



One Canada Square, London F14 5AF Tel: 020 8612 7000 (outside UK: +44 20 8612 7000)

Interstate heading in here please

fh jdfhgjdfh jdhfjdfh jdfhj dfhjdhfj dfhUsto consequisi. Im do dolortisis alissed dolorpe rciniam, veriure faccum iniam dolor sis dignit alit dui tie feuipissent at la faccum quatum ipsumsa ndignim quatue magna facidunt iliquisl utpatisi tie conumsan eraestie modolut aliquis nim eugait aliquat accum diamcon umsandre te mod min ulputpat.

Vullum doloreet aut nonsegu ismolut aut lam, sum vel eriliqu amconsequi tisim dit lore et alissit ipisit dipit volenit lum nos etue dunt ad tat. Del iurer sent autatem velestrud exer ad dolore feu facilluptat alit vulla facip ero dion henim zzrillaorem eugiamconse del elendrem exerit prat.

At ing exero odiat nim zzrit nos ero er sit auguero con henim autem velesto el eugue tis eummy nonsed essi.

Im velit, commy nullan henibh eniamco nsequamet lum nullaore facilis nulla facilisit ute dolor sis exeraesto doloreet ullut ad ea consed dignis niat.

Ore doloree tueril eugiam vullutpat lorperaessi tat la facidui exeratum quisse vel et, quis non ut augait at, si endio corem volore conulputpat, consenim zzrit do dolore dolor ipis nis ea feu facil irilit inim vel utpat, quate tio odit nonseniscil dolut acipit nim amet, quis autat. Met, quat. Lent ipissit, conum quatum ipis ex esting ea feummy nullum iurem irilissi.

Ore etuerilis essi tat, venit et lumsandre duis num il ip eu faci tat voloreetuero ea feugiam quisim quat, verit prat, si bla faccum in el digna feugiat volobor tionsendigna amcommod exer

Interstate heading

fh jdfhgjdfh jdhfjdfh jdfhjdfh jdfhj dfhjdhfj dfhUsto consequisi. Im do dolortisis alissed dolorpe rciniam, veriure faccum iniam dolor sis dignit alit dui tie feuipissent at la faccum quatum ipsumsa ndignim quatue magna facidunt iliquisl utpatisi tie conumsan eraestie modolut aliquis nim eugait aliquat accum diamcon umsandre te mod min ulputpat.

Vullum doloreet aut nonsequ ismolut aut lam, sum vel eriliqu amconsequi tisim dit lore et alissit ipisit dipit volenit lum nos etue dunt ad tat. Del iurer sent autatem velestrud exer ad dolore feu facilluptat alit vulla facip ero dion henim zzrillaorem eugiamconse del elendrem

Interstate heading

gfh jdfhgjdfh jdhfjdfh jdfhjdfh jdfhj dfhjdhfj dfhUsto consequisi. Im do dolortisis alissed dolorpe rciniam, veriure faccum iniam dolor sis dignit alit dui tie feuipissent at la faccum quatum ipsumsa ndignim quatue magna facidunt iliquisl utpatisi tie conumsan eraestie modolut aliquis nim eugait aliquat accum diamcon umsandre te mod min ulputpat.

Vullum doloreet aut nonsequ ismolut aut lam, sum vel eriliqu amconsequi tisim dit lore et alissit ipisit dipit volenit lum nos etue dunt ad tat. Del iurer sent autatem velestrud exer ad dolore feu facilluptat alit vulla facip ero dion

bour is harm

VER the past four decades, I've committed considerable time and resources towards helping young people receive a better education. My most significant contribution has been the founding of a city technical college – later transformed into Ashcroft Technology Academy (ATA) – in south-west London in 1991.

ATA provides free education for more than 1,500 children of mixed ability aged 11 to 18 and, as Chairman of Trustees, I can honestly say it's not fashionable ideologies that transform their life chances. It's the quiet, relentless pursuit of excellence in every aspect of school life and an ambitious curriculum.

By setting demanding standards, by nurturing a culture of ambition, by promoting the benefits of hard work and success, our students - particularly those classified as disadvantaged – achieve exceptional results. These experiences and successes are the reason I find the government's proposed reforms to secondary education so deeply concerning.

E WELCOME a significant number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and who have known Special Educational Needs (SEN) yet we are one of the 15 top performing schools in England. Our absence rate is the lowest in the country, and our disadvantaged and SEN students outperform national averages.

This is true social mobility and this success is achieved through hard work, a dedicated teaching and support staff, a well-rehearsed and exacting set of daily routines and expectations and, finally, a huge amount of care.

Yet Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson's reforms serve to reduce the content, and therefore the overall standard, of the current curriculum, and to discourage the study of academic subjects. They favour "soft" subjects that will,



Students at Ashcroft Technology Academy are achieving impressive results

Lord Ashcroft Guest Columnist

over time, erode knowledge and artificially reduce the attainment gaps she seeks to narrow.

Instead of raising standards, Phillipson looks set to preside over a calamitous drop. Over time, this will make social mobility even more difficult for our most vulnerable young people.

Previous reforms under then Education Secretary Michael Gove between 2010 and 2014, saw English schools steadily raise standards. These prioritised core knowledge, academic challenge and accountability, and their impact has been positive: English pupils now outperform many of their peers across Europe.

By contrast, in parts of the UK,

including Scotland, where standards were relaxed, outcomes have declined sharply. That's why Gove has stated Phillipson's reforms will lower standards, limit opportunity and set back social mobility.

- from schools, from teachers and from pupils. Such demands are never popular. They bring pressure, scrutiny and a degree of discomfort. Yet by holding the line, we help young people flourish.

The English baccalaureate (EBacc), which the Education Secretary now plans to scrap, encouraged schools to steer all students - not just the privileged towards academic and knowledge-rich subjects such as languages, history and science. These subjects open doors to elite universities and global careers.

Importantly, for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, they also provide knowledge, cultural capital and a global awareness, all of which Phillipson's reforms threaten to deprive them.

The Education Secretary started this process when she announced plans to remove the additional funding state schools need to Improvement in education operate the International Baccaalways requires demanding more laureate, itself an academically

rigorous, global qualification which demands knowledge and civic mindedness. Now she has gone further by rejecting some of the most important recommendations of the curriculum review, namely choosing to dilute 'Progress 8", used to evaluate English secondary schools by tracking academic progress from the end of primary school and GCSE examinations

N DOING this, she risks reversing progress. In independent schools, academic subjects will remain at the heart of the timetable. In the majority of state schools, however, I predict they will quietly be replaced by less demanding and less examined courses.

Principals and headteachers will not take these reforms lying down. Many have observed firsthand that social mobility cannot be built on lower expectations. I genuinely fear for the consequences of Phillipson's reforms and an ever-increasing decline in standards for the next generation unless ministers see sense.

• Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC is an international businessman, philanthropist, author and pollster. Visit lordashcroft.com

'Phillipson's changes will lower standards and limit opportunity'