

JUST SOUNDING OFF ON EDUCATION

England, especially, has been bedevilled by the target setting culture. A while ago I saw experienced headteachers with tears in their eyes listening to Angela Rayner, the Shadow Secretary of State for Education. Those were tears of hope that professional life might once again be devoted to the enablement of learning instead of what it has become: the infliction upon children not only of a target culture but also of officially approved methods, content and “correct answers”.

At present education has become a contributor to stress. Why should that be? What does it achieve? Possibly in one short spell in office a Secretary of State can, just before being moved to another job, claim an improvement. If so it will very likely be a fiddled set of figures because most of the baseline statistics that we use came out of the heads of politicians. There was absolutely no research done to decide that a CSE Grade Four represented the national average for sixteen year olds but we were told that was the case. There was zero research done to establish that the average performance for seven year olds would be Level Two but, again, that is what we were told it would be. Kids can enjoy a game of footy until they are told that they are not good enough. For me education, particularly in schools, has too much of a destructive force about it.

Learning about kennings in Anglo-Saxon poetry a boy in my wife’s class described school as a “grading place”.

Cliff Jones 9th. April 2017