

Thursday, 5th June 2008

## Children 'reduced to status of targets'

A battery of Government initiatives has reduced children to the status of "targets and outputs" in a school system ruled by political "whim", say researchers.

Centralised control over primary education has increased significantly in the past 15 years as Ministers introduced new targets, more testing and league tables of schools based on results.

Research conducted as part of the biggest inquiry into primary education in England for 40 years warned that the focus on results and initiatives had created an "impersonal" system.

The study was conducted by Liz Jones, Andy Pickard and Ian Stronach at Manchester Metropolitan University as part of the Cambridge-based Primary Review.

Their report said many older teachers felt they had lost the freedom to run their own lessons in the face of government "micro-management of their work".

The study said: "The system appears to have been damaged over the last 15 years or so by excessive policy intervention, and by frequent successions of initiatives, task forces and projects of various kinds."

Conflicting ambitions rather than long-term development is regrettable, it says.

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