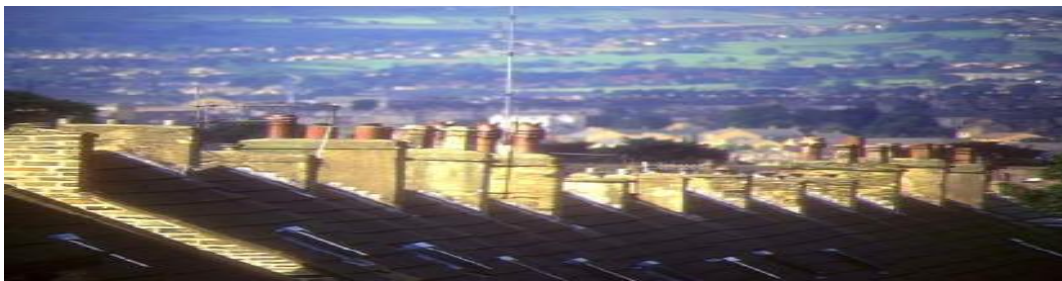


A Green Manifesto for Bradford District



Education



ShIPLEY **Green Party**
April 2010





Education

The issue

Formal education within our schooling system has an important part to play in achieving a learning society. However, successive governments seem determined to turn schools into mere job training centres. League tables measure exam attainment, but ignore more important aspects of education such as improvements in student performance, the instilling of good values and the welfare of the child.

The Green Party believes instead in Lifelong Learning – the idea that people should be provided with the opportunity to learn throughout their lives. Such learning should enhance our quality of life whilst benefiting society as a whole and a variety of educational opportunities should be freely available for all. The Green Party therefore believes that quality education should be adequately funded by central government and opposes the private funding of state schools in any form.

In Bradford

Obviously, local education policies are severely constrained by central government in terms of the funding and content of education. Nonetheless, Bradford's councillors can play a lead role in influencing the delivery of local education. The Green Group therefore opposed the privatisation of Bradford's Education service in 2001 and, since then, we have been a critical voice on issues such as standards, payments to SERCO, new buildings and school transport. Our green councillors have:

- ▶ supported the Special Schools review, but raised many concerns about resourcing of older special schools that are still delivering education to pupils across the district;
- ▶ spoken with parents and staff at the blind and deaf special schools who raised many concerns with us;
- ▶ expressed concerns about the affordability gap in the Pathfinder Scheme intended to pay for the co-located schools;
- ▶ engaged with the schools in our wards, working with staff, with extended schools managers and with pupils and parents to ensure the schools in our areas are popular and successful;
- ▶ lobbied to improve supplementary schools, calling for a vigorous register and inspection system;
- ▶ supported a year on year increase in education spending in the budget process to bring Bradford in line with its statistical neighbours;
- ▶ supported school public transport;
- ▶ supported traffic calming measures around schools in the district such as 20mph zones;
- ▶ supported school buses, walking buses and footpath schemes such as the pressing need for footpath access to Challenge





College (paid for, if necessary, out of the Council's capital budget).

What would a Green Council do?

In addition to continuing the strategies outlined above, a Green Council would:

- ▶ support an approach to education based on values rather than raw achievement scores, encouraging an ethos of cooperation, conflict resolution and respect to reduce the incidence of bullying and violence;
- ▶ promote different learning styles to better meet the needs of individual children;
- ▶ provide additional funding for services such as educational psychologists aimed at early identification and treatment of learning problems;
- ▶ support specialist provision within schools of focused, short-term support for specific learning-related difficulties such as dyslexia;
- ▶ encourage a diverse and inclusive education system that is a true reflection of the local community – pupils with disabilities, learning disorders or challenging behaviour should be integrated into mainstream schools wherever possible, although off-site provision such as Pupil Referral Units will still play a vital role for some;
- ▶ advise parents about home schooling, part-time and flexi-schooling and ensure that schools facilitate this where it is requested by parents;
- ▶ promote sharing of equipment, teachers and specialist expertise between schools to increase access to a wider range of provision such as language and music teaching;
- ▶ encourage school and community-led initiatives such as school-based allotments to expand the use of schools for everyone's mutual benefit;
- ▶ improve support for parent-governors;
- ▶ encourage schools to include pupils in decision-making and let them take responsibility where appropriate;
- ▶ involve young people directly in the planning and delivery of youth services, where appropriate;
- ▶ require that the daily act of worship be non-sectarian in all state schools, in so far as this is legally permissible;
- ▶ explore options for breaking the link between our education and religious institutions;
- ▶ support the provision of more nutritious school meals, prepared on site from locally-sourced and organic produce wherever possible;
- ▶ ensure that all school buildings are environmentally sustainable.

