

1. Outline and explain two ways in which educational policies have attempted to reinforce social solidarity [4]

One way in which educational policies have looked to reinforce social solidarity is through the introduction of British Values into schools. The values of democracy, rule of law, respect and tolerance and individual liberty look to reinforce social solidarity by demonstrating to pupils that they are part of a wider society and encourage social cohesion by giving pupils guidelines for how to act within that society.

A second way in which educational policies have looked to reinforce social solidarity is through changes to the history curriculum in 2015. As identified by Durkheim, history is uniquely placed to enable pupils to understand the bonds that bring people together and these changes enforced the teaching of at the history of Britain, what Michael Gove called an 'island story' or Britain through the ages.

2. Outline and explain three ways in which governments have tried to tackle inequality in educational achievement [6]

One way governments have used educational policy to try and tackle inequality is through adopting policies which gave schools additional funding for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Policies such as Pupil Premium addressed the material disadvantages that some pupils face by giving school additional resources for books, laptops and other educational resources so that disadvantaged pupils would have access to them.

A second way that governments have tried to tackle inequality in educational achievement is through the creation of comprehensive schools. This aimed to tackle the disparity between grammar schools and secondary moderns by bringing all students together under the same roof with the same access to teaching, subjects and self-esteem.

A final way in which governments have looked to tackle inequality in educational achievement is through EMA. EMA was a means-tested allowance that encouraged pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to continue in education beyond the then compulsory school-leaving age of 16, in order to give them more opportunities to succeed.

Item A

According to functionalists, the purpose of education is to prepare pupils for their future roles in society. This can be achieved through teaching of specific skills or through transmitting norms and values.

3. Applying material from item A, analyse two ways in which education prepares pupils for their future roles in society [10]

One way in which education prepares pupils for their future roles in society is through 'transmitting norms and values' (Item A). While functionalists would argue that this is done for the benefit of pupils, socialising them into the value consensus of society, both Marxist and feminists would argue that it socialises pupils into the dominant norms and values of society, and prepares them for future exploitation. Marxists will argue that this is done through promoting values of capitalism, such as hard work and individualism, which leads to pupils rejecting other commitments, such as solidarity with their peers, in order to achieve higher status for themselves. Feminists on the other hand would suggest that the norms and values that are transmitted by education, prepares female pupils for a life of subordination in a patriarchal society. This is achieved through sifting girls into lower value expressive subjects and reinforcing the idea that females should be passive and subservient. Both Marxists and feminist argue that the transmission of these norms and values sets up pupils for their future roles, as being subservient to the ruling class and men respectively.

A second way in which education prepares pupils for their future roles is by teaching them 'specific skills' (Item A). Durkheim argued that one of the main functions of the education system was to teach pupils the specialist skills required for the complex division of labour in modern society. As such, schools focus on providing pupils with skills for employment, either through academic routes, such as A levels – with students learning information that will enable them to go onto university and more specialised study – or through vocational qualifications. These are aimed to enable pupils to gain experience in working in a specific sector, such as carpentry, vehicle repair or health and social care. This leads to them having the skills in order to perform their roles adequately and this enables the smooth running of society. However, critics, such as Bowles and Gintis would suggest that instead of learning specialist skills, pupils are only prepared for the 'long shadow of work' through what they called the correspondence principle. However, this also prepares pupils for their future roles, albeit by teaching them concepts such as hierarchy, fragmentation of information and alienation, and is a less positive approach that that suggested by Durkheim.