

*Helping Children, Parents and Teachers  
by Moving ...*

# **Way Beyond School**

*A Counter Revolution!*

John Adcock

**The education acts of the 1870s and 80s  
saw children taken from their homes  
to be taught in schools. Given the  
social and economic conditions of the time,  
and the dearth of teaching aids, it was  
the only option and created  
... a social revolution.**

**Today those conditions have changed  
beyond all recognition and  
plausible alternatives could now give  
direct support to every parent and child in  
... a counter revolution!**

**D & R**

2016

**Dedicated** to those teachers working in inauspicious environments who have done much to improve the lives of their pupils.

ISBN: 978-0-9564061-0-X

First published: 2014.  
Reprinted with amendments: 2016

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*Sources:*

The substance of this work is augmented in three earlier books by the author: *Teaching Without Schools – A Novel Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, New Education Press Ltd, 1994, and AMS Educational Ltd, 1995; *Teaching Tomorrow*, Education Now Publications, 2000; and *Vote for Terry Park! The Common Sense Man, Revised Edition*, Deacon & Roberts, 2012.

*Acknowledgments:*

Thanks are due to June Adcock, Peter Curtis, Rebecca Gregory and Jane Randall for editorial work.

*Published by:*

Deacon & Roberts, Publishers,  
The Old School, Village Green NG11 6HH.

*Printed by:*

Adlard Print & Reprographics Ltd.,  
Ruddington, Nottingham.

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## ***A Counter Revolution Supporting every ...***

### **Child, Parent & Teacher**

#### **1870 - 2014**

The elementary education of all children arose mainly from the 19<sup>th</sup> century's need for a literate and numerate workforce. That need called for the rapid and cost-effective instruction of millions of children. Given the dire social conditions of the time and the primitive state of technology, the only option was to legislate for children to be taken from their homes to be placed in buildings called schools to be taught by unknown people called teachers for a fixed number of hours, days and years until they left for the labour market. And some people, such as the Members of Parliament who passed that legislation, referred to this process as "education".

The joyless prototype which emerged was of a substantial building divided into classrooms, each one housing an assistant teacher and forty or more children of a similar age. Each school was controlled by its own head teacher, had halls where children and teachers could assemble daily in order to sing hymns, say prayers and then be suitably addressed. Discipline was harsh. There were toilets, often outside, and securely fenced areas where children could exercise, briefly, at their morning and afternoon "playtimes".

From the age of five children followed an uninspiring curriculum which focussed on 'the three Rs' of reading, writing and arithmetic, with, usually, some study of the Bible. On this they and their teachers were appraised by visiting managers, clergy, governors and inspectors. Such visits were often feared by teachers particularly if funding depended on the assessment, i.e. "payment by results".

By 1900 such daily, law-enforced removal of children from their homes was firmly established, as was the tendency to see "education" in school-centred terms. Children's development was influenced

increasingly by unrelated adults, (not parents), instilling prescribed knowledge, often by rote, for five years or more.

Today it is difficult to imagine that the introduction of compulsory universal schooling was a radical development resisted by many: it was seen as being little short of a social revolution. And in 2016 there is little doubt that an equally radical change, i.e. the removal of children from their schools back to their homes for personal tuition, would be similarly resisted - and not least by those who have strong interests in maintaining our school-based structure.

But a consequence of the daily removal of children from their homes was that parents, if they so chose, need no longer see themselves as wholly responsible for their children's upbringing. That division of responsibility between home and school - between parent and teacher - has had repercussions that are with us today. It may be a state-imposed separation long due for review.

However, while some still regard "education" as a preparation for a child's future employment, and while some Victorian buildings and teaching arrangements remain, it would be wrong to suggest that schools have not, despite their current difficulties, changed greatly for the better. They have.

Many children find much in today's classroom that is interesting and worthwhile and are keen to attend. Many parents are well satisfied with their children's school and are eager to be involved in its absorbing activities. Teachers have a wider and more humane interpretation of their role than was possible in the late 1800s and are able to enjoy a much more propitious relationship with pupils. A school's facilities are now more varied, flexible and numerous. Many children, especially, maybe, the younger ones, *enjoy* school.

Unfortunately, that happy situation does not embrace all children, all parents, all teachers or all schools. It would be dangerous to pretend otherwise and it would be complacent, if nothing else, to hold that today's *system* could never be replaced by something better even if a few politicians claim that little is wrong.

A great deal is wrong. Many schools have problems with boredom, bullying, expulsion, harassment, indiscipline, stress, truancy, uniforms, vandalism - and even arson. Low achievement is often accompanied by the desire to leave school as early as possible. Competent but frustrated teachers seek premature retirement while some less competent ones remain in post. Assistant and head teacher vacancies can be difficult to fill. Teaching unions resort to militant action to defend members' and children's interests. Many parents feel obliged to pay for supplementary tuition, or to move house to be in a "better" school's catchment area, or to opt out of the state system altogether at an even greater cost to themselves.

Politicians pile changes on a structure unable to cope. Paperwork, external examinations, targets and unfair competition do little to lift morale, while league tables based on arbitrary accomplishments do even less. And then, and even after all that, and despite decades of argument promoted by assorted reports compiled, often, by those with very little experience of regular classroom work, controversy continues about who should be taught what, and why, and when, and where, and how, and by whom! With the best will in the world it is difficult to see how all this can be put right solely within the present long-tried and inherently restrictive school-based system.

Since the wartime 1944 Education Act, which made the provision of "appropriate education for all" the praiseworthy aim, billions of pounds may have been wasted and well-intentioned efforts thwarted because that money has been spent - and those efforts exerted - within the narrow confines of the 1870s "school".

**So, for decades, the real stumbling block to progress may have been staring us in the face: *the school itself!* An unbeatable example of not seeing the wood for the trees?**

But in the 21st century, in a totally changed social and economic environment, and with the exciting possibilities brought to us by modern technology, there is a strong case for examining radical alternatives to that school-based system. It is difficult to accept that there is now no better way of preparing children for their adult lives than by congregating them, legally, in groups of thirty, in clusters of classrooms, to follow a common curriculum, for eleven years.

Within a decade the child's world will have changed again and it is likely that, if schools remain at all, they will be increasingly anachronistic. The society which initiated massed schooling, and the one which currently supports it, will have gone. Thus it may be time to replace the “home-to-school-in-order-to-be-taught” process with one better suited to the needs of 21st century children, their families, teachers and society. But, unlike in the 1870s, legislators can make choices from three options:

**Option 1. *Retain the old school system and introduce:***

- even more rigorous testing and more frequent inspection;
- greater use of payment by results;
- compulsory additional sessions for pupils failing to meet targets;
- training of senior school management in meeting new targets;
- promotion and relegation within school league "divisions";
- early retirement or dismissal of teachers unwilling to conform;
- extensive stress counselling for teachers remaining in service;
- protection of teachers against slander and grievous bodily harm;
- further external measures to curb indiscipline at all ages;
- regular police patrols to contain the vandalism of schools;
- legally enforceable 'school compliance' charters for parents;
- even tighter enforcement of attendance laws;
- greater, all-encompassing, accountability of school governors.

## **Option 2. *Dismantle the old system and 'call it a day'*.**

Return responsibility for the education of children to their parents. Then, with ongoing support, more parents might join the increasing number in the UK and the USA who keep their children from school and educate them at home. Taking a lead from those parents, a far-sighted government could offer families exciting, diverse, flexible educational arrangements, give financial and tutorial aid to participating families, and then monitor their progress with the intention of widely extending the most encouraging approaches.

## **Option 3. *Examine alternatives impartially.***

Investigate different approaches with a view to implementing the most promising. Such alternatives would recognise both the changing social, economic and technical environment in which today's children mature and the strength of the influences affecting that maturation, especially, perhaps, materialism. Similarly there would be a realisation that many once-strong influences are much weakened, such as the undermining of the family unit, the diminishing power of the Christian religion, and a growing apathy towards, and loss of trust in, Britain's basic social institutions.

To gain popular support - and subsequent national implementation - any proposed alternative education system would have to meet a set of criteria such as all, or almost all, of the following:

- be emotionally and intellectually rewarding for children;
- offer all children the opportunity to realise their potential;
- be supportive of children and families;
- be aware of those who see a school's principal role as one of daily child-minding;
- cost little more than current expenditure;
- be a viable, readily-understood proposition;
- offer learning opportunities not available in traditional schools;
- appeal, on its own merits, to parents or guardians;
- address problems faced by schoolteachers;

- promote literacy and numeracy, enjoyably, from an early age;
- be readily accessible to all families wishing to participate;
- be of benefit to the wider community;
- lend itself to a sensitive, carefully staged introduction;
- offer tutors a professionally satisfying career;
- attract, from outside, the voluntary input of time and money;
- engender an ongoing trust between child, parent and tutor.

## **Way Beyond School ...**

This is but one proposal for moving beyond a school-based system: there may well be others. This one is presented in 13 sections [*see below*] and advocates the education of children without the use of traditional schools. **It offers a personal approach to each child's upbringing.** Guided by parents and a team of professional personal tutors, children would be educated first within the family unit and then within the family as that family relates to, and has obligations to, its local community.

In the proposal a personal tutor [*see item 3 below*] would replace the schoolteacher, work closely with parents, and have professional responsibility for, initially, a group of twenty children.

**That personal tutor would, for two years, be a child's named carer. With knowledge of each family, as well as full access to, and the ability to co-ordinate the work of, educational, medical, social and voluntary services, the tutor would help parents routinely and in stressful times.**

In their day to day educational work tutors would make use of the ever-extending range of material available, electronically and in print, in order to construct an individual study programme for each pupil in their personal tutor group [*item 4*]. In this way the interest, concern, kindness and love shown already by teachers working in the old school environment could be enhanced to the benefit of all.

Initially the topics chosen for study in the new system would arise mainly from children's personal interests, in whatever fields those interests may lie, and give tutors key points at which to begin studies. The fact that the child already had that interest would spur him or her to take it further and, from that self- motivation, tutors could, by their skills, and at times of their own choosing, link the development of those interests to those regarded as 'basic' subjects.

From this, children might, and largely within the family, experience a longer, more natural and more inquisitive childhood than seems possible today. This gentle social revolution could strengthen the family unit and that unit could strengthen its own role as our prime social institution. From that strengthening everyone could gain.

In this way the nervous energy used by schoolteachers in meeting the administrative and curricula demands of school organisation, governmental legislation, and the control of many pupils gathered in one building for 200 days a year, could be *redirected* to meeting the personal, social and academic needs of the child, the family, and the social group in which the family lives and on which it depends.

Central and Local Government could play a much reduced role. As a result of this, and following the individualisation of the curriculum (as opposed to its standardisation), the state might gain happier, more capable and more responsible citizens - young and old. Those citizens might well have acquired a range of interests far beyond paid work - work which, for many, may be tenuous or totally lacking in stimulus, and that widespread lack of secure and absorbing employment could weaken any nation if it encouraged antagonism to all forms of authority. But, no matter what the length and level of their ultimate employment, that danger might be lessened, or even averted, if children could be introduced to a variety of lifetime interests during the ten years they spend in their tutor panel [*see 5*].

**The initial costs** of this proposal, including multimedia resources [*see 9*], community resource centres [*see 6*], and field centres [*see 7*], and other permanent study facilities, would be met from the sale of most of our schools and their often extensive and valuable sites.

**Ongoing costs** of tutors' and ancillary workers' salaries, accommodation, visits, books, stationery and other equipment, would, initially, be commensurate with that spent in the school-based system, i.e. £6,000 p.a. per pupil in 2010, or £600,000 p.a. for a 100 pupil strong tutor panel. But, in 2006, the Chancellor expressed a wish that expenditure on a state school pupil should equal that spent on one in the private sector, i.e. £8,000 p.a. So, by the time this *Moving Beyond School* proposal is operating, and allowing for inflation, by 2025 the per child cost would be £10,000 p.a. and a tutor panel would be allocated £1m p.a. Panels would receive this from central government, to be supplemented by voluntary parental contributions and self-raised funds.

## **The Proposal: in Thirteen Sections**

### **1. Children**

Children would be of paramount importance. In addition to their parent(s), children would have a known, trusted adult person from within their tutor panel [see 5] who could be turned to for comfort, support, encouragement and sensible, impartial advice at any time during the ten years they are associated with the tutor panel, even allowing for tutor-personnel change. Also, children would know that they were involved in an individual study programme [see 11] whose construction they, their parents and their tutors would have played a vital part. This proposal is inclusive of children who have special needs, and by virtue of the plan's personal, family-based nature, tutors might be able to give even greater love and care to these children than can be offered in traditional schools today.

### **2. Parents and Guardians**

During the four years prior to their child joining a tutor panel parents could visit, as frequently as they chose, tutor panels of their choice. They could get to know well the tutor who cares for the youngest age group and get advice on child care, early learning and the part they

could play in the panel's work. When their child is three they could introduce him or her to the group. That gradual introduction would be important and would be greatly encouraged.

In this 'no-school' scenario, parents would be urged to, and be better able to, take responsibility for their children's education. The ambivalence to which the current school-based system is prone – the parent/teacher divide – could fade. The long term guidance given by sympathetic, trusted tutors is likely to be welcomed by most parents and offer a satisfying career for the tutors themselves.

### **3. Personal Tutor**

A personal tutor's role would differ from that of a schoolteacher. Tutors' training, practice and professional freedom would enable them to appreciate fully many of the problems faced by parents and so determine how each family could be helped. Such a sound, professional, caring relationship between tutor and parent would be as important as that between tutor and child and be of benefit in the upbringing of the child. A personal tutor's importance to the family in detecting early signs of stress, and in co-ordinating available specialist help, would equal that of all other care professionals.

### **4. Personal Tutor Group**

Each tutor would care for 20 children of similar age (a personal group) for two years. Children in the tutor's group might be taught individually, or in small groups of two, three or four, or, occasionally, more. They might be taught in whole groups of twenty for activities such as drama, sport, educational visits or for stays in field centres [see 7]. There might, at times, be a combination of two or more personal groups (making 40 or more children) for events such as films or talks. They might be taught by their personal tutor who would often be working alongside the child's parent(s). Visiting speakers, instructors, sportspeople, or others, might be invited to assist on single or multiple visits, and on a paid or voluntary basis.

The children comprising a tutor's personal group would fall within a two year age range. The five ranges would be: 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10-11 and 12-13, all inclusive. The group would never be larger than 20 and might often be less, ensuring that, over two years, the tutor would gain knowledge of each child and the child's parent(s). Pupil vacancies in personal groups would be listed on the regionalised databases of the International Multi-Media Library [see 9].

**The personal group, and the tutor's duty of care, would be at the very heart of *Way Beyond School*.**

## **5. Tutor Panel**

Each tutor panel would consist of five personal groups, one group for each of the five two-year age ranges [see 4]. The panel of five personal tutor groups, with, altogether, up to 100 pupils, plus the panel chairperson, [see below] would be attached to and have priority use of a community resource centre [see 6]. The tutors would appoint replacement staff and ensure that a balance of skills and interests was retained within the panel. Over the ten years children spend in the panel, the six tutors would come to know the children and their families, and build a lasting, vital trust.

The panel chairperson would be elected by the five panel tutors for a period of two years. For that time he or she would have no personal group but would be responsible for fund allocation and the annual engagement of an accountant, assist other tutors, cover for absences, arrange visits, represent the panel in the community, liaise with outside bodies, help the resource centre warden [see 6], advise International Multi-Media Library (IMML) staff [see 9] and supervise tutor interns [see 13]. The chairperson would have secretarial assistance but be paid no more and have no higher status than the other five tutors and, after two years, would be replaced and assume responsibility for a personal group.

## 6. Community Resource Centres

A large local community resource centre would be opened in each town, district, village or group of villages. The centre(s) would be administered by wardens who would themselves be qualified tutors. Each centre's facilities would be available to some ten tutor panels comprising approximately 1,000 pupils and 60 personal tutors, plus parents and local citizens. The centres would become attractive venues for all, so that when tutors took groups into the centres, children would be studying in the same building as adults and the adult/child educational divide would, for that period, diminish. This could have significant educational and social advantages.

Initially these centres would be created from large, refurbished secondary schools, but eventually they would be purpose-built - with the old schools then being sold and the proceeds reinvested. Centres would open daily throughout the year. Between agreed hours *personal tutor groups would have first use of all resource centre educational facilities*, while, at other times all would be available to local residents. Such centre facilities might include:

- libraries, laboratories, cyberspace;
- music rooms, theatre workshops, stages, dressing rooms, studios;
- halls, seminar rooms, reading rooms, studies, tutor rooms;
- shop for books, audio and video equipment, DVDs and stationery;
- restaurants, cafes, bars, lounges;
- sports facilities, pool, gymnasium, fields, grounds;
- accommodation for warden, deputy warden and staff;
- local health centre, dental centre, social services centre.

A centre would have **a resident warden and deputy**, and ancillary staff, who would care for the centre's resources including tutor group transport, but excluding medical and dental areas. Wardens would be elected by the 60 tutors connected to the centre. The wardens' and ancillary staff's only additional fees would be in kind, i.e. accommodation and meals, in return for which they would cover the centre for 18 hours a day throughout the year. Wardens

would hold office for four years (two as deputy and two as warden) and would then resume personal tutor group duties within a panel.

## **7. Field Centres**

One-day and longer educational visits for tutor groups could be possible when suitably-situated schools from the old system are retained and refurbished for use as hostels in both urban and rural areas. They would offer basic residential accommodation, study and visual aids rooms, and a library of local materials. They might house camping, trekking and similar equipment all of which might be available for groups and accompanying parents. A qualified warden-tutor, someone having local knowledge, would live at each centre, and each centre would be open throughout the year. Older pupils could arrange their own visits to several centres annually. When not needed by tutor groups, rooms would be available, on a cost-only, self-catering basis, to parents, guardians and children.

## **8. Other Venues**

Other study venues would be agreed by parents and tutors. Tutors would arrange availability as and when needed. Examples would be:

- pupils', friends' and tutors' homes;
- libraries, museums, art galleries, theatres;
- resource centres, sports, youth and leisure centres;
- churches, chapels, temples, cathedrals, abbeys;
- zoological, botanical and other gardens and parks;
- town, village, community, church and other communal halls;
- field centres and youth and other hostels;
- sites of historical, geographical, architectural or similar interest;
- transport, craft, farm and industrial heritage centres;
- hostels, hotels, caravan sites and holiday parks out of season;
- universities and colleges in and out of term time.

## **9. International Multi-Media Library**

The International Multi-Media Library (IMML) would, initially, consist of a collection of materials available from redundant schools, public libraries, the internet, radio, TV, recordings and commercial outlets, and be housed in a temporary centre – a large former school. Later there would be a purpose-built IMML holding, or able to access, worldwide, materials covering an unlimited range of interests suitable for all age and ability levels. The ready availability of this material would enable personal tutors to compile, with parents' and children's growing input and agreement, individual study programmes. Material could be transmitted, on request, to any venue at times appropriate to pupils' study schedules as determined by the tutor. Later, the IMML could, with tutors', parents' and children's input, produce bespoke teaching materials. The increasingly significant IMML would be governed by an elected council of tutors, technicians, parents and older pupils.

## **10. Open and Hidden Curriculum**

The 'prescribed' i.e. the open curriculum, especially the achieving of the level of literacy necessary for daily life, would be important in all studies. But much of personal and social value would be derived from reading for pleasure and from both practical and theoretical work in music, drama and art. The teaching of listening skills would be ongoing. Each child's development would be enhanced by reading and discussing, at all ages and levels, books of varied genre and authorship emanating from different cultures including the biographies and autobiographies of those who have undertaken valued work in, and contributed greatly to, the wellbeing of society.

Numeracy would be given due attention as would local and national history, geography and the work of eminent scientists. Skilful selection from the IMML and other sources would broaden studies and enable tutors to vary approaches and widen children's interests. All that is learned incidentally, i.e. outside any 'set' or 'national'

curriculum, is the hidden curriculum, and it would be as important as the open one while its effects would be at least as long-lasting. This would be appreciated by sensitive tutors as, in their daily work, they raised children's self-confidence by assuring them they are:

- important in their own right;
- loved, protected and consulted;
- not being pressurised into premature competition with others;
- learning that study can be enjoyable and be of value in itself;
- being taught that other people are important and need due care;
- being taught that living happily in a social group requires effort;
- being helped to develop interests and skills that could long abide.

## **11. Individual Study Programmes**

With tutors free of the routine preparatory work and often stressful working conditions in today's traditional schools, they could familiarise themselves with the mass of material available from the IMML and elsewhere. This ongoing familiarisation would be a requirement of tutors in training and in their years of practice.

**Tutors would need to know of, or trace, and then evaluate, material readily available to themselves, their pupils and their pupils' parents, just as other professionals need to keep abreast of relevant developments in their own fields.**

Tutors could select freely from the IMML – and from books and materials elsewhere – in order to construct individual study programmes for their pupils. With information obtained from parents, and from knowledge obtained from other panel tutors, they could formulate short and long-term study programmes for each child. A prime objective would be to ensure that children found learning stimulating so that later they could - and would want to - study by themselves, for their own enlightenment and enjoyment, and in their own time, for the rest of their lives.

## **12. Work and Leisure**

Changing work patterns will likely mean that relatively few of today's young people will experience a lifetime of unbroken employment, or of continuous employment with one employer, or a career in one occupation. Therefore it will be desirable for tutors to:

- ensure young people and their parents know and allow for this;
- suggest that flexibility and variety in employment could open up previously unthought of, and once unavailable, opportunities;
- introduce children to varied leisure pursuits and encourage them to concentrate on those likely to offer long-term interest.

## **13. Professionalism and Tutors' Training**

Tutors' work would be *at least* as important as that of all other care professionals, so their professional education and training would be just as long and as demanding. Young people hoping for a career in tutoring would be told of these demands before going to university and would be advised to include in their studies, where possible, a selection from: literature, the psychology and sociology of the family, aspects of childcare, and the philosophy underlying 21<sup>st</sup> century non-school-based, personalised, education.

A rigorous selection of graduate applicants would be made by a committee of panel chairpersons. All chosen applicants would undertake a year's university work reading theoretical aspects of tutoring from the viewpoints of children and parents, and would then undertake a year's supervised experience in a tutor panel during which they would prepare a thesis on an aspect of a tutor's work for their university supervisor. If this proved satisfactory, the student would join a tutor panel for two years' paid probationary practice under the supervision of the panel chairperson and, thereafter, enjoy a thirty year career as a qualified personal tutor.

Tutors' professional status would be secured by the:

- desire to help children at all stages of their development;
- requirement to prescribe and supervise the individual study programme of each child in a personal group after discussion with the child and his or her family and, at times, with other tutors;
- acceptance of responsibility for that programme, the subsequent decisions made, and the results achieved;
- absence of supervisors, of whatever ilk, overseeing their work;
- absence of outside interference: e.g. inspection and assessment;
- need for ensuring client satisfaction: i.e. children *and* parents;
- national recognition of their hard-won expertise;
- selection for, and length and intensity of, professional training;
- a salary wholly commensurate with the social value of their work.

## **14. Education Post-Thirteen**

This proposal, *Way Beyond School*, would involve children aged from 4 to 13 inclusive and does not extend the personal tutor system beyond the onset of adolescence stage. That is not to say that such an extension would be undesirable or that it could not be done. Indeed, with many young adults it could be argued that, in a different format, a personal tutorial system is quite as necessary then as it is with the younger age range. But, as it is likely that opposition to *Way Beyond School* would be strong, the proposal for the 14 to 18 age range [below] is deliberately modest and limited to what might be acceptable in the current educational climate.

Once children reach the age of thirteen they would prepare to leave their tutor panel and proceed to further education (FE). FE would cover three age ranges: (1) 14 to 16; (2) 16 to 18; and (3) post-18. Gradually, and then only in part, teaching in FE would become more formal and begin to accord with the knowledge and skills likely to be required in later employment. In stages (1) and (2) any relevance to

employment would be made clear. At the same time those students who so wished could retain contact with, or assist in the work of, their old tutor panel. The three stages could be when:

1. Students attend junior college and study a variety of subjects. At 16 they might be externally examined in English and Maths and be given internal assessment in other, chosen, study areas.
2. Students transfer to a senior college for work at, or nearing, 2016 'A' level standards, with academic or practical or work-related aspects, or two or three of these.
3. University, college or apprenticeship studies begin.

## **Benefits**

**Children** are likely to be the principal beneficiaries by (i) enhanced personal relationships; (ii) the security offered by belonging to a small, long-term and largely home-based personal tutorial group; (iii) the care and attention given by a skilled, well-known tutor working and co-operating with parents; (iv) the appropriateness of a bespoke study programme which could be adjusted to correspond to the child's physical, mental and emotional development.

**Parents** could receive, directly or indirectly, dependable help as needed. Formal and informal contact with a skilled, experienced tutor might be a boon to parents who had little preparation for parenthood. They, like their children, might find the confidence given by a trusted, sympathetic, knowledgeable and reliable person, priceless.

**Teachers**, initially, might gain most through the satisfaction of deciding on and arranging their own work, the times and places of work, and being able to utilise that freedom in meeting clients' needs. They would then be fully-fledged professionals. They could practise, wholly free of a school's hierarchical structure, its traditional curriculum, its restrictions, its frustrations and its stress. The energy thus saved could be redirected to their tutorial work.

**The Nation** could, in time, gain a more interested and contented population. Social ills affecting the individual, family or community, could be addressed, early, at the manageable level of child, parent and tutor. Employers could gain adaptable, innovative employees. Fears of unemployment might be assuaged if people see that there are worthwhile activities other than a lifetime's paid work.

**There would be gains for everyone by:**

- ending set school hours, weeks and medieval terms;
- ending "the school run" and its rush-hour dangers;
- abandoning school buses and similar school transport;
- ending the inflated costs of holidays taken at "peak" times;
- savings made from the salaries of very highly paid, non-teaching professional staff both inside and outside schools;
- savings made by the reduction of ancillary school staff;
- savings from the insurance of, and maintenance of, schools;
- making retained grounds available for free, daily, public use;
- retaining younger children in their own villages or localities.

## **Reassurances**

Proposals for change could cause concern. When such proposals mean moving from a familiar, 140-year-old system to an untried alternative calling for family participation, concerns could escalate. For generations children have been taught outside their home, in schools, by teachers. That system, deeply embedded in our culture, would require patience to uproot. Advocates of change would need to offer reassurance, *not* revolution! Some likely concerns could be:

1. *Parents who might resent what they saw as tutor-interference.* It must be made clear: (i) their participation in this tutorial-based proposal would be voluntary: many schools would be retained during the long period of changeover; (ii) tutorial work would be done with parental cognisance; (iii) parents would participate as fully as they chose; (iv) tutors would be aides, not interlopers.

*2. Parents who fear that tutors would replace them in their child's affection, or form too close an intimacy between tutor and child.*

They would be assured that each tutor would be replaced every two years, and that tutors would be made aware of these fears during professional training. Tutors would be carefully screened and would comply with an exacting code of professional conduct. Further, tutors would be working alongside parents as partners, as well as with each child. While miscreants exist in any profession and need to be detected and struck-off, they must not be allowed, as a tiny minority, to determine professional policy in any field of work.

*3. That some parents, who felt they could not cope with the demands of the new system, would resent it, or oppose it, or both.*

The introduction of the new system would be a gradual process just as the school-based system itself took decades to evolve in the late 1800s. It could be stressed that some parents now happily home-educating were once worried about the implications of what they were doing and their ability to do it, but then found that things worked out well. Those families would provide invaluable examples.

*4. That some children, largely because of their social, intellectual or material background, or all three, would gain little from what would be seen, initially, as a home-based, middle-class education.*

Again, reassurance must be given that (i) there would be no overnight change and no pressure on parents to participate; (ii) there would be many years of closely-observed trials involving volunteer families; (iii) the initial scheme would be adjusted as necessary and as experience was gained; (iv) if successful, i.e. those families involved wish to be involved further in the proposal and others wish to join them, more changes would be made as required.

*5. That teachers would tolerate no more changes, arguing there have been far too many already.*

For those who felt there have been too many changes in schools, it would be stressed that “in schools” is highly significant. The changes have been *in schools* with few radical changes in the school *system* itself. That 1870s system and its basics remain, with no impartial attempts made to try, and to assess, radical alternatives.

*6. Parents who now rely on schools for childcare or childminding.*  
A society serious about childhood education should be able to make family life possible without both parents needing to go out to work, and could offer adequate allowances to all "stay-at-home" parents, whether they are the child's mother or father.

*7. Parents who fear their homes will be unsuitable for study.*  
They would be assured that other suitable accommodation would be available [see 8] and that tutors would assess each situation sensitively and arrange for alternatives to be provided.

*8. Senior teachers and others who fear they might lose out.*  
They are likely to be those in elevated positions who enjoy influence and salaries above the teacher average even though they themselves might do less or little teaching. This systematic withdrawal from the classroom of talented and experienced practitioners is a serious weakness in career advancement within the teaching profession. In this proposal, where it was shown that senior teachers', advisors', inspectors' or administrators' duties were inessential, they would be compensated, on a one-off basis, and then gain satisfaction by using their experience within their own personal tutor group and panel.

*9. Business owners whose trade is largely with schools.*  
There would still be some opportunities in the new system, but a child's education would not be compromised to meet trading needs.

*10. Employers who fear inadequacy in basic subjects or skills.*  
Employers complain of this already, but in the new personal tuition system, standards would be likely to rise. Employment-related studies could begin, gradually, in the 14-16 and 16-18 stages [see 14]. Employers could gain greatly if, at age 13 or 14, young people enjoy their learning and want, in their lives, to embrace much more.

*11. Politicians who fear education is falling out of their control.*  
Politicians would retain some legislative and fund raising duties, but pupils, parents and tutors would decide on all the working principles and practices on both a short term and a long term basis.

## **The Basic Idea**

**Way Beyond School** is only one idea and is offered here to: (i) encourage discussion about alternatives to our school-based system; (ii) question the widely-held belief that a child's education *must* involve schools; (iii) suggest that a pilot scheme be initiated to test plausibility.

In an ideal world a pilot scheme would run for ten years, following just one personal group through its tutor panel. But, without that ideal world, it is likely that a two year pilot would have to suffice, calling for:

**40 or 50 voluntarily participating families** residing in one locality from which approximately 100 children could be drawn.

**100 children**, aged four to thirteen, who would be willing to leave their traditional schools for two years in order to 'try something new'.

**Eight seconded teachers** ready to practise, after due training, as professional personal tutors. Five would each have one tutor group of twenty children, one would work as the panel chairperson, and the other two would manage the temporary resource and field centres.

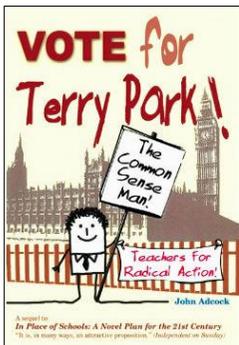
**Funds** for salaries, equipment, materials, transport and utilities: after the pilot's set-up costs, these funds would equal the cost of providing for 100 children's attendance at a state school for two years.

**Two disused schools** for use as resource and field centres.

In this pilot, with children, parents and tutors working in less than ideal conditions, it would be good to gain the help of MPs, teachers' unions, university education departments, journalists and others.

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*Please see overleaf for details of the satirical novel 'Vote for Terry Park! The Common Sense Man' and two other books which, in many ways, complement this booklet. Terry shows what could befall those who try to change British society!*



## ***Vote for Terry Park!***

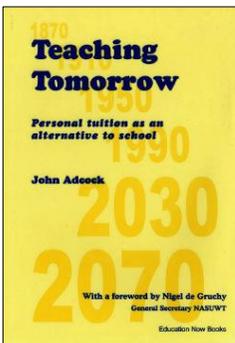
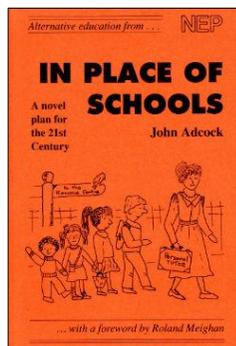
**John Adcock**

This is the chicken or egg conundrum. Which should the 40-year-old disillusioned schoolteacher, Terry Park, try to reform first: the whole of British society or its antiquated education system? With his new girlfriend, Susan Mansfield – a radical, strong-willed university lecturer – he tries to do both by forming his own political party and standing for Parliament. But Terry soon has more problems on his plate than he'd bargained for!

## ***In Place of Schools***

**John Adcock**

This short novel is a telling skit on today's schooling and foresees a time when the 150-year-old Victorian system finally collapses. A panicking Prime Minister calls for a most select committee to contrive solutions – and rapidly. But only one member has the slightest idea of what to do and he bullies the conscripted, cantankerous and ill-informed committee into doing his bidding.



## ***Teaching Tomorrow***

**John Adcock**

This book offers a viable and attractive alternative to school-based teaching. It suggests that gradually, as the 21<sup>st</sup> century progresses, traditional schools be replaced by a child-centred, home-based, tutor-guided and multimedia-supported approach that is capable of providing a tailor-made programme of study for each child from birth to early teens.

Books available in paperback and on Amazon Kindle from:

**[www.inplaceofschools.co.uk](http://www.inplaceofschools.co.uk)**

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**D & R**

Revised 2016.