

EDUCATION IS COMPULSORY – SCHOOL IS NOT

An Uncertain Future for State Education - Is Home Education The Answer?

Despite recent promises to maintain school budgets, fears around tighter spending for years to come have left parents, already long frustrated at the lack of places at good schools, increasingly worried about the future of state education. After more than 20 years of relentless change and with academies and free schools adding to the current confusion, perhaps the time has come to ask if there are some real alternatives?

Periplus Home Education is a new company set up by two teachers who believe there is another way. Home Education is a legal choice in the UK, although many parents are unaware of this. In the US, there has been a remarkable increase in numbers of children home educated in recent years with an estimated 1.5 to 2.4 million¹ receiving effective education at home, but its popularity here also is also growing steadily.

“With further educational reforms and uncertainty about future funding, we believe families are becoming much more open-minded about education”, explained Nina Obratsova, co-founder of Periplus. “It is human nature to want to learn, but the mass schooling of the last 150 years may no longer be the best choice for children in the future and home education is a serious alternative. Our aim in starting Periplus is simply to make this option a more accessible and progressive choice.”

With around 20,000 children currently registered as being home educated in the UK, it is probably only the tip of the iceberg as registration is voluntary. More realistic estimates already suggest it is double that figure, if not as high as 80,000 and growing³.

The most often cited reason for parents choosing home education is a disappointment with education received at school (31%), followed by bullying (25%), with the lack of suitable schools, poor teaching and disruptive behaviour as other common issues. Home education is an obvious way of addressing these issues whilst offering a flexible approach and one where

¹ Ray, B. (2008) State Regulation of Homeschooling and Homeschoolers' SAT Scores

³ Badman, G. (2009) Report to the Secretary of State on the Review of Elective Home Education in England

the child also benefits from the freedom to develop skills at their own speed. Many parents who might consider this option however, choose school in the end, often only because they appreciate qualifications are an important currency, or they do not feel they can cover the full breadth of the curriculum especially at secondary level. This is where providers such as Periplus Home Education, with its bespoke services, access to examination courses and extensive support packages can be the ideal answer to meeting the need.

“Our aim is to provide as much or as little as each family requires. We can offer a full curriculum to GCSE and beyond, occasional or regular private tuition or simply access to quality subscription only resources,” commented John Edwards, the newly appointed Principal of Periplus. He added, “Many of our services could be just as useful to those who attend a school but need to supplement their education for whatever reason.”

Critics of home education often raise concern over a lack of socialisation. In fact research confirms that home educated children are socially adept and that the worry is more of a parental issue rather than one echoed by the children⁵. They will often choose to spend time with other home educated friends, school children or siblings or perhaps join local sports clubs and outside activities. Periplus are nevertheless seeking to address this concern by organising regular social events as well as providing an online Forum to enable students to interact with one another.

Periplus Home Education believe they have put together a unique range of services from which parents can select, these include:

- **Fully qualified, specialist teachers** offering online and face to face lessons for individuals and groups.
- A **tailored curriculum** to address the interests and needs of the child with the **progress of every student being monitored** and a **variety of learning styles** being offered to promote success.
- A powerful online **resource and research centre** enabling family access to subscription only educational resources.
- **Regular drop-in sessions** for study support. Available initially at locations around London, but with plans for further centres across the country as the company grows.
- A **secure and monitored website** where:

⁵ Rothermel, P. (2002) Home education: Aims, Practices and Outcomes. University of Durham

- **students** can access their Learning Zone, educational resources, check progress, view their timetable, take part in the forums and reserve sessions as required
- **parents** are offered their own short course on supporting effective learning at home, can access the student resources and will also be able to track their child's progress and socialise with other parents
- **teachers** will also monitor attendance, mark work, share materials and **communicate with parents**
- **A Forum**, both academic and social, with **questions answered within 24** hours is at the same time a monitored, safe environment for peers to socialise and support each other.
- A series of 'Be Inspired' **lectures** which give advice and inspiration in a variety of different career fields.
- **Social and cultural events** will be offered, such as musical occasions, museum trips and various outdoor activities.

www.periplus.org.uk

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Notes to Editors

Periplus Home Education is a not for profit organisation and member of Social Enterprise London.

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