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Witnesses: Sir Michael Wilshaw and Matthew Coffey

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Members present

Baroness Corston (Chairman)
 Baroness Berridge
 Baroness Blood
 Lord Farmer
 Lord Holmes of Richmond
 Earl of Kinnoull
 Baroness Howells of St Davids
 Baroness Morris of Yardley
 Baroness Sharp of Guildford
 Baroness Stedman-Scott
 Baroness Tyler of Enfield

Examination of Witnesses

Sir Michael Wilshaw, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills, and **Matthew Coffey**, Chief Operating Officer, Ofsted

Q108 The Chairman: I would like to remind everybody present that at 11 o'clock the bells will ring and we will have the two minutes' silence for Armistice Day.

I would like to welcome Sir Michael Wilshaw and Matthew Coffey from Ofsted. Having done this before, you will appreciate that this session is open to the public. A webcast of the session goes out live and is subsequently accessible via the parliamentary website. A verbatim transcript will be taken of your evidence and it will be put on the parliamentary website. Shortly after this evidence session, you will receive a copy of the transcript. We ask you to check it for accuracy and advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If you want to clarify or amplify any points that were made during the evidence session, or you want to make any additional points, you are welcome to submit supplementary written evidence. It might be useful if you introduce yourselves for the record.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I am Michael Wilshaw, chief inspector at Ofsted.

Matthew Coffey: I am Matthew Coffey, chief operating officer of Ofsted.

The Chairman: As you know, we are very concerned about employment opportunities and social mobility for groups that could be called underserved or middle attainers, or who have been described to us as the "overlooked majority". In your view, should Ofsted have a greater role in improving opportunities for these young people?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: As you probably know, Ofsted was founded in 1992. If you look back at the history of Ofsted, over those 22 years, you will see that Ofsted was set up because there was widespread concern and deep anxiety on the part of government that standards were not high enough and that this country was doing badly in relation to its competitors. The youngsters who were doing especially badly were average youngsters and poor children. There was a sense of deep malaise at the time and Ofsted was founded—as one of the accountability measures brought in at the time—to try to raise standards through inspection, and by challenging the system to do better, but also supporting schools through inspection to do better.

Over that 22-year period, Ofsted has played a key part in raising standards for all children. Have we been universally successful, or successful with, for example, white British youngsters in certain parts of the country? No, we have not. However, what it was like before is not often discussed. I speak from personal experience because I was a teacher in the 1970s and saw how low standards were in London. Look at London now. In 1985, I started as a head teacher in east London and remember the terrible standards at that time. Compared to that period—what I call the lost generations of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s—this country is doing significantly better. I want to say that at the very start. Although you read in the press that this country is not doing well against its international competitors, and all the rest of it, and that social mobility is not as great as it should be, compared to where it was it is doing significantly better for all children, although perhaps not as well for certain ethnic groups living in certain parts of the country.

The Chairman: So, in your view, who should have responsibility for guiding young people through the transition from school to post-16 provision and then into employment? We understand the focus on going to university, but what about the people who do not take that route?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We produced a report two years ago on careers education and vocational guidance in schools. It was a very critical report. We said that not enough was being done to promote careers in schools. It was not a government priority at the time. Head teachers were not taking careers education as seriously as they should have been and, as a consequence, those youngsters for whom progression to university was not necessarily the right thing for them to follow were being abandoned and not given sufficient help and

support. It was a very critical report and, since then, inspectors have seen a bit of a pick-up, but not much.

It is now a key part of our framework for inspection. A key thing that inspectors from the HMI look at when inspecting secondary schools under the heading of personal development is what is being done to help and support youngsters to progress to their next stage of education, particularly where the route is not necessarily on to level 3 programmes, A-level programmes and on to university. They inspect what is being done to talk about apprenticeships, what is being done to engage with local employers, what is being done to bring FE providers into schools to help and support youngsters into their next stage of education. A large number of youngsters who do not go down the traditional academic route will end up in further education institutions, and they need to know more about them and what courses and programmes of study they offer.

The Chairman: So you have no role beyond that? For example, if a young person left school at 16 and was offered two days a week training and was expected to hang around for the other three days of the week, is that the kind of thing you would take up with the school?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We inspect a school's provision for guidance and careers education. Our job is not to establish the school's policies or what the school is doing to promote careers education. Our job is to look at that, but it is really up to the school to determine what is most successful for their children.

The Chairman: So the transition from school into employment is not really your responsibility?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is our responsibility to inspect against that issue, but it is the responsibility of schools and post-16 providers to ensure that youngsters have the best possible opportunities to do as well as they possibly can.

The Chairman: Do you want to come in, Mr Coffey?

Matthew Coffey: I agree entirely with what Michael has said. It is within Ofsted's power to highlight the issues, some of which you are highlighting here in your questioning, and bring those to the attention of the decision-makers. In this respect, particularly in post-16, bearing in mind that post-16 providers are autonomous individual businesses, there is a significant role for the Government on policy and the way they fund providers to act. In our 2013 annual report, we were severely critical of the system and posed the question, "Is the system broken?", because people were not talking to each other and allowing these

situations to happen. Ofsted will continue to highlight where these problems occur in an individual institution and, more broadly, take a look back so that we can spot those transitional arrangements.

Ofsted has been re-organised into eight regions, and the regional teams of HMI are able to see what is going on across a local authority area. The great challenge is always who is ultimately responsible, so we continue to publish our reports and shout louder and louder where we see these things happening.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I think that point needs to be emphasised. Our job as an inspectorate is to go in and inspect against published criteria and frameworks. Once we have done that and come to a judgment, it is up to policy-makers to come up with solutions to the problems that we have identified.

Q109 Baroness Morris of Yardley: I just want to take that further. I accept entirely what you have just said about inspecting against a framework, but in a way this area is a victim of the success of another area. To go back to what you said to begin with, Sir Michael, about the improvement in standards and higher aspirations and most children doing better, Ofsted, among other things, has played a role over the years in putting into place incentives for working with those children. It has happened because schools have been incentivised to address those issues. Could you explore this a little? The success has been that more children go to university and more people from different backgrounds aspire to do that, and I would not want to belittle that success story at all. I know you can only speak for Ofsted, but Ofsted and the rest of the system have never been successful at incentivising schools to offer people these other routes. We yell at them that they do not do careers education properly, but they are not qualified to do it. It is the same as not having a trained maths teacher. Lots of teachers do not have the qualifications or the experience. We shout at them for not doing that, but in truth in the more academic area, the system and Ofsted incentivised schools to put children in for GCSEs and to have high aspirations, targets and all the rest of it.

Looking back, or looking forward, is there more that Ofsted could do to give that clear message that for some children going down the non-university path is appropriate and does reflect higher aspirations and ambitions? Is there anything you could do to incentivise that discussion at school level so that it becomes something that is not second-place for schools, but rises to the top of their agenda?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: In response to one of the previous questions, the fact that we have prioritised careers education and vocational guidance in our inspections means that head teachers are now concerned about what inspectors will say about their judgments in that area in a way that they were not before. It is also up to Her Majesty's Government to say important things about this. It is not just about progression. We want as many youngsters with the capacity to go on to do academic courses, and to university, from a range of backgrounds. Of course, we want that, and many more are doing so, but there are some youngsters for whom that is not appropriate, who need to go into apprenticeships, who need high-quality vocational provision. At 16, only 5% of youngsters go into apprenticeships, 3% of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds. That is a nonsense. It is not only up to Ofsted to say that careers guidance is important and that it should be balanced for all children; it is also up to the Government to say that they are going to promote both, that a successful school is about developing both, and making that is a strong political issue. Perhaps government has not done that as successfully as it should have done.

We need to say a lot more about apprenticeships. You probably saw what we said a few weeks ago about low-quality apprenticeships. We were very critical of existing programmes. Perhaps government should say a lot more about what it is going to do to promote a strong vocational offer in schools post-16. It is not just up to Ofsted to say what we should do.

Baroness Morris of Yardley: I accept that entirely, but is it about something other than careers guidance? Could you inspect against anything else in the inspection framework when you are in schools? Careers guidance is an obvious one. If that is poor, children will not make sensible decisions. Is there another way we can incentivise using the curriculum, school organisation, quality of leadership, or links with industry? At the moment, the incentives tend to be for EBacc and things like that. I know that EBacc is for these young people as well, but when you look at the system across the board and talk to heads, the incentives are all in one direction.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: You are quite right on that one. The EBacc figures are pretty poor. Only one in five youngsters achieve the EBacc qualification, and there will be plenty of youngsters for whom that is not an appropriate programme. The Government might not agree, but there will be some youngsters for whom an alternative programme would be more suitable. At the end of the day, Ofsted makes a judgment on the quality of provision in the school and the sorts of programmes of study that the school offers, but even more importantly it makes

a judgment about the quality of leadership in the school, because everything is determined by the drive and determination of the head teacher and senior team to deliver good outcomes for all children. A good leader will come to common-sense decisions about careers guidance. Go to any good secondary school and you will see a good secondary school head identifying a suitable, and suitably senior, person in the school who will co-ordinate careers education, who will make sure there is one-to-one tuition, who will make sure they bring local business leaders into the school and heavily engage with the business world, who will make sure local FE colleges come to the open evenings and make sure youngsters know what opportunities exist outside the school. Inspectors often go into secondary schools and find that because head teachers are so concerned about filling their sixth forms to ensure that their budgets are strong, they will give the wrong advice to youngsters and be selfish in their careers advice.

Increasingly, we are critical in our secondary school reports. I have put in a sub-judgment about the sixth form that did not exist before. The judgment includes whether you are offering good careers provision, ensuring that your children are getting the right advice, whether your sixth form is viable, with a broad and balanced curriculum, and whether some of your youngsters should be heading in different directions.

Lord Farmer: Just a very brief and direct question with regard to this. If, in your inspection of a school, you found that the quality of the careers guidance was poor but the rest of the school was outstanding, would that affect the inspectorate's decision as to whether the school was outstanding, very good, good or failing?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is a good question and a very difficult one. If everything else in the school—provision, progress, outcomes and behaviour—is good, it would be very difficult to mark that school down just because careers provision was not as good as it should have been. The most successful heads want everything to be good in their school, and really understand that good careers education is not a bolt-on but an integral part of raising achievement. Going back to my experience as a secondary head, once children know that by working hard they will achieve good outcomes and have a better chance of employment, they will work that much harder in school, and the school will do well. The short answer is probably that we would not mark a school down, but we would certainly put in our report that careers education and personal development were not good.

Lord Farmer: If the heads knew that they might be marked down, it would certainly be an incentive for them to give good careers guidance.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: If the school is on the cusp, and there are all sorts of other things that are not going well in the school, that could be a tipping point.

Baroness Berridge: In relation to the point you made about post-16 provision and wanting to fill places in the sixth form, obviously good leaders should be making decisions that are in the best interests of each child. At our last evidence session we heard evidence from the studio schools and the UTCs, which I know are a very small part of the provision at the moment. They are trying to recruit from the head teachers' existing cohort at 14, which means a potential loss of pupil premium if a child in your secondary decides to leave midstream. Is there a place within the inspection framework to include what promotion there has been within the existing school of the local, small—and I recognise it is small—studio school or the UTC as alternatives, because unless you do that I cannot see very many head teachers wanting to lose a pupil at age 14 from their existing school?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Matthew will say something, because he is the expert on this. What you have said is right: head teachers are reluctant to lose any of their children for budgetary reasons, and the ones they are prepared to lose are often the disaffected, the demotivated, and so on. That is why a number of UTCs are not working particularly well. This is a structural issue for schools. As more and more schools join partnerships of one kind or another—collaborations, federations, clusters, chains, et cetera—under the leadership of a very good leader, it seems to me entirely possible that that leader could make a decision about the constituent elements within that partnership and say that that particular institution is going to be the 14-to-19 vocational centre for this partnership, to be the UTC, and not make a decision on entry based solely on behaviour and those sorts of issues, but on whether that particular individual child would benefit from a more vocational route.

Baroness Berridge: Could it be part of the inspection process—I know it is not at the moment—to ask whether there is a UTC or studio school within a particular school's environment and whether there is any evidence of promotion of them by the school? Is there anything in principle to stop that being part of the inspection?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: No, there is not.

Matthew Coffey: That is part of the evidence the inspectors would gather in order to judge the school on its approach and success in relation to careers. They would talk to the head

teacher and see evidence of the relationships that the head teacher has with local provision, particularly when they see the published accountability data, which are clearly based on GCSEs, and which is the big incentive for schools of course. I will come back to that in a second. Where they see that dropping, particularly for the free school meal children, inspectors will want to understand what the head teacher is doing to provide alternative routes for those children.

On Lord Farmer's question about careers advice on its own, I would say that poor careers advice manifests itself in a variety of ways. It is unlikely that an individual school would be graded as good for everything but careers advice, because you would see that those children who had been advised to stay on in the sixth form would not stay for the full two years of their A-levels, because at the end of the day they would realise that is not what they want to do, and inspectors would identify that as well.

To provide incentives for these schools to do much more, we have to continue to put pressure on the Government, as we have done through our successive annual reports, about destinations data. If we start to publish destinations for schools, we can ask the "so what?" question: "Where are these young people going, and what impact is it having?"

The Committee paused for two minutes' silence.

Q110 Baroness Sharp of Guildford: We have covered a lot of the careers ground. A couple of years ago you produced a report on careers. Have you seen any evidence of schools improving their performance on careers since then? At the moment we are concentrating entirely on schools rather than colleges, yet quite a lot of these youngsters shift over to colleges at age 16, and the advice they get when they arrive at college about the courses they could take and the careers they want to do is vital. You also inspect colleges. What is your opinion of the advice young people are getting from colleges at that stage?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We have seen some improvement in our inspections and, as I said in answer to a previous question, careers education and progression to sixth form and the quality of sixth form provision is a sub-judgment in our reports in a way that it was not before, and obviously head teachers have taken note of that and are worrying about it a lot more than they were. Many youngsters enter FE, often on very poor advice. Head teachers are very good at saying, "Stay on in our sixth form, or study A-levels and go off to university".

They are not very good at understanding what FE provides. They are not very good at understanding apprenticeships and the best routes for youngsters to go into them. They are not very good at engaging with business. The best heads and best schools are. What we have to do as a nation—never mind Ofsted and our framework—is to make sure that we give greater emphasis to strong vocational education in a way that we have not done for the last half century. We have to make sure that careers education and guidance is good. We have to make sure that those youngsters who do not go down the A-level path and on to university get high-quality provision in a way in which over the last half century often they have not.

Q111 Baroness Howells of St Davids: I have looked at Ofsted reports for a long time and have never seen anybody take on board the ethnicity of teachers in schools. The more I visit schools the more appalled I am, because some teachers are teaching classes where 40 different languages are spoken. What happens there, and is that responsible for some of the defects we find regarding the black community?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I worked in London for over 40 years in very diverse institutions, with large numbers of children for whom English was not their first language, who came from a range of different backgrounds and ethnicities. What I was looking for in the people we appointed was good teachers who could teach in that sort of environment and who had a passion for raising achievement across the school for children from different backgrounds and different abilities. Obviously I wanted the diversity and ethnicity of the staff to reflect the youngsters in the school. Sometimes that was very difficult to achieve, but we did all we could. I always adopted a philosophy of positive discrimination, which meant that if two people of equal merit and equal qualifications applied for a job, and one represented an ethnic group that was underrepresented in the school, I would appoint that person, but they had to be of equal merit. If that was not the case, I would be falling foul of the law, never mind anything else.

Baroness Howells of St Davids: Let me say that positive discrimination was, and still is, against the law. We worked on affirmative action and I am sure that is what you meant you were doing.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Whatever you wish to call it. It was where you had two people of equal merit.

Baroness Howells of St Davids: We do not want the standards to be lowered by anyone. You may have answered my question, but I want to follow that up by asking another. There is a

real difference in people coming from the Caribbean to enter university here because they do not have any special needs, but we find that our young people here need special help outside school. Is that your experience, not as a head teacher but as somebody from Ofsted? Do you look at those sorts of minutiae?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I was the head of a school where 80% of the youngsters came from an Afro-Caribbean background. It was mainly Caribbean youngsters, because it was a Catholic secondary school, and they did extraordinarily well. They did extraordinarily well because they were taught well by good teachers. They not only taught them well in the classroom but taught them outside school. They taught them in the twilight hours and at weekends and promoted literacy, numeracy and basic skills, and prepared them well for their examinations—a philosophy and culture almost universally supported by the parents.

Q112 Earl of Kinnoull: I want to turn to data as a subject and to the middle attainers, the group that we are interested in. How can data be used to improve outcomes for that group? What mechanisms can be put in place to improve data-gathering? Those are general questions, but there are two specific areas we have come across where data-gathering seems to be very poor. The first is for the category “current activity not known” and the second is destinations data from the independent providers.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: The first thing I should say is that the data we have on school performance is infinitely better than it was years ago. I do not know if you have had an opportunity to look at the RAISEonline data, which the school has and which we have before we inspect, which show how the school is doing regarding progress and outcomes and compared to schools with similar intakes. They will also show in great detail how particular groups of children—children from different ability ranges, children with special needs, children from disadvantaged groups—are doing in the school. They will show how the most able youngsters are doing. They will track youngsters’ progress at key stage 2 and so on. The data we have on schools now is very sophisticated and very good. It helps the inspectorate as well as head teachers to identify issues at an early stage and deal with them.

You are quite right that the data only goes so far, and us not particularly good on youngsters who fall out of the system at 16 and beyond. I suppose this is an organisational issue. It becomes the responsibility of the local authority to gather that data when they leave school and go into FE. Some of them do not do it well. They are not inspected against it. As local authorities have declined in importance over the years, this has been one of the key

consequences of that. Often they lack the personnel and the resources to do this properly. It is a major issue when a youngster drops out at 17, and goes off wherever, as to who is chasing that one up. It becomes a legal responsibility for the local authority to do this.

Earl of Kinnoull: I must interrupt because I am sure we are all dying to know. Do you have a proposal for who it should be, if it is not the local authority, or how you ginger that up?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It should be the local authority. We should ask questions of the local authority. We have enough to do at the moment in the inspectorate, but if it became our responsibility to inspect on that issue, then we would do it.

Q113 Lord Holmes of Richmond: On local provision, Ofsted has found geographical variations in strategic planning for post-16 provision. How can strategic planning for post-16 provision be improved? What is the interplay between national policy and local planning?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is a mess, as you probably know. That is the first thing I should say.

Lord Holmes of Richmond: That is the tweet from this session then.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Post-16 is a mess in relation to organisation and provision and to ensuring coherence. There are joint area reviews looking at FE colleges and sixth form colleges—but not school sixth forms—going on at the moment, and we wait to see what those joint area reviews come up with. We come back to this issue of the role of local authorities. It is absolutely essential that there is a co-ordinating body post-16 to ensure that children have the right provision, that it is not duplicated, and that the programmes of study and courses offered across the different institutions have a coherence to them and meet employers' needs.

Matthew Coffey: There is a real opportunity with the area reviews. It is unfortunate that school sixth forms are not part of that process. We are providing all the information to the Government as they conduct these reviews, including information on school sixth forms. Michael is right that it is unco-ordinated.

The LEPs were seen as a big solution. Again, in our 2013 annual report, where we identified this was such a problem we developed a tool for governors of FE institutions—a governor dashboard—and it was a fairly controversial but nevertheless very useful tool. We harvested the information from each of the local enterprise partnerships and identified their top five skill shortage areas within the areas that they covered and reflected it back to the governors of those institutions, alongside the top provision that they were offering. Surprise, surprise, there was often a big mismatch. That enabled governors to challenge much more assertively

those college principals as to the reasons why they continued to deliver training in X when the local economy needed Y. We continue to push really hard at this, but there does need to be some real oversight.

Lord Holmes of Richmond: Can I push you on the point that you have both made a couple of times about the role of local authorities and local authorities being on point in this? To me it feels that they are not necessarily quite the right body. They feel quite remote and not able to go alongside people and get the best results out of this.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: If it is not the local authority, there needs to be a co-ordinating body. Matthew has mentioned the LEPs, but if you talk to principals of FE colleges, head teachers and others, they will not necessarily think that the LEP is the answer. They vary very much in quality, and the word “remote” has been used, which they often are. There needs to be a co-ordinating body that can bring in local employers and local chambers of commerce.

In the apprenticeship report that we issued a few weeks ago, we said exactly that there needs to be a level of co-ordination by an employer-led organisation at a local level to make sure that apprenticeships are of high quality and that post-16 provision in the area is also of high quality. If it is not going to be the LEA, another local organisation has to occupy that space

Matthew Coffey: There is a compelling argument that the local authority should continue to be the responsible body with a duty to do this. There are many facets to the reasons why. Here we are interested in social mobility, but there is a safeguarding element to it as well, and it is the local authority that is responsible for understanding where those children are and if they are being safeguarded appropriately. If they do not exercise their duty to gather that information, we would be in danger of confusing or crowding that particular field by having another body responsible. It would seem to me that the local authorities are there and we just need to find a way to ensure that they do it

Q114 Lord Farmer: What are the features of good-quality work experience as part of post-16 provision? How can independent training providers work more effectively with employers to secure what you consider to be good-quality work experience? Should the provision of work experience be assessed in inspections?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is, and we have inspected post-16 study programmes that have work experience as a key component, along with English, maths and basic skills. We have been very critical of work experience provision post-16 and also in schools. It used to be

mandatory for schools to offer work experience at key stage 4, particularly in year 10. Again, that is something that has not had a focus over the last few years and, in my view, it should have.

Again, it comes back to the issue that we have just focused on as to whether there is that middle-tier organisation, which is business-led and engages with local providers, to ensure that those work experience vacancies exist. The small employer will not have the time to give to this. All schools rely on local employers to offer places. Schools often do not have the time to run around and get those places. It needs a middle-tier organisation that can deal with this and the other issues we have just discussed.

Lord Farmer: In your opinion, what are the features of good work experience?

Matthew Coffey: It has to be well planned, organised and relevant to the programme of study. I think this is where the sector falls down. I absolutely understand that it is not an easy fix. There may be a dearth of opportunities because we are trying to train too many people in areas where the economy does not have that many employers, so there is going to be a mismatch. This is why we need post-16 providers to ask whether the economy really needs this and whether the reason they are not getting employers offering opportunities is because they do not need these skills of the future. For me, there is a simple economic response to the question, and if the need is not there you have work experience for the sake of it. The short answer to your question is that it has to be well planned, appropriate and matched to the needs of the individual.

Baroness Blood: Should the provision of work experience be assessed in inspections?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is part of the process of inspection of personal development in schools, which is a key framework issue for Ofsted, and post-16 as well.

Baroness Berridge: There is one question that I do not think was covered fully. Is it a requirement at the moment to have destinations data for children and young people in the independent sector in the same way as in the state sector? A theme of the evidence is that the system is very complicated for young people who are not going to university and there is no equivalent of UCAS to go to. You also said that it is difficult for teachers to understand employers. Is it your experience that the system of choices and advice is more complicated for young people who are not going down what seems to be the much more straightforward route of going to UCAS and finding out?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: It is. I think that is what is going wrong. You mentioned UCAS, and all youngsters in schools understand what UCAS is. Head teachers talk about it a lot in assemblies and elsewhere. There is a recognised and acknowledged process to enter university.

In the apprenticeship report that we published a few weeks ago, we suggested a similar body for apprenticeships so that a youngster knows exactly how to apply for apprenticeships. You are quite right in saying that is not a focus. It should be, and access to post-16 vocational provision, including apprenticeships, needs to be simpler and clearer. Yes, that is an issue that needs to be addressed. Your first question about independent schools and destinations data I will pass to Matthew.

Matthew Coffey: I do not have the legal framework in front of me, but my understanding is that the local authority has a duty to collect data for anybody up to the age of 18 and has to be able to report on it. However, my understanding is that the local authority does not have the power to enforce that. Therefore, they have greater luck with the larger institutions and struggle with the independent providers to get the data reported to them.

Baroness Berridge: Is it right that the obligation is on the state schools themselves to collect that destinations data? Is there a similar obligation on independent schools to collect destinations data?

Matthew Coffey: That is an emerging issue. The Government realise how important destinations data is, and that will be a key accountability issue in the future. We are all getting our heads around it at the moment, but the Government have made it a priority, and we fully support that.

Q115 Baroness Blood: You spoke about apprenticeships this morning, and as we go round we hear more about people going on apprenticeships. Your report found that quality was “variable and often poor”. Can you say what makes a good-quality apprenticeship?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: I have had the good fortune to go and look at the provision in both Germany and Switzerland, where you see high-quality apprenticeships. What is very striking there is that employers take ownership of them. They make sure that the apprenticeship is of high quality, the teaching is of high quality, the accreditation process is good and will lead to employment. That is what we need here. We need employers to take ownership, to act as gatekeepers for apprenticeships, to make sure they are not the low-quality provision that we

have heavily criticised and which are not really apprenticeships but simply an accreditation of existing work, and low-level work at that.

We have talked a lot this morning about a middle tier co-ordinating body post-16. If it is employer-led, one of its key functions could be to ensure that the apprenticeships that are being offered in that area are of a high quality. It is a big priority for government and policy-makers that there are these co-ordinating bodies post 16 to ensure that there is co-ordination in the different elements of post-16 provision, but also that apprenticeships are well organised and of high quality.

The Chairman: We heard evidence from some young people that they had apprenticeships that involved, variously, six weeks wrapping vegetables, six weeks arranging flowers into bunches for supermarkets, six weeks sweeping a stable floor and six weeks working in a fish and chip shop. We are told that apprenticeships are burgeoning, but would you consider that they were appropriate apprenticeships?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: You and I recognise that the sorts of apprenticeships you have just described are not really apprenticeships.

The Chairman: Absolutely.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: All that is happening is those employers are receiving taxpayers' money to subsidise low wages. We heavily criticise that model. The Government are committed to introducing 3 million apprenticeships over the next five years. That is very laudable, but they have to be of high quality and recognised to be so by the public and employers.

Q116 Baroness Morris of Yardley: Apprenticeships is the one area where I genuinely believe it was better in the old days compared to now. Would it be helpful if you included in the definition of apprenticeships the fact it was nothing other than a level 3 qualification? At the moment it is being used for level 2 qualifications as well.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: There are level 3 and level 4 apprenticeships.

Baroness Morris of Yardley: Yes, I know, but should we stop them using the term "apprenticeships" for level 2? If you are talking about an apprenticeship, that would imply it is level 3, and it would be a traineeship or something else if it was level 2.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: That is an interesting point, and I would not necessarily be against it, but that is a policy issue, and the Government, DBIS and the DfE need to get together and make a decision on that.

Q117 Baroness Stedman-Scott: In all your inspections, and from your experience, what is the good you have seen in the use of the pupil premium and the outcomes it has achieved? Conversely, have you seen some really poor evidence of the use of the pupil premium?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: We have seen good provision, mediocre provision and poor provision. We have produced three or four reports now on how the pupil premium is going, how well the money is being spent and how head teachers are using the money to close the attainment gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils.

If I could sum up what those reports say, schools with high numbers of children from disadvantaged backgrounds in receipt of the pupil premium tend to do quite well, simply because the head teachers and governors of those schools know that because of those high numbers, if they do not do well with those children, with the large amount of money they are receiving, Ofsted will be very critical of overall performance and progress measures.

Where high-achieving schools have a very tiny number of FSM pupils, and the majority are not from disadvantaged backgrounds, again the FSM pupils do quite well there, because in a sense they are pushed along by the others.

However, the great majority of schools have between 10% and 20% of free school meal pupils, and the quality varies enormously. We are very critical of head teachers who do not have an effective strategy whereby the teachers do not know which youngsters they should really be focusing on, they do not run extension classes and enrichment programmes, the governors do not know how well the pupil premium money is being used, and where the data indicates that attainment gaps are not closing.

The overall national figure for secondary schools is pretty poor. The pupil premium has only been in operation for three years, something like that, and the overall data for key stage 4 is as bad now as 10 years ago. There is a 27-point gap between the outcomes for FSM and non-FSM children at GCSE. That has not changed in 10 years. It is moving positively in the primary sector, but primary schools are doing significantly better overall than secondary schools. I could talk at length about that.

It is important to say that head teachers know that we will be critical of the school and their leadership if they have no clear strategy to use the money.

Baroness Stedman-Scott: What is the best use of the premium that you have seen?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Again, I would draw your attention to the report that we have produced on this subject. It is head teachers who make sure that in their school evaluation

document, which we want to see when we inspect a school, they prioritise the pupil premium and have a clear strategy for how this money is going to be spent and the number of children it is going to be spent on. The focus should be on basic literacy and making sure that English and maths programmes do well, and there are plenty of enrichment opportunities for the youngsters in school, but also after school and weekend provision and revision classes in holiday periods, and so on. Tracking those youngsters is very important, and making sure on a week-by-week basis the progress of those children is well monitored by somebody who is senior in the school if it is not the head teacher.

Q118 Baroness Tyler of Enfield: Given the very compelling evidence that this Select Committee has already received, I am sure we will want to make a number of pithy recommendations to the Government. As a wrap-up question, what is your one key suggestion to this Committee for something we could recommend that would really make a difference in this area we have talked about, and improve mobility and outcomes for the group we are so concerned about?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: All of you really know this, because all of you have been to school, and all of you know the schools where you live and in your constituencies, and so on. The thing that makes for a good school is good leadership and good teachers. The two go hand in hand, because good leaders recruit good people, ensure the culture is positive in the school and lead on teaching issues. There are lots of things I could say, but if it is only one it would be a drive to ensure that we do much more to promote good leadership in our schools in the poorest areas—that is a challenge for every Government—and to make sure that we get as many good teachers into those areas as possible.

If you look at the demography, the poorest youngsters often have the poorest schools with the poorest leadership and the poorest teaching, and that has to change.

Baroness Tyler of Enfield: Could I press you on that? You would prioritise that above the sorts of things you were saying about the need for much better co-ordination post-16?

Sir Michael Wilshaw: All of that is very important, but unless we have youngsters who are taught well from the age of four and a half all the way to 16, who then have positive routes into post-16 provision, this will be academic and a waste of time. We need to make sure that includes youngsters, particularly from disadvantaged communities. It was always my passion as a head, teaching in the poorest areas, to try to get good teachers who worked flat out so that those youngsters achieved well.

The Chairman: Have you anything to add?

Matthew Coffey: My one thing would be obviously to support what Michael has just said.

Sir Michael Wilshaw: Thank goodness for that.

Matthew Coffey: In addition, as soon as we get destinations data as part of the accountability framework for schools, we will see behaviours change.

The Chairman: Thank you for this session. We appreciate your time.