



## **Best Start for Every Child**

*Too many children are still leaving school without the knowledge and skills to be successful. Finding a good school is still a struggle, lessons don't stretch the brightest and classes are too big for teachers to control or give extra help to the children who need it. And your family background still has a huge effect on how you do: even a bright but poor child will fall behind a richer classmate by the age of 7 and never catch up. Liberal Democrats want every child to get an excellent education because it is the best way to get on in life, get a good job, and learn about the world. Only when all children get a good start, no matter where they live or what their parents do, will we have a fair society. We will provide a fair start for all children by giving schools the money they need to cut class sizes and set teachers free to spend more time teaching in the classroom. And we will scrap unfair university tuition fees so everyone has the chance to get a degree, regardless of how rich their parents are.*

**Ensure children get the individual attention they need by cutting class sizes (Pupil Premium).** To give every child a fair start in life, the Liberal Democrats will spend an extra £2.5bn on schools, guaranteeing them the money they need to support children who are struggling. It will be targeted at schools taking on children who need more help and can be used to cut class sizes and make sure they get the individual support they need. An average primary school could cut classes to 20, with a typical secondary school able to cut classes to just 16 or start a programme of catch-up classes for 160 pupils.

**Scrap unfair University Tuition Fees.** To get a degree, young people are saddled with thousands of pounds of debt when it is tough enough to get a job, get on the housing ladder and make ends meet. The Liberal Democrats are the only party which believes university education should be free and admissions based on ability not bank balance. We will scrap unfair tuition fees for all students taking their first degrees saving them nearly £10,000 each. We have a financially responsible plan to phase fees out over six years, so that the change is affordable in these difficult economic times. In our first year, we will scrap fees for final year students, so future graduates have their debt slashed by over £3,000.

**Education Freedom Act.** Teachers want to get the best from children but they are held back because of constant government interference which stops them from spending time with their pupils. The Liberal Democrats believe that all schools should be free from meddling politicians to work in creative and interesting ways to make sure every child gets a fair start in life. We will slim down the curriculum and pass an Education Freedom Act banning politicians from getting involved in the day to day running of schools.