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Testing, testing. A, B, C. [1]

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The Conservative Party?s latest idea [3] on ensuring that all children are able to read by the age of seven is noble. Yet they?ve once again slipped into the idea of measuring standards through centrally set testing. For the vast majority of children in Britain they face repeated testing throughout their days at school, and most of this is merely for the whim of the politicians.

As Michael Gove MP told the Andrew Marr Show on the BBC: "We want to introduce a simple test which means at the end of two years of primary school we know whether or not children have mastered the skills they need to read.? It is rather shocking to read that a Conservative MP wants to know whether a child can read or not. This type of nannying interference is typical of the politics of the moment, and as an opposition party the conservatives should be offering an alternative not aping it. The over emphasis on the state to monitor (by turning the exam and test results into statistics) the development of children has removed this role from the parents. The most important people in a child?s education are its parents and they need to become more involved and not further alienated.

The Conservatives should be focusing on removing the state from the lives of children and allowing the teachers the freedom to teach the children in their care how they best see fit. It is noticeable, after all, that children are not only different but they develop and learn at a range of speeds. A teacher should be endowed with a wide range of skills so that these disparities are equalised in the way the children are taught.

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