

Frustration over Primary Review

20 Oct 2009

I attended last night's debate on the Cambridge Primary Review's final report at the RSA in London. It is a sign of the grass-roots interest in the Review that the auditorium was packed, leaving standing-room only.

Opening the event, Professor Robin Alexander - who edited the report - vented his (in my view very understandable) frustration that the media coverage had 'fixated' on a single issue, namely the raising of the school starting age to 6.

As he said, this was particularly annoying as many of the media reports got it wrong, suggesting the report was recommending a delay in the age at which children start school, when in fact it was only saying that the Early Years Foundation Stage should be extended to 6.

He also showed his frustration - but not surprise - that the report had been almost instantly dismissed by the government.

Professor Alexander insisted that, despite what the government says, the curriculum issue in primary schools is not 'sorted'.

However, he argued that irrespective of the short-term political response, the report was about long-term change. 'Above all the report seeks to start a new way of thinking and talking about primary education, avoiding myth-making and polarising...a way that embraces new ideas and gives readers a break from that phrase "The government has dismissed the findings of..."'

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