

Research Report

Fictional Committee

2 | Reforming the wizarding education system in England

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Introduction

The Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is a British school for young witches and wizards and is considered as one of the finest institutions of education in the Wizarding World, with other notable examples being the French 'Beauxbatons Academy of Magic', the American 'Illuminatus School of Witchcraft and Wizardry', and the Bulgarian 'Durmstrang Institute'.

The school itself was founded in 990 AD by four of the greatest wizards and witches of the age: Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, Salazar Slytherin, and Godric Gryffindor. The four came together out of the "selfsame yearning, to make the world's best magic school,". They each created a house that would represent a specific personality trait or skill that they wanted to nurture: Gryffindor for bravery and chivalry, Ravenclaw for intelligence and wit, Hufflepuff for loyalty and fair play, and Slytherin for ambition and cunning. Though close friends, the founders had very different ideas of who Hogwarts should cater to. Given the then-recent implementation of the international statute of secrecy, Salazar Slytherin heavily suggested that the school should only cater to purebloods. Whereas, the other founders disagreed, insisting that all witches and wizards, regardless of their heritage, should be allowed education at Hogwarts. They had reached an impasse and even though Slytherin left the school in protest, the house of Slytherin's population seemed to be mostly pureblooded.

It can be said that the British Wizarding education system should be blamed for the rise of Lord Voldemort and his death eaters. This is argued since, although Slytherin left the school, his blood-purist ideas remained among his house's original students and the sacred twenty-eight. It can be said that one reason for Tom Marvolo Riddle's (i.e. Lord Voldemort) opposition to muggle-born classmates was due to his past trauma with a muggle father and upbringing being further developed by the bigotry commonly found in his Hogwarts house, Slytherin.

Therefore, to combat the ideas of future bigotry (between parties like, but not limited to, the Order of the Phoenix and the Dark Lord and his followers), it is necessary to reform the wizarding education system in England to the extent that the staff and the program itself would be able to prevent such an occurrence from happening.

Definition of Key Terms

Ancient Runes: Ancient runes are a form of writing which witches and wizards used hundreds of years ago, a Hogwarts class

Arithmancy: Arithmancy was a magical discipline that studied the magical properties of numbers, including predicting the future with numbers and numerology, a Hogwarts class

Astronomy: Astronomy is the branch of magic and science that studies stars and the movement of planets, a Hogwarts class

Board of Governors: The Board of Governors was a group of twelve wizards who oversaw the running of Hogwarts

Care of Magical Creatures: An elective course at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry that can be chosen by students in their third year onwards

Charms: A course that teaches how to cast the class of spells known as Charms, a Hogwarts class

Death Eaters: A terrorist group of wizards and witches, led by the dark wizard Lord Voldemort, who seek to purify the wizarding community by eliminating wizards and witches born to non-magical parents

Defense of the Dark Arts: A mandatory subject taught at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, in which students learn how to magically defend themselves against Dark Creatures and the Dark Arts

Deputy Headmistress: A title given to the faculty member at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry that had been given special responsibility in regard to assisting the Headmaster or Headmistress

Divination: An elective course taught at Hogwarts that teaches methods of divining the future or gathering insight into the future

Dungeons: A place underneath the Hogwarts castle where the Slytherin dormitories reside

Forbidden Forest: A forest next to the Hogwarts castle that's home to many dangerous creatures and is forbidden to the students to enter.

Gryffindor: A house founded by Godric Gryffindor, one of the four founders of Hogwarts

Halfblood: A witch or wizard with a pureblood parent and a muggle-born parent

Headmistress: The chief administrator of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, by the appointment of the school's Board of Governors.

Herbology: The magical and mundane study of plants and fungi, the wizarding world equivalent of botany.

History of magic: A subject at Hogwarts that studies the history of magic itself

Hogsmeade: A town near Hogwarts often visited by wizards and witches that study there on field trips

Hufflepuff: A house founded by Helga Hufflepuff, one of the four founders of Hogwarts

Mudblood: A derogatory term for a muggle or muggle-born

Muggle: A non-magical human being, the term is used in Europe, known as non-maj in the United States

Muggle-born: A witch or wizard born to muggles

Muggle Studies: An elective class at Hogwarts that studies the history and daily life of muggles

N.E.W.T.S: The Nastily Exhausting Wizarding Test (often abbreviated to N.E.W.T.S) is a subject-specific examination taken in the seventh year at Hogwarts

O.W.L.S: The Ordinary Wizarding Levels, examinations taken by fifth years. These examinations help determine future jobs.

Potions: A class held for students to learn the correct way to brew potions.

Pureblood: A witch or wizard who has two pure-blooded parents, a line of completely magical people with no muggles or muggle-borns

Ravenclaw: A house founded by Rowena Ravenclaw, one of the four founders of Hogwarts

Slytherin: A house founded by Salazar Slytherin, one of the four founders of Hogwarts

The Great Hall: The dining hall of Hogwarts, the place used for the gatherings.

Transfiguration: A class taught at Hogwarts that teaches a family of magic that changes objects from one thing to another

The Current State of Affairs

The year is 1999 with the Battle of Hogwarts of the second wizarding war ending in the previous year, leaving the Hogwarts castle in ruins and the education system being questioned.

Tom Riddle, Lord Voldemort, has been defeated by Harry Potter and his loyal followers (the Death Eaters) have been easily transported to Azkaban, the British wizarding prison. The jail is a facility on an island in the middle of the North Sea, serving the population of Wizarding Britain as a facility for convicted criminals. The wizarding world seems to be a less prejudiced place

At the death of both her predecessors, Professor Minerva McGonagall has taken her position of Headmistress as opposed to her place as Deputy Headmistress in the time before the Dark Lord's defeat. Along with the new headmistress, it's seen that there is a recent change to the Board of Governors as the former chairman, Lucius Malfoy, was found guilty as a death-eater and sentenced to Azkaban.

The system of education is currently in disarray partially due to the puppet ministry established by Tom Marvolo Riddle, leading to the destruction of wizarding records involving non-pureblood wizards and drastic changes in magical syllabi, with a notable example of the unforgivable curses being taught and practiced upon the grounds of Hogwarts in the last year as an extension to Defense Against the Dark Arts. Furthermore, reforms regarding the Prefect system and the implementation of the inquisition system still lay unaddressed and could serve as areas of notable student dissidence when de-constructed.

Stances of Characters

Harry Potter

He was the cause of Voldemort's fall during both Wizarding Wars, Harry Potter remains allied with the Order of the Phoenix during the second war, he holds an important stance as being one

Hermione Jean Granger

She is the brains of the golden trio, a muggle-born, and Gryffindor. Along with Harry Potter, Hermione Granger is also allied with the Order of the Phoenix throughout the war. She is known as the most intelligent witch of her time and holds an important place in the reformation of the British wizarding education system as most respect her opinions and thoughts.

Ronald Weasley

Ronald Weasley is part of the golden trio and Harry Potter's best friend. Like Harry Potter and the other Weasleys, he is sorted into Gryffindor. He is a blood traitor with his family and himself as allies of the Order of the Phoenix.

Minerva McGonagall

Professor Minerva McGonagall was once the transfiguration teacher, deputy headmistress, and Head of Gryffindor at Hogwarts but is now the Headmistress. She's remained a loyal member of the Order of the Phoenix throughout both wars.

Draco Malfoy

Draco Malfoy is Harry Potter's schoolyard rival before things became darker and he was forced into becoming a death eater. He is pureblooded and of the house of Slytherin. He also holds the position of ensuring equality despite house affiliation.

Neville Longbottom

Neville Longbottom is a friend of the golden trio and like them is sorted into Gryffindor. He is passionate about herbology, extremely loyal, and allied with the Order of the Phoenix. He was the slayer of Nagini, effectively destroying Lord Voldemort's final horcrux.

Luna Lovegood

Luna Lovegood was one of Harry Potter's friends, who he named his daughter after. Her father, Xenophilius Lovegood, is an editor of the Quibbler, a famous magazine in the wizarding

world. She is an eccentric Ravenclaw who helped Harry find the prophecy that linked him to Voldemort and fought in the Battle of Hogwarts.

Rita Skeeter

Rita Skeeter is a journalist who worked for the Daily Prophet, specialized in writing poison-pen stories. These stories were based on false information and misreported interviews to make them seem interesting. She was an animagus who could turn into a beetle.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

There have been previous attempts to reform the British wizarding education system, as can be seen in 'Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix' and 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows'. The former attempts to solve the issue include the following:

In the fifth book of the series (i.e. Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix), Delores Jane Umbridge becomes the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher as assigned by the Ministry of Magic. The professor, soon to become Hogwarts High Inquisitor, is the first who attempts to change the educational system at Hogwarts. She does this through her educational decrees, which are laws that demand certain behaviors, expectations, and habits from the students at Hogwarts. As the Senior Undersecretary to the minister, she does this in an attempt to create a more ministry-driven/approved education. It does however fail as the system she promoted was one of mostly dictatorship to the students and staff, creating a rebellious environment in which she was overthrown.

The second attempt to solve this issue can be seen in the seventh book of the series (i.e. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows). This is when Lord Voldemort has taken over the Hogwarts school of witchcraft and wizardry through former potions professor, Severus Snape. Voldemort aims to make the school more open to purebloods and makes fundamental changes to the syllabus that is taught at Hogwarts. Like, Defense Against the Dark Arts becomes the Dark Arts and Muggle Studies becomes a compulsory class where muggles are degraded to Hogwarts students. He also makes noticeable changes in the staff with Amycus and Alecto Carrow each teaching a changed class respectively. This system also didn't work as Voldemort was eventually thrown over and the school was reclaimed by the Order of the Phoenix.

Possible Solutions

Any possible solutions would need to include a way in which multiple parties hold shares of the power to prevent a dictatorship from taking place, as was seen in the previous attempts to solve the issue. These previous attempts included a reign on the parts of both Hogwarts High Inquisitor, Delores Umbridge, and the Dark Lord, Voldemort.

That being said, the idea of eliminating the houses (Gryffindor, Slytherin, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw) or even the sorting of the children as soon as they enter the castle should be considered as it might attempt to remove the preconceived notions of a certain house or by extension, a certain person being 'evil' or 'cruel'. We should also consider the idea of replacing 'Muggle Studies' with 'Cultural Studies' to promote awareness of both muggle and wizarding cultures.

Questions to Consider

1. What is the best way to reform Hogwarts school of witchcraft and wizardry
2. What is your characters stance on the issue?
3. How could the delegate use their character's perspective in their resolution?
4. How can your character use the tools and equipment available to effectively address the issue?
5. Which specific areas should you focus on to overall improve the British wizarding education system?
6. Which other characters would your character be more interested in working with?
7. Who are the characters with the most power in the development of a resolution for the British wizarding education system? And why?

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Use MLA citations

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