

**“The Curriculum for today’s fifteen to eighteen year olds is inappropriate for the present day young person.” Discuss.**

The curriculum in today’s schools has survived relatively unchanged for many years. It was created in a completely different world, one where computers were not used and jobs for the uneducated were easy to find. The world has changed significantly since then, but should the education system?

The job market is a competitive one, and an extra qualification can make all the difference. One qualification that is needed for nearly every position is that of Information and Communication Technology, in other words, computers. Computers are used for many purposes in nearly every company, for example, spreadsheets in finance, databases in stock keeping and desktop publishing in advertising. The skill needed to control the software and hardware is highly desirable, but the current curriculum in high schools does not reflect this. ICT was only introduced into the curriculum several years ago, and has been taught as a minor subject, comparable to the likes of Art and Music. Throughout high school, each school only has to complete one hour of ICT per week, although it can be taken optionally as a GCSE subject, or as a GNVQ. A large number do not opt for the latter options, which leaves them with a qualification equal to half a single GCSE. I do not believe that the curriculum’s compulsory ICT lessons are sufficient now that more and more jobs are becoming increasingly dependent on computers. I personally think that ICT provision should be increased to three hours a week, making it on level with the main academic subjects of English, Maths and Science. This will enable pupils to study a wider range of software, and complete more theory work, which is an aspect currently neglected. These extra skills will be beneficial in the workplace. I am aware that to cope with the extra number of ICT lessons, more computers would be needed, and spaces to put them, but even with this extra expenditure, the benefits of having a full ICT qualification would be well worth it.

There are quite a few things that are needed in later life that are not taught in school. These include money management, communication skills, stress management and form writing. If these skills were taught in schools, it would make later life a little easier to cope with. Many people struggle to look after their money, especially if they stay in

education at university. People also struggle to understand the workings of finance, so an education in money management would be beneficial to all pupils.

Quite a few pupils in schools lack the confidence to speak to people they do not know, or fail to get their point across clearly during a conversation. A course in communication would help people to speak more confidently, and to express them more clearly. It could also contain advice on how to deal with a job interview effectively.

It is often mentioned in the media that our lives have become more stressful, and that we need to learn how to manage it. During exams, further education and our working lives, stress inevitably builds up, and if lessons were taken in high school on how to relieve that stress, people would not suffer from stress-related illness in later life, which can only be a good thing.

Another skill that could be taught in schools is how to fill in forms. During adulthood, there are many, many forms that need to be filled in, such as application forms, benefit forms and census forms. Many people find this task daunting and confusing; they can fill the wrong boxes in, or write the incorrect information. Lessons in this skill would be beneficial and helpful to the pupils in the future.

GCSE's are compulsory. Each Year 11 pupil has to take them by law, even if they haven't got a chance of passing any. In my opinion, those pupils in lower groups could drop their GCSE courses and study for other qualifications. This would not solely be the student's decision; parents and teachers would need to be consulted and involve in the decision well. They would not be able to however, drop the academic subjects completely. English, Maths, Science and ICT would still need to be taken, although not at GCSE level and with no exam or qualification. By dropping many subjects, they would be able to take a vocational I course and get a vocational qualification at the end of it, like an NVQ. This would give them the skills to easily find a job, as they would already be trained for it, whilst if they had stayed on their GCSE course, they would have probably ended up with no qualifications, and would be stuck in a poorly paid job, if they got one at all.

The curriculum that young people are taught today is flawed and is inappropriate for many young people. I feel that ICT should be made a subject comparable with the likes of Maths and English, essential skills needed for later life, like stress management and money management should be taught to pupils and the less-able pupils should be allowed to drop out of GCSEs and pursue a vocational qualification. These changes to the current curriculum would bring it up to date and make it more relevant for the youngsters of today.