



ECNAIS

National Report

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| <i>1. Name of Association</i> | Independent Schools Council UK |
| <i>2. Country</i> | England |
| <i>3. Year</i> | 2005 |
| <i>4. Prepared by</i> | Peter Owen |
| <p><i>5. New national legislation for independent schools:</i></p> <p>Please describe new laws which are in force or are being prepared.</p> | <p>Charities Bill: This continues and the outcome is still uncertain. The consequences of this could be very important. As registered charities, many schools can pay reduced taxes: TVA. Local Building taxes and Company taxes on “profits”. If the government was to remove charitable status from Independent schools, then this would increase the very high fees still further, making Independent education even more financially selective. It would be likely to bring about the closure of a number of schools.</p> <p>An appeal to the European parliament would very possibly be successful as education is a “charitable” function. However, this would take a long time, and schools would close in the meantime.</p> <p>This has put an onus on schools to show that they do offer “public benefit”....one of the criteria for a charitable organisation. The higher the fees, the more difficult this may be to demonstrate. There are many different strategies needing to be applied!</p> <p>There is a new Government White Paper on education. This is suggesting that State Schools will be “free” to become Independent. Indeed, already, the “City Academies” are being regarded by Government as “independent”.</p> <p>This raises the Ecnais question of “what is Independence!” Needless to say, this white paper has caused a storm amongst teachers and amongst the Labour / Socialist factions!</p> <p>New Employment laws may have consequences for Independent Schools. This includes sections on age discrimination, sex discrimination. Equal pay and sex orientation discrimination.</p> <p>The proposals that Males may also have maternity leave</p> |

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| | may also be significant! |
| <p><i>6. National discussions:</i></p> <p>Discussions about the situation of the independent schools.</p> <p>Does the discussions take place in the media, if yes, which questions are raised.</p> | <p>There are almost too many to list!</p> <p>Issues about education are achieving high profile at present. In part because of the government white paper.</p> <p>Issues include:</p> <p>The decline in Language teaching above primary level. The government is promoting primary language teaching, but has removed the need for all to study a language to 16. There is a very serious decline in students studying languages to 18 or at University.</p> <p>The methods of selection to Universities. Independent schools are FAR more successful in gaining University places than the state schools, especially at the better universities. There is a move to get Universities to take more children from more deprived backgrounds....meaning effectively that they discriminate against children from Independent schools....and accept those who did less well at A level.</p> <p>Levels of Literacy and Numeracy: There is much concern that in spite of the Government's drive on educational basics, the UK children continue to fall behind many countries, and show little real improvement since the government drive began.</p> <p>Boys and Girls: The gap between the achievements of Boys and Girls continues to widen, with the Girls out-performing the boys.</p> <p>Exams: More and more children succeed year upon year in their exams. Whilst it is true that education has become more organised, and perhaps, more professional, in many ways, children are not more able than in previous generations. The increased exam success is considered to be largely due to a watering down of the exams and the standards demanded for success. There is a feeling of frustration among the most able that there is nothing in the exams in which they can show their true ability.</p> <p>This has consequences for the most academic who are not being stretched, but also for the less able, who are gaining qualifications for higher education for which they are not intellectually equipped.</p> <p>Within the Independent sector there is a strong move away from National exams towards the International Baccalaureate.</p> |

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| <p>7. <i>Situation of the Association:</i></p> <p>Progress, stagnation, decline. Problems, challenges for the Association.</p> | <p>For the first time in a number of years there has been a very slight decline in numbers in the Independent sector. This amounts to only a 0.6% decrease. However, this does need to be seen with an eye to the Demographic forecast for the coming 5 years. These predict a fall in the child population by 2010 of 4.9%.....For the Independent sector, a fall of 4.9% translates to 24,703 children. Assuming that the sector held the same overall percentage of the school population. With rising costs of Independent education and the possibility of recession nationally or internationally, there are obvious concerns.</p> <p>Office of Fair Trading Investigation: The OFT has been investigating the “price-fixing” by groups of Independent Schools. The Bursars of some of the larger schools met each year in a number of small groups of similar schools to discuss the likely fee increases and to agree to be more or less in line with each other. This has contravened the competition laws and <i>could</i> lead to large fines on the schools involved. The Independent schools acknowledge that they were in the wrong technically, but that the meetings were not for “price fixing.”</p> |
| <p>8. <i>Independent schools in general.</i></p> <p>Growth or decline? The schools’ financial situation?</p> | <p>As above</p> <p>Financially, life is tough and competitive.</p> <p>With NO government money at all, Independent education is expensive, and so, parents must make considerable sacrifices to send their children. There is a limit to the number of parents who can make this financial commitment, or are prepared to do so. This may make boarding more difficult too.</p> |

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| <p><i>9. Special initiatives:</i></p> <p>Has the Association during the past year made any particular initiatives in order to promote the work in the independent schools?</p> | <p>There have been initiatives to encourage good young teachers into Independent Schools from Universities.</p> <p>There have been considerable initiatives to move towards areas of partnership with the Maintained state sector.</p> <p>There have been important moves to make schools make better use of their resources for “public benefit” (see above).</p> <p>This includes making resources and facilities available to the community around the school, helping other maintained schools, and diverting money from scholarships...often awarded to able children whose parents were already paying the school fees...to bursaries to enable able children from less affluent families to attend the schools.</p> |
| <p><i>10. Other relevant information.</i></p> | |