

PP Presentation: Education and Expectations of Society

1 Issue

Society has high expectations of schools. Society doesn't just expect a good standard of education that prepares young people for their professional lives (qualifications) and for participation in society (socialisation). Schools are also expected to tackle other social problems, for example: providing security, preventing alcohol abuse, making kids 'mediawise', fighting segregation, breakfast club, etc.

2 Request for opinion

How can schools deal with this sensibly and selectively without detracting from the two basic roles of schools: qualifications and socialisation?

3 Method adopted

- Historical study of the development of society's expectations
- Interviews with school governors and school leaders
  - What is their view of this issue in relation to their responsibilities?
  - How do they cope with the pressure from society?
  - Are there limits to their pastoral role?
- Survey of 500 teachers
  - Most common tasks conducted to meet expectations of society?
  - What do they think about the responsibilities?

4 Development of expectations of society over the past 50 years

- Pressure has always been felt because of the social role schools have
- Pressure has risen since the 1990s due to:
  - combination of demographic, economic, social and administrative developments
  - more often family problems emerge at school
  - new relationships in governance: autonomous schools

5 How do schools view this issue in relation to their responsibilities?

- Parents and pupils are increasingly assertive
- Conflicting interests of the various stakeholders
- Ambivalence: high degree of willingness to act versus government desire to delimit responsibilities

6 How do schools cope with the pressure from society?

- School governors and school leaders consider themselves capable of making choices
- They experience inconsistent government policy: on the one hand, there is an assumption of autonomy, but obligations are also imposed, such as tailored education, 'social work experience', etc.

7 Do the schools consider that there are limits to their pastoral role?

- The burden has become heavier, especially in senior secondary vocational education (MBO), due to increased problems among pupils: a lot of pastoral care is needed
- There is tension between the statutory duty (educate to starting qualification standard) and the need for pastoral care
- There is a need for delimitation of duties and responsibilities

8 Teachers: how do they experience tasks conducted to meet society's expectations?

Teachers deal most with:

- Teaching values (83%)
- Dealing with large differences in levels (81%)
- Pastoral care for pupils with learning or behavioural problems, or for highly gifted pupils (80%)
- Ensuring safety (67%)

9 How do teachers view the division of responsibilities?

- Within the school: teachers are responsible
- Within society: parents are responsible

10 Recommendations

- Retain the key roles of schools in all cases
- Three school variants: schools are free to choose
- Schools are better placed to put their choices into practice
- Appreciate and strengthen the role of the school leader as a 'gatekeeper'
- Government should act in an issue-driven way and should activate other trouble-shooters

11 Retain the key roles of schools in all cases

- Qualification and socialisation are the key roles
- Any responsibilities not directly related to these are supplementary

12 Three school variants: schools are free to choose

There is no single preferred school model. Schools can choose from the main types:

- Multifunctional school
- Austere school:
- Network school

13 Schools are better placed to put their choices into practice

Schools can make their choices clear by aligning them with:

- their educational vision
- their unique school environment
- chances and opportunities inside and outside the school

14 Appreciate and strengthen the role of the school leader as a 'gatekeeper'

- School leaders are experts at delimiting the responsibilities of their schools.
- This role should be recognised and appreciated.

15 Government should act in an issue-driven way and should activate other trouble-shooters

- Government should show restraint in assigning responsibilities to schools
- Government should take account of specific target groups and local circumstances
- Government should activate other organisations with a stake in schools