

# Gravy Art Workshops

## The delights of home education, not if they had their way...

The Daily Telegraph's article, [The Idle Parent: home education](#), on the benefits of children being educated at home has raised some pertinent questions regarding how effective state, independent and private schools are at ensuring our children are suitably educated to produce socially and emotionally intelligent members of society.

There are a growing number of parents dissatisfied with the state schools, and perhaps in no position to send their children to private school, have decided the better option is to home-educate. Believing that not one size fits all, parents are therefore seeking alternative ways in which to provide the education they believe their children deserve.

The article highlighted much of the sentiment of that parents have suspected for a long time. That despite the vast amounts of money pumped into state education, children's literacy and numeracy have not improved; discipline in schools is an uphill struggle to achieve and quite simply in the end failing all children. Parents are beginning to vote with their feet.

The growing disquiet regarding our education system has parents feeling there are few real choices, despite the fact that by law parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children receive an education. In an interview with [Education Otherwise](#), Ms Zenna Atkins, Chair of Ofsted, echoed much of the sentiment of why parents are opting out of state education. When parents raise concerns regarding their children's education they feel their voice may be heard, but not listened to. Often feeling intimidated by teachers - who treat them as people who have no insight into children's needs, or that parents have a fundamental lack of awareness regarding the aptitude of their children - end up feeling that in order to be heard an adversarial stance must be taken.

In this day and age where there is so much talk about diversity and ensuring greater choice in healthcare, education and greater empowerment of communities it is surprising that if - for what ever reason - parents decide to home-educate their children they will need to have their curriculum approved - fair enough - by the local education department. No issue with that. However, then parents would be subject to an assessment by a social worker. One question - Why?

On the one hand parents are legally responsible for the education of their children, whether public or private. However when they decide to exercise this right they will find themselves subject to an assessment and if unsatisfactory, the parents' decision can be over ruled and the children forced back into school.

However that isn't even the real terrifying part. Even if your Educational Department approves your curriculum, this can be vetoed by the social services department and force you to place your child back into school. They will be able to have an 'interview' with your child without you being present; not even the police can do this. This is what is so disturbing and paradoxical. Are social services also educators?

Whilst I'm sure most social service departments' paramount concerns are children's protection, to levy that they have to 'investigate' because (in some cases, so the argument goes) the withdrawal of children maybe to cover up instances of abuse, forced marriages and the like, aren't people supposedly innocent until proven guilty?...

Although this may be the case in a number of circumstances, and yes we all must do more to bring these to light, but what studies have been conducted to ascertain the real number of instances of such cases where children have been taken out of school in an attempt to cover up abuses, or forced marriages?

And yet we all know of recent headline cases such as Baby P, Victoria Clumbié, and of social workers placing a known paedophile with a foster family with young children, who then went on to molest of the the children. However the social workers did not inform the parents of this little detail, wanting to preserve the paedophile's human rights. Uhhmmn...

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This creeping insidious march of eroding the rights of individuals is very disturbing, particularly when the reasons given seem to be a catch all: child protection. If you protest you are viewed with suspicion and the implication that you have something to hide. If you say nothing your responsibility for your child's educational welfare can be overridden.

We have a menacing onus that you are guilty and must prove your innocence otherwise your decision to home educate your children will be met with suspicion and your children's best interests will be decided by faceless individuals who have set up what amounts to Kangaroo courts to decide your fate and that of your child.

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