

# Penny Mordaunt

## Conservative Parliamentary Candidate Portsmouth North



### EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Our teachers and pupils are doing a wonderful job in very difficult circumstances. I want to see dramatic improvement to education service and results in Portsmouth and believe that the policies we have set out will help to do that. But an MP needs to do more than just walk through the right lobby to help teachers, parents and pupils to achieve more. We need to develop local investment in our schools so they have the funds to make best use of the innovation and ideas their staff and parents have.

Local Conservatives are also seeking ways to help tackle truancy, which is exceptionally high in our city. We believe that everyone in our city can help to tackle this issue, and that it is in their advantage to do so. We have set up a mentoring scheme which pairs people in the community with pupils who could benefit from their support and advice. The Mentor would help the child get work experience and keep them interested in training, further education and work. The Mentors are trained by the charity Spear and are sponsored by donations raised by local conservatives. I would like to see this and similar scheme open to every school in the city.

We also need to allow more places for high quality apprenticeship schemes, as they are massively oversubscribed. Portsmouth would be an ideal location for this kind of development given the type of industries we are fortunate to have based here.

#### Schools

Education is the most powerful means by which individuals can be given the freedom to shape their future – and our schools reform plan is driven by the need to increase opportunity for all.

We will undertake a long-term programme to close the educational gap between the fortunate and the forgotten, with policies including:

- Building hundreds of good new schools within the state system
- Shifting the balance of power away from the government and towards parents
- Removing the obstacles which prevent new schools being established
- Encouraging smaller and more varied schools to respond to parents' demands
- In addition, we will take a number of immediate steps to improve standards in all our schools:
  - Improve discipline and behaviour in schools by shifting the balance of power in the classroom back to the teacher
  - Ensure more teaching by ability to stretch the strongest and nurture the weakest
  - Look at reforming the testing regime in primary schools to reduce bureaucracy and focus on every pupil's real needs

By doing all this, a Conservative Government will stop the decline in standards and create the excellent schools our children deserve.

#### Universities and Skills

We believe that every person who could benefit from a university education should have the opportunity to do so if they wish. But the proportion of young people going to university has scarcely changed in eight years. At the current rate, it would take Labour over a century to meet their 50% target.

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A Conservative Government will:

- Give universities greater freedom from detailed bureaucratic intervention
- Offer a fairer deal for part-time and mature students
- Create a clearer pathway from vocational routes into further and higher education

We recognise that higher fees have brought benefits to universities, but we need to ensure that they are providing a better student experience in return. We have called on the Government to start a full review of the higher education sector now.

### **SKILLS**

Labour have failed on skills: the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) has risen, and the numbers of real apprenticeships, FE enrolments and Adult Learners are down. A Conservative Government will transform skills and training, with:

- A massive expansion in the provision of real apprenticeships, creating 100,000 additional apprenticeships every year and making it easier for companies to run apprenticeships
- More community learning to improve skills and employability, including a NEETs Fund aimed at youngsters not in any kind of education, training or employment, and a Community Learning Fund
- Supply-side reform to set further education free by creating a streamlined funding model where government support for training follows the learner
- Better careers advice by creating a new all-age careers service and providing a careers adviser in every secondary school and college