

Film Review

We Are The People We've Been Waiting For: A film made by the Edge Foundation, under the guidance of Lord Puttnam.

It is not clear whether the title of this film is meant to be 'You are the people we've been waiting for,' or, 'We are the people you've been waiting for.' In spite of the ambiguity, it seems to be intended to suggest that the young people of today have something important to contribute that has been overlooked until now. On the box we read: 'The world is changing rapidly, but our education system is not keeping pace. The journeys of 5 young people.'

However, the film shows us very little about the journeys of the five young people, and, after starting with a few irrelevant shots of the effects of climate change, consists almost entirely of a great number of talking heads, among them famous talking heads like Richard Branson, Germaine Greer and Ken Robinson. The 'we' in the first part of the title seems to refer to these people, well on in years, rather than to the five young people.

What this great variety of heads has to say, repeatedly, in many different voices, is that adults should be providing a wider variety of stimulating lessons, adults should be constructing timetables with more time for imaginative and practical work, adults should be taking into account the wide variety of learning styles that are now recognised, adults should value practical skills as well as academic skills, adults should make young people more aware of the world of work, adults should be making more use of IT and so on.

No one would quarrel with any of this, and there are many schools in this country that are actually putting such ideas into practice. It is good to hear so many voices encouraging this kind of change. What is disappointing is that, in spite of the title, we hear so little of opinions of the young people themselves. It seems as though they are assumed to have nothing of value to contribute. This is particularly surprising from the Edge Foundation, which does a lot to help

young people to take charge of their own lives.

The makers of the film have plainly assumed that all change must be originated and controlled by adults. The flaw in this assumption is illustrated by a short sequence of dance, intended to show the advantage of allowing children the opportunity for creativity and imagination. What we see is a gym full of girls standing on the spot doing movements in unison – drill rather than creativity.

The title of the film should perhaps have been simply *We are the people who know best*.