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Primary pupils 'let down by Labour'

By Graeme Pato, Education Editor

12:01AM GMT 29 Feb 2008

The quality of education in primary schools has worsened under Labour despite increases in funding, says the biggest inquiry of its kind for 40 years.

Reports published today say many pupils spend too long preparing for "batteries of tests" in English and maths at the expense of a broader education. The reports say educational standards may actually have fallen as a result.

In one study, it is claimed that Government control of state schools has risen over the past 20 years but "especially after 1997". It also concluded that Britain spends less on education than most western nations - despite funds soaring under Labour.

The report, by Dominic Wyse, from Cambridge University, and Elaine McCreery and Harry Torrance at Manchester Metropolitan University, said coaching for tests has "restricted curriculum coverage" and as "test scores have risen, educational standards... may actually have declined".

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A spokesman for the Department for Children, Schools and Families said: "The Government does not accept that our children are over-tested."



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