

All Party Parliamentary Group on Schools, Learning, and Assessment

Minutes of Inaugural Meeting

Tuesday 26 November 2024 – 10:30 to 11:30 – Room B, 1 Parliament Street

Attendees

Peter Swallow MP (Chair), Lord Watson of Invergowrie, Kim Johnson MP, Lord Hampton, Chris Vince MP, Sam Carling MP, Andy McNae MP, Sam Rushworth MP.

Chris Brown (NEU Senior Political Officer), Cara Bishop (NEU Political Officer), Olga Popinska (Office of Peter Swallow MP), Harry Bradley (Office of Marie Goldman MP).

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed attendees and invited them to introduce themselves.

It was noted that the meeting was quorate, and apologies had been received from: Tristan Osbourne MP, Baroness Blower, Baroness Morris of Yardley, Sharon Hodgson MP, Lord Knight of Weymouth, Mark Sowards MP, Ian Byrne MP, Ellie Chowns MP, Baroness O'Neill of Bexley, Jack Abbott MP, Amanda Martin MP, Baroness Garden of Frognal, Lord Aberdare.

The Chair explained that the purpose of the meeting was to re-establish the APPG on Schools, Learning, and Assessment.

2. Overview of previous work of the APPG

Chris Brown explained that the APPG was established in 2022 to promote and support school level education and the quality of learning and assessment for all pupils. During the last parliamentary session, the former Group launched a select committee style inquiry to investigate the case for assessment reform. Following the inquiry the Group published a report: '[Towards a fairer, more useful and fit-for-purpose way to assess children and young people in the 21st century](#)'.

Attendees noted that they would be supportive of producing a similar select committee style report.

Previous meetings explored a full breadth of issues across our school system, including on teacher training. A meeting on teacher workload had been planned but this was cancelled after the dissolution of Parliament.

3. Name and Purpose

The Chair sought agreement from the Group on the proposed name and purpose for the APPG. The following was proposed:

- Name: All-Party Parliamentary Group for Schools, Learning and Assessment
- Purpose: to promote and support school level education and the quality of learning and assessment for all pupils

The proposed name was agreed to, but after discussion, the proposed purpose of the APPG was amended. The agreed purpose is to promote and support school level education, the quality of learning, assessment *and outcomes* for all pupils.

4. Election of Officers and Confirmation of Membership

The following members were elected as officers after all attendees voted in favour:

- Chair: Peter Swallow MP (Labour)
- Co-chair: Tristan Osborne MP (Labour)
- Officer: Baroness O'Neill of Bexley (Conservative)
- Officer: Sam Carling MP (Labour)

The Chair noted that this officer group met the requirements set out in the APPG rules.

As of 26 November 2024, the following MPs and peers have indicated their intention to become members of the APPG, in addition to the four officers mentioned above:

- Amanda Martin MP (Labour)
- Andy MacNae MP (Labour)
- Baroness Blower (Labour)
- Baroness Morris of Yardley (Labour)
- Chris Vince MP (Labour)
- Ellie Chowns MP (Green)
- Ian Byrne MP (Labour)
- Jack Abbott MP (Labour)
- Jodie Gosling MP (Labour)
- Kim Johnson MP (Labour)
- Lord Aberdare (Crossbench)
- Lord Hampton (Crossbench)
- Lord Knight of Weymouth (Labour)
- Lord Storey (Liberal Democrat)
- Lord Watson of Invergowrie (Labour)
- Marie Goldman MP (Liberal Democrat)
- Mark Swards MP (Labour)
- Natalie Fleet MP (Labour)
- Rachael Maskell MP (Labour)
- Rupa Huq MP (Labour)
- Sam Rushworth MP (Labour)
- Sharon Hodgson MP (Labour)

5. Election of Secretariat

The National Education Union (NEU) was elected as the secretariat for the Group after all attendees voted in favour. The NEU is responsible for arranging meetings and formally administering any business. The NEU will work closely with, and has already engaged with, other organisations and APPGs in this area to ensure that the Group is collaborative and effective in its outputs. The NEU has budgeted for the provision of secretariat services for the APPG for the year ahead.

6. Future programme of work

The Chair gave an overview of some possible meeting topics for the year ahead:

Accountability and Report Cards

- This session would look at the Government's proposals to reform Ofsted inspections to a 'report card' system rather than single-word grading.
- Members could consider how report cards could best reflect different aspects of school performance and make recommendations to the government.

Curriculum and Assessment (with a focus on subject choice)

- This session would consider the number of hours that different subjects across the curriculum get studied by pupils and why humanities and arts take-up has declined considerably over the last two decades.
- This would link to the Curriculum and Assessment review and Becky Francis has indicated that she would be happy to attend an APPG meeting on this as a guest speaker (preferably in late February).

Global Teacher Recruitment and Retention

- This session would consider the impact of the UK government and multi-academy trusts increasingly recruiting overseas-trained teachers address the ongoing teacher recruitment and retention crisis.
- Members could develop recommendations for the UK government to better support ethical overseas-trained teacher recruitment practices and equitable pay.

Children's Wellbeing Bill

- The Bill is expected to be published soon. It will have wide ranging implications for the education sector. The APPG may wish to hold a briefing for parliamentarians on the Bill to help inform legislative scrutiny and understanding of the proposals.

Other topics suggested by members who attended the meeting included:

- Workload (Chris Vince MP)
- Meeting with exam boards to discuss curriculum and assessment (Lord Hampton)
- Home school education (Lord Watson)
- Social and emotional learning (Sam Rushworth MP)
- Sports in schools (Andy McNae MP)

It was agreed that the next meeting of the APPG in January would focus on workload and recruitment and retention.

7. AOB

The Chair thanked all for their attendance.

Action points

- The secretariat to formally register the outcome of the inaugural meeting

- The secretariat to update the APPG website <https://www.schoolsappg.org.uk/> and social media accounts (X: @Appg_Schools and Facebook: APPG-for-Schools)
- The secretariat to send members a proposed outline of meeting topics and a proposed meeting schedule

Please note that we will be proposing dates in the following months:

- Meeting 1 – January 2025 (*Parliament is on recess from 19 December to 3 January*)
 - Meeting 2 – late February 2025, Professor Becky Francis has indicated that she would like to attend this meeting (*Parliament is on recess from 13 February to 24 February*)
 - Meeting 3 – May 2025 (*Parliament is on recess 22 May to 2 June*)
 - Meeting 4 – July 2025
 - AGM – Autumn 2025
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