

Manifesto 2017

"The strength of our schools
lies in their excellence
and independence."





We believe independence is our key strength.

We support families from all walks of life.

We work in partnership with state schools to help all pupils thrive.

We are recognised as an international gold standard.

We champion improvements in pupil assessment and teacher training.

What you need to know

There are over **1,300** independent schools represented by the Independent Schools Council (ISC), educating over 500,000 pupils or 5% of the UK total school population (and a much higher proportion of A-level pupils).

Pupil welfare comes first in ISC schools. We provide first-class learning environments in which student wellbeing and safeguarding are top priorities.

ISC schools in Britain contribute **£9.5 billion** to the economy annually.

ISC schools generate **£3.6 billion** in tax revenue for the UK each year.

The annual saving to the UK taxpayer through the educating of children and young people in the independent sector is approximately **£4 billion**.

One in every hundred British jobs is supported by independent schools.

88% of ISC schools have a partnership with a state school.

49% of all independent school A-level entries achieved either an **A*** or an **A** in 2016 – nearly double the national average of 26%.

130,395 top GCSE grades were awarded to independent school pupils in 2016, **34.5%** of all their grades. This is **five times higher** than the national level of 6.5%.

Quantitative research into soft skills, conducted in 2016, has shown that pupils at ISC schools are more likely to have good attainment, wellbeing and behaviour, more resilience, the ability to deal with setbacks and are more open to learning as a result.



Independence is our key strength

The excellence and strength of ISC schools stems in part from our independence from central government and local authorities. It enables each ISC school to follow its own curriculum – offering a wider range of learning opportunities in subjects like science, mathematics, modern languages, classics and music – as well as allowing us to be innovative and experimental, better to meet the needs of our pupils.

The 2015 PISA tests showed that ISC schools are amongst the highest achieving in the world.

Parents have a right to exercise their freedom to choose the best and most appropriate education for their children, based on their individual needs. This includes choosing an independent school and paying the fees necessary to run it. Many of our parents pay less or nothing if their child qualifies for a means-tested bursary.

We propose that:

Our schools are encouraged to operate independently in the knowledge they are an integral part of the national education system.

All political parties recognise the contribution that ISC schools make to the UK economy and society, and do not propose measures which will inhibit our excellence or ability to extend the work we do in partnership with state schools.

We expect that:

ISC schools will remain some of the best in the world, boosting excellence and innovation in education and extending the considerable partnership work we already carry out to the benefit of many other schools and students.

“Whilst the children are benefitting from these experiences, their parents and members of staff are also developing a powerful growth mind-set; that there are more possibilities and more opportunities than before, building confidence and self-belief that in turn will realise aspirations.”

Jessica Mair, Headteacher of John Betts Primary School
which partners with Latymer Upper School in Hammersmith

“As school leaders, we know what works for pupils. And forcing independent schools to run, rather than help, state schools in deprived areas just won't work. Let's not forget, independent schools are supposed to be independent of government.”

Russell Hobby, General Secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers



The independent sector is for families from all walks of life

Independent schools offer high quality education to aspirational parents and financial support to help children from lower income families.

ISC schools are spending **£380 million** each year on means-tested bursaries and scholarships, mostly for children from low income households. Over 40% of those on means-tested bursaries have more than half their fee remitted.

ISC schools are an integral part of the national education system.

We propose that:

Up to 10,000 new school places a year are created in ISC schools for children from lower income families. These will be co-funded by independent schools and the government, which would provide only the allocated state funding per child.

The next government introduces the means by which parents can choose the school in which their state-allocated funding is spent.

We expect:

More pupils including those from lower income families to attend ISC schools, achieve their full potential and thereby benefit from more opportunities and contribute to social mobility.

Partnerships: working together to enhance education for all children

Partnerships between schools in the independent and state sectors are well-established but historically under-reported. They benefit increasing numbers of children from diverse backgrounds. Ten thousand different partnerships now exist between ISC and state schools, despite our average school size of only 400 pupils. However, we still want to do more.

We propose that:

All political parties work with the independent sector in the spirit of true partnership, to acknowledge the scope and value of hugely beneficial initiatives that already exist between ISC and state schools. At present, 88% of ISC schools work in partnership with a state school.

Best practice and current activity is increasingly shared to encourage greater participation.

We expect that:

All ISC schools with the capacity to do so will be encouraged to engage in partnership activity with state schools, including supporting Academies, MATs and new free schools.

New partnerships will respond to local needs and the expertise available from individual schools.

National level schemes, including teacher training in shortage subjects, will be supported by ISC schools.



ISC schools are recognised worldwide

ISC schools provide overseas students with an introduction to British culture, improve the international community's view of the UK and make an important contribution to UK higher education.

Overseas pupils at ISC schools benefit the British economy through an estimated gross value added contribution totalling more than **£800 million**.

International franchise schools run by UK-based ISC schools help to fund bursaries, increasing access to excellent UK schools.

We propose that:

ISC schools be recognised as high quality providers and the regulations around overseas pupils seeking education at an ISC school in the UK be relaxed, particularly when negotiating new arrangements for European students post-Brexit.

Overseas students at UK schools should be taken out of net migration targets.

We expect:

International students to continue to be encouraged to study in the UK, gaining a better understanding of Britain and fostering a lifelong bond to our nation. This promotes ever-stronger cultural and trade links across the world.



Improving pupil assessment and teacher training

ISC schools choose their own exams and devise their own curricula and accountability measures. We are eager to be involved in continuing professional development schemes for teachers as well as with initial teacher training nationally.

We propose that:

There should be no further significant or sudden reforms to public exams until the current changes and new grading system have bedded in.

Improving the quality of paper setting, examiner training and exam marking should remain priorities to ensure complete confidence in the new exams.

Barriers to independent schools in taking a lead in initial teacher training schemes should be removed.

We expect:

A fair and robust assessment system which commands public confidence, ensuring equity and justice for all pupils.

Independent schools to be included in national and local teacher training schemes.

Teachers to be trained in the best school departments with support from and collaboration with the best higher education institutions (HEIs).

A strong focus on subject knowledge and understanding alongside the best pedagogy.

Strong links with HEIs acting as centres of excellence for specific subjects and phases.

An option for independent schools to lead local/national consortia of schools and HEIs with training taking place in both state and independent schools, and for trainees to attract full funding (both loans and bursaries).



Constituent Associations

Girls' Schools Association
Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference
Independent Association of Prep Schools
Independent Schools Association
The Society of Heads
Association of Governing Bodies of Independent Schools
The Independent Schools' Bursars Association

Affiliate Associations

Boarding Schools' Association
Council of British International Schools
Scottish Council of Independent Schools
Welsh Independent Schools Council

Independent Schools Council
First Floor, 27 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9BU
020 7766 7070

www.isc.co.uk



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References: ISC Annual Census 2017, The Impact of Independent Schools on the British Economy 2014

The Independent Schools Council (ISC) protects and promotes the interests of the independent education sector across the UK as directed by our constituent associations. Schools and headteachers in membership of associations which form the ISC ("ISC schools") educate generations of young people who bring benefit to society and the economy. The ISC is not affiliated to any political party.