



10th May 2002

PRESS RELEASE

New CER working paper

Learning from Europe: Lessons in education

By Nick Clegg MEP and Dr Richard Grayson

Learning from Europe is a significant contribution to the debate on how our public services can be improved, drawing on lessons from other European countries. The pamphlet is based on original research undertaken on visits to Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, as well as an examination of education systems in France, Germany and Spain. The authors recommend a radical shake-up of the English education system.

The paper concludes that England has the most socially divided and centralised secondary education system of all the countries examined.

The authors recommend radical decentralisation of funding (local income tax) and a per capita allocation of resources to individual pupils, similar to the Dutch system, to overcome social exclusion.

Other key recommendations include a lighter-touch school inspection system and a reflection on Danish-style state funding for fee-paying schools. Nick Clegg and Richard Grayson also discuss the role of faith schools and EU education policy.

In contrast to England, the Danish, Swedish and Dutch systems enjoy greater local autonomy and accountability, higher per capita expenditure on pupils, less central government interference, narrower differences between the educational performance of socio-economic groups, and a more sophisticated system of vocational education.

Notes for editors:

1. Nick Clegg MEP has represented the East Midlands in the European Parliament since 1999 as a Liberal Democrat. Previously, he worked as a journalist, EU development aid official, and a senior policy adviser to Leon Brittan, Vice President of the European Commission. He can be reached on +44 (0)7775 876978.

2. Dr Richard Grayson has been Director of Policy of the Liberal Democrats since 1999 and was the principal author of the party's 2001 general election manifesto.