94 Chair: Can I ask you, Sir Michael, briefly about sixth-form colleges? They appear to be the most successful 16-to-19 provider in terms of inspection outcomes, yet more and more 11-to-16 schools are opening sixth forms. We know that small sixth forms tend not to be so good. Have we got the right framework in place? Are we incentivising more of what is good and less of what is weaker? Or are we in the opposite situation?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I go back to my previous answer on small school sixth forms. That is why we are very keen to re-introduce the sub-judgment on sixth forms, which will have an impact on the overall effectiveness grade of the school.

Q95 Chair: There is no sign of consultation on that, is there?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We are consulting on it between now and September. It will be in the framework for September, partly because of the concerns I have about an even playing field for both schools and FE, but partly because we want to make sure school-based sixth forms do better than they are doing at the moment.

Q96 Chair: I am trying to get an overview. Andrew Adonis, if you read his book, seemed to be quite keen on sixth-form colleges—perhaps because of their performance data—for a while, and then moved to thinking that 11 to 16 without sixth form was a weaker provision generally and seemed to become less of a fan over time. What is your overview of where sixth-form colleges fit in or whether we are better off generally having 11-to-18 schools? What framework do we need to make sure that the best outs, whatever structure or form it takes?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am sure Matthew will endorse what I am going to say on this one.

Chair: I am sure he will.

Matthew Coffey: I am sure he will.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: You can get an 11-to-18 school that does as well as a sixth-form college with sixth-form students because it is a very large sixth form and it can offer a broad balanced and coherent curriculum; it is well taught and youngster progress to HE institutions as they should. You can get a school with a small sixth form and a very narrow curriculum that is not doing that and is getting away with a “good” judgment from Ofsted because we are not focusing on it in the way that we should. We are going to change that.

Q97 Chair: Could we see some closing? The drift at the moment, especially with academies, is that any self-respecting 11-to-16 school that becomes an academy will end up wanting a sixth form. You had a sixth form at yours, Sir Michael, and people will say, “I want to be as good as Sir Michael, so I want my school to have a sixth form.” Are there risks in that drift in policy?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: There are, and we have got to make sure sixth forms are viable and are producing good outcomes. If they are not, they should not exist. There needs to be a 14-19 strategy locally for that to happen. That is an issue for Government.

Q98 Alex Cunningham: I just have a follow-up question to that. I have seen an area in Stockton-on-Tees that has the potential for more sixth forms within new academies, and

certainly within one or two. Of course, we have good provision—FE and sixth form colleges. I feel that undermines their viability as well. Do you have a view?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The same response: that it is really up to an organising body to ensure that 14-to-19 is well delivered in that area. We do not want a fractured system. We do not want small sixth forms delivering poor outcomes.

Q99 Alex Cunningham: That is helpful. On inspection evidence, do you expect the slight reduction in the proportion of “outstanding” schools to be a trend or a blip?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The fall in outstanding schools? I think it will be a blip. Because we have been tougher on the “outstanding” judgment by saying, “You can only be ‘outstanding’ if the quality of teaching is in the main ‘outstanding’,” there has been this shortfall. Because the quality of teaching is improving in our schools gradually and the quality of leadership is improving in our schools and schools are getting better, I think we will see an increasing proportion of “outstanding” schools.

Q100 Alex Cunningham: Have you any idea of what size that proportion will be? Can we expect 5% or 10% over the next three or four years or more?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It would be foolish of me to give a percentage.

Q101 Alex Cunningham: Tell us how the schools get from “good” to “outstanding”.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Pretty easily.

Alex Cunningham: A good head teacher—yes, we know that bit.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Focus on teaching; the core business. Make sure the quality of the teaching across the school is good. Make sure you appoint good teachers, you professionally develop them and that their impact in the classroom is good.

Q102 Alex Cunningham: We will never accuse you of being inconsistent on that particular message. The CBI have called for a new more narrative style of reporting, so that heads can be held to account for both academic performance and the school’s wider ecosystem. Others have called on Ofsted to look more at trends over time. Are these the sorts of things that you will be looking at in your review of school inspection?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think one of the issues is time. Most section 5 inspections are two days—sometimes a bit less than that. One of the concerns I have is regarding the fact that more time will have to be spent, certainly from September, on assessment—looking at how the school is assessing pupils—now that the previous accountability measures are being removed. It should be a requirement that we look at extra-curricular activities and at how the school is developing children in a broad and balanced way, enriching the lives of pupils both inside and outside the school. We need more time to do that. I think, in consultation with the Secretary of State, we will be outlining our proposals for inspection over the next few years.

Q103 Chair: Could this improving trend lead you to work yourself out of existence in places? If we have a truly self-improving education system, with more and more heads, national leaders and local leaders in education getting involved in inspection themselves—you have got the NAHT, who feel it should be more of a professionals-led system, rather than Ofsted—could you imagine a framework in which areas, if they could provide sufficient assurance confidence, could start to be self-inspected and occasionally looked at perhaps by Ofsted to check they are there? Effectively, there would be more and more of a self-improving system in which the profession, and the leaders within that profession, take the lead and Ofsted shrinks away.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Two things on that one. First of all, once we move to a system where we have 10 teachers or more applying for one vacancy, as they have in some countries, particularly in the shortage subject areas—STEM subjects; once we move to a system where the best of those teachers get into leadership positions and prove themselves there; and once we get to a system where we are up there in the top five in terms of the PISA tables, then I think we can slowly withdraw. How long that takes remains to be seen. I said at the beginning of this session that once we remove inconsistencies in our system and differences between the regions, we might be able to get there more quickly than we thought.

Q104 Chair: It might move the other way. Surely we might get greater disparities. The thing about localism is that some people do better than others. Some areas might be able to go off on their own and you would be able to concentrate your resources on those that remain to greater effect.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes. That is why I think risk-based and proportionate inspections are the way forward. However, if that model of schools in clusters working together under an outstanding leader really takes off and become entrenched, what we then do is inspect a cluster and take a sample, rather than inspect the individual school.

Q105 Bill Esterson: We will come to inspection changes shortly. Can I just come back to the questions that you were answering for Alex? You indicated that it is not just the academic results that are the measure of whether schools are doing well or not. Do you think that we should be looking at value added again as part of the accountability framework?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We do already. We look at the value-added outcomes and the progress of children across the ability range in terms of value-added scores. We do that already in coming to a judgment. What I think you mean is: should we be looking at all those other things—the softer curriculum—as part of our overall judgment? I think we should, but we do not have enough time to dig deeply into it.

Q106 Bill Esterson: One of the concerns about the changes in the accountability measures has been that schools are not necessarily being compared—the ending of the family-of-schools approach in comparisons. Do you think that should be revisited?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We certainly do that. If you look at the data dashboard, that has been a powerful driver for improvement over the last—when did we introduce it?—two years, where we compare the performance of a school with similar schools. We benchmark the data, and inspectors have that data before they inspect a school.

Q107 Bill Esterson: That does not seem to be the impression that some head teachers are getting.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am really surprised at that, because it goes out to schools every year. They can see how they are doing against similar schools in similar circumstances.

Q108 Bill Esterson: Moving on to academies, last week the Department told us that academies are doing better than similar maintained schools. Is that the evidence you have as well?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is the evidence that we have for sponsor academies at the moment.

Q109 Bill Esterson: And what about for converters?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is too early to say because we must remember that most of the converter academies were previously “outstanding” schools. Once they broaden their

base, as they are doing at the moment, and more “good” and “satisfactory” schools join that structure, we wait to see whether they are doing as well as they are doing now in relation to other schools.

Q110 Bill Esterson: Sure. Your report is upbeat about sponsor-led academies, yet 43% of them are less than “good”. How long do you expect it will take them to reach the national average at this rate of progress?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think it is tough. They have taken over the most difficult schools in the most disadvantaged areas and are doing better with them than before. The head teachers, sponsors and trustees of those schools should be congratulated on doing that. It will take time; these things are not easy. Incremental progress is what we want to see. I am sure that the Secretary of State would say this as well—incremental improvements year by year.

Q111 Bill Esterson: Coming back to converters, how do you intend to assess the impact of conversion to academy status on performance?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: One of the things that we worry about is that converter academies have gone for academisation without thinking of its consequences in terms of changing the way they work. We would want to see converter academies and all academies using their new-found freedoms. We will be focusing on this much more from September. Are they doing things differently with the additional funding they are receiving? Are they doing something about the extended day? Are they doing something about the structure of the school year? Are they doing something about contracts, etc? The feedback so far is “not as much as they should be”. For example, only one of the converter academies that we have inspected over the last year has done much on the extended school day and the year.

Q112 Bill Esterson: The phrase “coasting academies” has been used. Why do you think they are not making more of the freedoms?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think because they have not been sufficiently challenged by their sponsor. The sponsor has a key role to play in saying, “Right.” Certainly, that was my experience with my academy.

Q113 Chair: These academies do not have a sponsor.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Sorry, by their trustees.

Q114 Bill Esterson: It comes back to the governors. Who is going to hold the governors to account?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Well, hopefully the Secretary of State and his officials.

Bill Esterson: Hopefully.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: There has to be some system for challenging underperforming academies before we walk in.

Q115 Chair: In your list of things they were not doing—school day, etc.—you did not mention partnership and co-operation with other schools. You mentioned atomisation at the beginning of the session.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is something all schools should be involved in, whether they are academies or not. Strong schools should be supporting weaker ones. That needs to be well co-ordinated.

Q116 Bill Esterson: How do you make them do that?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think I have mentioned here before that I think there needs to be a national system for doing this. The NCTL has a big job in making sure that they create systems and structures whereby these sorts of things are well led and well co-ordinated. I would gladly support them in that task. I have said to you before when I have appeared in front of you that I would like to introduce a different grade called the “exceptional head teacher” grade for those people who are willing to put themselves out by supporting and taking ownership of the outcomes of other schools.

Q117 Bill Esterson: Carrots but no stick?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I do not think you can force people to do things that they do not particularly want to do, but you can incentivise them to do that. That is one incentive that we can have. You probably heard the Secretary of State or the Department for Education talking about the champions’ league of head teachers and that sort of thing. You can incentivise heads to do this.

Q118 Bill Esterson: If they fall into a certain category, then you are forcing them to do things.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: They would only get that exceptional leadership grade if they volunteer to do this and put themselves out to do it.

Q119 Mr Ward: The incentivisation with the league tables is always through competition rather than collaboration. If you were a school and cynical, you would not want to share your very best practice with the school down the road that you are going to be in a league table with.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is why incentives are important. We should recognise head teachers who are going to move beyond their school gates to support other schools, particularly those in challenging circumstances. That is not an issue for Ofsted; it is an issue for the Government to incentivise those people to do it.

Q120 Bill Esterson: What is your view on the creation of free schools where there are surplus places?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is a policy decision and is not for Ofsted.

Q121 Mr Ward: It is something for the Government, but it is also incumbent upon you to make recommendations to us. In terms of collaboration, is that a recommendation you would make to us?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am going to remain entirely neutral on this one. My job—and Ofsted’s job—is to report on standards in those schools. It is an issue for the Government to decide where those schools go.

Q122 Bill Esterson: You are not going to look at policy issues when it comes to free schools. What areas are you intending to investigate?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Free schools are publicly funded, so we are inspecting them at the moment and we are reporting on standards in those schools.

Q123 Bill Esterson: What about the effect they have on other schools where they are created?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We do not comment on that. We comment on standards in those individual institutions.

Q124 Alex Cunningham: Sir Michael, you have always proved to be a truly independent spirit in education over the years—some might think a little too independent at times. You have had different views from the Secretary of State, which has got to be healthy in my opinion—for example, on what you think about grammar schools being full of middle-class kids or on being unhappy about the quality of sex-and-relationship education. You have got this great desire, which I share with you, to inspect the academy chains. Are you getting any closer to those powers?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The powers to—

Alex Cunningham: Inspect the academy chains.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Oh, I see. First of all, in terms of my relationship with the Secretary of State, I enjoy a really good relationship with the Secretary of State. I admire him as a reforming Secretary of State who is passionate about improving standards in schools for children across the country. I am thoroughly at one with him on that.

Q125 Alex Cunningham: But you do not mince your words with him.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: No, we have robust conversations.

Q126 Alex Cunningham: Does that make you feel vulnerable? Our brief suggested that you are beyond your bus pass. Do you not feel vulnerable?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I would gladly walk off into the sunset, if it is the desire of those who have power over me that I should do that. However, in terms of academy chains—I think I have said this to you before—we do not have the powers to inspect at the moment. We are looking at the performance of constituent schools within one academy chain at the moment, and we will be producing a letter to the Secretary of State on that over the next few weeks.

Q127 Alex Cunningham: Why do you want the powers to inspect the chains as opposed to the individual academies?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think it is just fair. We are inspecting local authorities, and we have been critical of some local authorities for not doing as much as they should if the schools within that local authority are not doing well. I think it is only fair that we should do the same with academy chains.

Q128 Alex Cunningham: Contrary to what the Chair thinks, I am not totally opposed to profit, but you will be aware that one of the major academy chains is planning to outsource some £200 million to £400 million of services to I think a joint-venture company.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: AET?

Alex Cunningham: It is. Is this the sort of thing you would like to be able to look at?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: If the Secretary of State asked us to look at the finances of an academy or an academy chain or another group of schools, we would do it. We do not have the capacity at the moment to do it.

Q129 Alex Cunningham: Is it something you think is important if we are going to make sure that we retain the cash in the system for the benefit of pupils?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Again, that is an issue for the Secretary of State. Our job is to report on educational standards and outcomes for children.

Q130 Alex Cunningham: Do you now have all the data you need from the DfE about the governance arrangements of schools in order to inspect chains or analyse their

performance? You said you had information about a number of schools within a chain, but do you have all the data you require to do that?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Well, do you want to answer that one?

Matthew Coffey: I think it was at the Select Committee last year when Sir Michael expressed his frustration that we were not getting those data. We are getting those data now, so they are being fed in. Also, the regional structure has helped to further enhance the relationship we have with local authorities, but also with chains. So, with multi-academy trusts, each regional director has an oversight relationship with each of them. We understand much better the individual schools that make up their chain, but also the performance within it—just as we do with a local authority.

Q131 Alex Cunningham: Are you at the point where you are almost ready and you would be able to investigate or inspect chains if you were just given the powers now and given the nod by the Secretary of State?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We would do that.

Q132 Mr Ward: I have questions on teaching and then there is a question on assessment. First of all, I will deal with this issue of schools mistaking “the process of education with its purpose”, which you have been quoted on. Do you want to tell us about that story and about the issue?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Again, head teachers should worry about systems, but only systems in relation to the impact those systems have on classroom performance. The point we were making there is that the best schools are run by people who worry more about the quality of teaching than anything else. Where you have schools that worry about process and procedure rather than outcomes for children and what goes on in classrooms, it does not work.

Q133 Mr Ward: Many teachers have argued that Ofsted dictates the style of teaching or the DfE does so. Does the fact that you have had to reiterate the guidance on the acceptability of it being about outcomes rather than means indicate that there was some truth in that?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Over time there has been a belief out there in the system that Ofsted had a preferred view of a lesson. That was the case certainly when I was teaching and when I was a head. We have changed all that, and we have said that we do not have a preferred style of teaching—you can teach in any way you want—as long as, when we inspect, we see children making progress and we see children attentive, engaged and achieving good outcomes. That has been hard to get through because we have had 20-odd years of a different sort of culture in Ofsted. However, we are getting it through and we are reviewing our training programmes as a result.

Q134 Mr Ward: It was one of the arguments put forward for the perceived inconsistency: that we did not really know what they wanted until they arrived.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think that is a fair point, and we are putting it right. That is why, for the last 18 months, I have said at every conference I have attended and every time I have addressed both teachers and heads: we do not have a preferred style of teaching. We just want to see, no matter what the style, children doing well.

Q135 Mr Ward: You have also made comments about more able students and the problem of them being disadvantaged and not supported enough. Do you think some return to the old “gifted and talented” or “more able” student programmes would be helpful?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I want to see able children in the non-selected system—in the comprehensive system—doing as well as children in grammar schools and independent schools. That is what I want to see.

Q136 Mr Ward: As opposed to more in selection as a way of supporting them?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I operated selectively within my comprehensive school. Bright youngsters were setted—they were put in sets one and two—and we got the best out of them. We focused as much on the most able as we did on children with special needs. I want all schools to do that. That is why it is a key part of our inspection framework at the moment. We are failing schools if they do not do well by their most able children.

Q137 Mr Ward: In terms of assessment, you have suggested that there should be formal tests at the end of Key Stage 1. Can you just give us your thinking behind that?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Simply because we are seeing a consistency at Key Stage 1. It is important that youngsters have mastered the basic skills by seven. If they cannot read by seven, we know that they struggle thereafter. What we are seeing is that, in infant schools that are not all-through infant and junior schools, the results are that much higher at Key Stage 1 than for all-through schools. In an all-through school, there is a temptation at Key Stage 1 to lower the assessment to ensure better value added at Key Stage 2. That is what inspectors see. You want to see greater consistency in terms of assessment and better moderation by local authorities, which we see as being too variable and inconsistent.

Q138 Mr Ward: You are not concerned about the criticism that over-assessment would be detrimental?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: No, I do not think so. Most good heads who were operating the tests previously thought it was a good idea. I do not know why we abandoned the tests at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 3, especially now that we are removing national curriculum levels. We need benchmarks all the way through a youngster’s career.

Q139 Mr Ward: My final question on this set is to do with SEN. Does Ofsted pay enough attention to SEN and what proposals do you have for how you can hold local authorities to account for SEN provision?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Every inspector has to have SEN training. We focus as much on special needs issues as we do for the most able. We look at assessment patterns in the schools we go into for special needs. We make sure we have a robust conversation with the SENCO—the special needs co-ordinator. We are identifying a number of local authorities to review their plans for monitoring the new arrangements for education, health and care plans. Do you know how many authorities we are looking at at the moment, Matthew?

Matthew Coffey: I think it might be 17. We are revisiting those that we visited two years ago.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We are doing that to see how they are planning to deal with this within their own local authority. We will publish a report on that, so that good practice can be more widely spread.

Q140 Chair: Will you be looking very closely at the local offer, because if the Children and Families Bill becomes law and the new framework is to make any difference,

the local offer and the quality thereof will be absolutely critical? Are you ready to go in and make sure that best practice is shared?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes. That is the whole purpose of focusing on these pathfinder authorities.

Q141 Chair: Super. What about when it does come in and we have everybody implementing? Will you do a thematic review or do you have any plans to try to work in parallel with the introduction of the new responsibilities?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think there has to be a thematic review, rather than an inspection, because we simply have not got the capacity for that at the moment.

Q142 Chair: Do you have enough capacity for all the things you have got to do? Your budget has been cut again in the coming period. The answer to any problem in society seems to be to give you a greater responsibility to ensure that schools fix it at source.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Chair, we are a very large organisation inspecting seven remits. It is a tough call for Ofsted to do all of those things well, and we need a budget to be able to do it well.

Q143 Chair: Is the budget you have adequate?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We are struggling with it at the moment, but the Secretary of State has been very generous to us. Every time I have asked him to fund Ofsted for additional work, such as the improvement work we are doing with schools, he has managed to persuade the Treasury to give us a bit more money. However, I understand the constraints that we are operating under within in the public sector.

Q144 Bill Esterson: I do not know if you saw today's *Independent*, but there is an article about a head teacher in the independent sector saying that heads should ensure that a culture of fear operates in their schools, because that is the way to get the best out of teachers.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: He said that?

Bill Esterson: He said that—well, he is quoted as saying that.

Chair: It is not always the same thing.

Bill Esterson: I thought it was important research.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: A culture of fear?

Bill Esterson: Yes.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: No. I think head teachers should be authoritative figures. I think head teachers should ensure that their teachers are authoritative figures and that youngsters respect them in the way that they should. That is very different from inculcating a culture of fear in those schools.

Q145 Bill Esterson: From your inspection evidence, is School Direct better than previous models of training teachers?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We do not know yet, because it is early days for School Direct. It is an evolving system. Next year and the year after, we will be able to say more about that. I think it is a sensible move. I think training should go on where it matters most: in the school environment itself. Even though youngsters might be enrolled within an HE institution, they spend most of their time in school. The move towards much more school-based training is one I support, as long as it is well managed and the school-based partnerships—SCITTs—include schools that are not good as well as schools that are good. My fear is that the good schools will take the best teachers and we will get increasing

polarity in the system. That must not happen. We will be critical when we inspect—and we are going out to consultation on this at the moment—of any partnership that does not have regard for schools that are not good, in their partnership or beyond.

Q146 Bill Esterson: Do you think there should be a move towards putting the best teachers into the most demanding schools?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Absolutely, but that has implications for the way we inspect.

Q147 Bill Esterson: How do you achieve that?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: As I say, we will be critical of any training provider or partnership that does not have regard for provision in the region and in their area. Again, this is an issue for the NCTL: to make sure that those areas we have highlighted in our report that desperately need good teachers and good leaders get them.

Q148 Bill Esterson: On this point about teachers learning in schools as part of their teaching practice, do you accept the importance of academic study and reflection and the balance between practical and academic learning? Do you have concerns that may be going too far in one direction or the other?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Do I think that teachers should have good subject knowledge and expertise in what they are teaching? Absolutely. That means that their qualifications need to be good and that they need to continuously professionally develop themselves. They also need the ability to communicate well with youngsters, and certainly, in the sorts of schools I have worked in, with youngsters across the ability range.

Q149 Bill Esterson: Does your inspection evidence support arguments that teachers with QTS are more effective than non-qualified teachers?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: If qualified teacher status was the gold standard, why is it that one in three lessons taught mainly by teachers with QTS is not good enough? This is an issue of debate at the moment. My view is that, if a head teacher appoints somebody who is not qualified and who has not gone through the normal processes of accreditation and they prove themselves in the classroom, they should be accredited as soon as possible. I did that as a head. If I could not get a physics teacher and somebody came along from university or business who could teach physics well, they went into the classroom and would be accredited as soon as possible.

Chair: Could we pause for the bell?

Q150 Bill Esterson: So, it is qualified teacher status or working towards it as a minimum?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: If I was an unqualified teacher in a school, I would want to be accredited as soon as possible so I could say—it does not have to be the HE institutions—“My head teacher believes that I can teach well. I’ve got some form of accreditation that I can passport to another school.”

Q151 Bill Esterson: Have you picked up concerns that, in some academies, teaching assistants are having their terms and conditions changed and are ending up teaching for quite extended periods?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That has not come my way.

Bill Esterson: It has not come up in your inspections.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: No.

Q152 Mr Ward: On this issue of qualified teacher status and accreditation, if someone comes in who has not done a formal qualification but can do, and is assessed to be able to do, should that in itself be sufficient to give accreditation for a person to become qualified?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes, I think so. The old, graduate teacher programme was just that. We used to take people from business and industry who wanted to be teachers and we would monitor their performance over a year. If they could teach well, they received that accreditation from both school and university.

Q153 Chair: Getting back to Bill's original question, is there any evidence about the quality of non-QTS teachers in schools? You are going around inspecting. Is there cause for alarm that these non-QTS teachers may be providing a lower standard of education than parents have every right to expect?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Because it has become such an issue and because more schools now—academies and free schools—are allowed to employ unqualified staff, it could become an issue for Ofsted in our judgments. In doing some survey work to assess whether there are any differences—

Chair: You are doing or you might do?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We might do it, as more unqualified teachers—

Chair: It does seem like an area of, as you say, hot political debate that a little bit of evidence would not go amiss in.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes.

Q154 Bill Esterson: Is it a legitimate part of your role?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We do not ask the head teacher. We do not look at data on qualified teacher status or the number of teachers who are unqualified; we do not do that at the moment. As I said, it might become an issue. We might do a little survey to see whether there are any differences in quality between the two.

Bill Esterson: "Might"; okay.

Q155 Chair: Are any inspectors suggesting it is a problem to you?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: No.

Q156 Neil Carmichael: The next subject to discuss is governance and leadership, which are very important matters on which we have had useful exchanges in the past. The first question is: what more can the Government do to encourage good governance?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: A number of things. First of all, you have probably seen from the report that we have judged 400 governing boards were so weak that they needed external review. That is not an option or a recommendation from Ofsted; it is a requirement that you do something about it. When we have gone back into those schools, often we see governors who have not done anything about it and have not sought any external review.

We need to regularise what external review actually means, so that, rather than having a whole host of different providers offering that external review, you have one or two, because often governors do not know where to go. It is not the job of Ofsted to say, "Go to the National College," "Go to the LEA," or, "Go to Serco." There should be one or two providers who specialise in external review. We should make sure that we, as Ofsted, look at the reports that these consultants are doing and ensure that they are focusing on the

key recommendations that we are making. I have gone on the record as saying that where we see weak schools, we see weak leadership often by the leaders but also by governors. I am all for professional governance in those circumstances and, if necessary, they should be paid.

Neil Carmichael: Well, that certainly concurs with the views I have expressed in the past; whether the rest of the Education Committee agree or not I am not sure.

Chair: I think you are very clear. Would you like to ask a question?

Q157 Neil Carmichael: I am, and I am going to ask a question. The focus that we seem to be seeing on recruiting governors with skills is getting under way. Do you recognise that that is making progress or do you want to see more action?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I would like to see more action. The National College did, some years ago, introduce the national leaders of governance programme. I do not know what has happened to that. It seemed to be a good initiative to train people who wanted to be governors and who wanted to support other schools with governance. I do not know what has happened to that, but that initiative should be developed and extended.

Q158 Neil Carmichael: You mentioned the effectiveness of external reviews and, first of all, you highlighted the fact that there should be some consistency, effectively, in those and also that you wanted to monitor them. So far, what is your opinion of external reviews?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Not good, and that is the opinion of HMI. That is why we want to see some sort of regularisation of this, with fewer providers doing it. They have got to be properly trained, able to do it properly and work with HMI on the school improvement work.

Q159 Neil Carmichael: Today, the Government is going through a process of effectively relaxing regulations to encourage school governors to do the right thing. Would you be more proactive?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes, because governance is absolutely key in holding leaders to account and challenging schools to do better. I think every local authority should have a list of people they can call upon for governance—ex-heads, ex-HMI. They should be people they can look to to do a range of things—go into a governing board where necessary, appoint additional governors when schools are in trouble, form IEBs and so on. I think Government should oblige every local authority to draw up lists of people who would be prepared to volunteer to do this important work.

Q160 Neil Carmichael: In terms of IEBs—I have often raised this point—if an IEB is necessary to sort out school governance, why not have that kind of structure in the first place? Is that something you would agree with?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: One of the strengths of IEBs—their greatest strength—is that they are made up of experts and people who know what to do and what to recommend. They are also fairly small bodies—five or six people—in my experience. I have chaired a couple of IEBs. They are people who really focus on the task ahead of them. I would not be adverse to that idea and it chimes with what I have already said: that we should move to a much more professional governance model.

Neil Carmichael: One last question. It is about the role of the good old regional commissioners, which we have now discussed three times already in this session.

Chair: Thanks to you.

Q161 Neil Carmichael: Thank you. Is there a role for the regional commissioners in encouraging good governance, inspiring good governors, ensuring that the local authorities do you what you have suggested they do, and in drilling down on the issue of leadership, which you have referred to?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Yes. The responsibility is with the Government as well to define the parameters of what good governance look like and how we are going to get better governors in schools that desperately need them.

Q162 Chair: Two quick last questions from me. Does it make any sense to fund schools in Tower Hamlets at exactly twice the rate of schools in Hastings? How important do you think funding may be—the allocation of limited resource within the system—to the underperformance of rural and coastal schools?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think it is a critical issue. If the deprivation and disadvantage indicators are the same, they should be funded equally. It relates to what I have been saying about white, working-class underperformance.

Q163 Chair: The National Association of Head Teachers says that Ofsted has rewritten published reports so as to make them compliant with HMCI guidance. In other words, when they came out, they were not compliant and then they were rewritten later. Is that true?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am not sure what, sorry—

Chair: This was in their submission to us ahead of your appearance today. They say that published reports that were not compliant with your guidance on how reports should look and what they should have in them were subsequently rewritten—changed—so that they would appear to be compliant with your directives. The question is: has that happened and, if so, is it appropriate?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The judgment has not changed, but the wording has because some inspectors who wrote reports had not listened to what I was saying about preferred teaching styles. There were a small number cases where I felt it was really important that the writing was appropriate in relation to that guidance. I sent HMI to those schools to say, “We are not changing the judgments on this one, because the evidence base tells us we should not, but the way teaching is described is going to be different.” The head teachers have accepted that.

Q164 Chair: Am I right in thinking that, in the report, there is no data on how many inspections gave rise to complaints against you and what the result of subsequent investigations were?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It would be in the data behind the report.

Q165 Chair: If we are to hold you to account, I would have thought that a pretty good measure for Ofsted is to find out the level of complaints and what happens with those complaints.

Matthew Coffey: There are data available.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: There are data available, and I will make sure it is in next year’s report.

Q166 Chair: Super. You said at the beginning that you were taking over the training of inspectors from the regional contractors. Could you write to the Committee about that just to let us know what you have put in place and what kind of expected numbers there are? There was an issue about quality and capacity in terms of the inability to turn around the

quality of the inspectorate as fast as you would like, because they did not seem to have the capacity. There was an also issue suggested in submissions to us that the regional contractors were charging quite a lot as well. There are quite a few issues there. We would be interested to hear from you, detailing what you are doing to address all of those issues.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I will write to you, Chair, on those.

Chair: Thank you both very much for giving evidence to us today.