

Britain: right-wing think tank opens new school

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A new private school opened its doors on September 13 in the Queens Park area of London. The “New Model School” is the brainchild of Civitas, the Institute for the Study of Civil Society, and claims to offer a “no frills” education for less than £3,000 a year.

The independent primary will teach mathematics, phonics-based reading and French, “social skills and good character,” as well as “Judaean Christian values.” The school will initially admit children aged 4 and 5, but hopes to expand—offering lessons up to the age of 13 years.

Civitas is a right-wing think-tank that promotes pamphlets opposing immigration and asylum. In a letter to supporters, the organisation’s deputy director, Robert Whelan, says Civitas has “gone from being a think-tank to a do-tank” because of the depth of its concerns over the state of Britain.

Whelan urges funding for the school and states that the group has focussed on education because it “is fundamentally a process which transmits from one generation to the next the values and knowledge on which the survival of culture depends. I’m sure I don’t need to tell you how greatly many people fear that our culture is in serious decline—one might almost say in meltdown. It is for this reason that we have taken such an unusual step.”

Amongst the publications promoted by Civitas is one by Dr. David Coleman, an adviser to Migration Watch, which specialises in generating hysterical reports about the supposed dangers of immigration and abuse of asylum legislation, wherein he argues that the cultural benefits of migration are “rather difficult to specify beyond a wider range of ethnic restaurants for the middle classes and new kinds of pop music.”

Other titles, endorsed by the organisation include, “Do We Need Mass Immigration?” and “Tomorrow is

Another Country: What is wrong with the UK’s asylum policy?”

In the run-up to the school’s opening, David Willetts, the Conservative Party’s head of policy coordination said, “The Civitas school is explicitly dedicated to traditional teaching methods, to strict discipline and a culture of high academic expectations. But that’s just one model—I like it, but then I’m a Conservative. New schools don’t have to follow the traditional pattern—they simply have to satisfy parents. Parents might not want a traditional education for their children.”

For the past 25 years, state schools in Britain have sustained an economic and ideological battering from successive governments, accompanied by a vastly expanded structure of targets and tests, to the point where millions of parents are appalled at the quality of education their children receive.



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