ANDREW MARR:
Sir Michael Wilshaw, appointed this year to be Chief Inspector of Schools in England, has been described as “a hero” by the Education Secretary Michael Gove. They share a vision of schools characterised by strong discipline and rigorous academic standards, and thousands are going to be told to pull their socks up. The ‘satisfactory’ grading is being abolished. From now on, only good is good enough. So what will this mean for school heads, teachers, and of course for students? Sir Michael is with me now. Good morning.

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
Good morning.

ANDREW MARR:
Some people would say that just changing a term, a piece of terminology and saying satisfactory isn’t satisfactory, it has to be good, is window dressing.

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
No, it’s not window dressing and it’s not just changing the terminology. At the heart of what we’re trying to do is to ensure that all children have the chance of a good
education. They have one chance at it. What happens in school determines what happens for the rest of their life. Parents want to send their children to a good school; children want to go to a good school. And two thirds of our schools are good or better. We’ve got a third of schools though, six thousand schools, that are not good; that are satisfactory and below. And…

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Just if I can interrupt for a second. Your argument is that schools that are called ‘satisfactory’ actually aren’t satisfactory at all; they’re not good enough?

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
They’re not good enough. The teaching’s often not good enough; the leadership often isn’t good enough; and the progress and the outcomes of children aren’t good enough. And we’ve got to make sure that schools know that they’ve got to get to ‘good’ as soon as possible, and we’ve given them a prescribed period of time, up to four years, in which to get to ‘good’.

ANDREW MARR:
And you’re going to change the way inspections happen, are you? They’re going to be somewhat more sudden?

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
Yes, the day before. There’ll be a day before notice rather than the two day notice now because really we want to see schools as they normally are, and we want to reduce the tension that often builds up before inspectors walk into a school.

ANDREW MARR:
You want to catch people out.

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
No, no, no, this is not about catching people out …

ANDREW MARR:
No?
SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
... and I’ve made that clear to head teachers. This is about actually seeing schools as they actually are.

ANDREW MARR:
Now I suppose the fundamental question is how you measure what a good school really is because you’ve got all the statistics. You’ve got the exam results, which we’ll talk about in a minute because some of them are controversial and measurements of different kinds, but presumably you would agree it’s about the inspirational teachers who kind of draw people out and make kids think about things they’ve never thought about before? In your kind of nets, how can your inspectors catch that?

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
Well inspectors will be spending more time in lessons now than ever before. We won’t be looking at as much paperwork as we used to do. It’s about being in the heart of the school, looking at what really matters, which is what’s happening in the classroom. And a good school is about good teaching, it’s simply about good teaching. And the big issue is that head teachers have got to see themselves as leading teaching. They’re not head administrators or head organisers or head business managers; they’re head teachers.

ANDREW MARR:
They have to be pretty remarkable people. You’ve made it clear, I think, that there are not enough good head teachers in the English school system at the moment. The question is how do you get more of these people because they don’t grow on trees, do they?

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
No, but I’m very optimistic that we are. I’ve seen - and I’ve been in teaching a very, very long time - better people coming into teaching now than ever before. The status has risen; we’re getting some really talented people coming in. Now they will emerge into leadership positions. They will go into head positions at a younger age. The person who’s taken over my job in Hackney is a person in their thirties, a very
talented leader.

ANDREW MARR:
So …

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
And also - can I just say this? - we’ve got a growing cadre of very strong, powerful leaders who are taking over groups of schools who can help and support less experienced colleagues.

ANDREW MARR:
How do you get rid of the people that you want to get rid of, however? If you’re talking about a culture change, you’re talking about getting rid of people too.

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
Well it’s about good performance management in schools, and up to now I don’t think it’s been robust enough and that’s something we’re going to look at much more carefully in the new round of inspections. It’s making sure head teachers identify and reward good teachers, but do something about those teachers who are not good enough.

ANDREW MARR:
Okay, let’s talk about the GCSE row because that’s absolutely in the headlines at the moment. You know there is a good argument that GCSEs need to be looked at again in a thorough way.

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
Yeah, yeah.

ANDREW MARR:
But a large cohort of kids who’ve taken these exams have surely been treated unjustly? They were taking the exam or it was being marked at a level they didn’t realise was going to happen, and many of them may have lost their only chance of a good college place as a result. What needs to happen?
SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
Well we inspect a lot of things, but we do not inspect the inspection system.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) I do understand that, yes.

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
You should really be talking on this to Ofqual, to the examination regulators.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) I know, but I have you here. I have you here; I can’t resist it.

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
But what I will say on this one, I think this is a really good opportunity for our system, and the Secretary of State in particular, to look at our examination system …

ANDREW MARR:
Yeah.

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
… and ask whether it’s rigorous enough, whether it’s credible enough; whether in fact what’s happened over the last few years in terms of resits, early entries and the modular approach to examination is actually raising standards. Because the issue is not really summer against January and what happened last year as opposed to this; it’s whether our examination system stands up with the best in the world. And one of the worries I have - and I know other people have - is that our standards are falling in relation to other countries in the rest of the world.

ANDREW MARR:
So as a former head teacher yourself, would you like to see GCSEs thoroughly overhauled?

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
Absolutely, absolutely.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Yeah. And we should not be looking at how we’ve done in the past; we should be looking at how we’re doing around the world. And we’re slipping down …

**SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:**
*(over)* Around the world.

**ANDREW MARR:**
… we’re getting worse?

**SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:**
Let’s just take reading, and English is the world language, it’s the business language. We know that we’ve fallen from seventh in reading to twenty-fifth in the world; in maths, from seventh to twenty-eighth. Now that’s not good enough. And we’ve got to look at what’s happening in the rest of the world. Our youngsters when they leave school will be going into a global marketplace. They’ve got to compete not just against competitors here, but the rest of the world as well.

**ANDREW MARR:**
So Ofqual are right in hanging tough on all of this? I mean you approve of that?

**SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:**
Yes, yes.

**ANDREW MARR:**
But just returning to what appears to a lot of people to be an injustice done to a particular group of people, you have no thoughts about what might happen as a former head teacher?

**SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:**
Well, as I say, that’s an issue really for Ofqual and not for Ofsted and I’d rather wait for the final report to come out.
ANDREW MARR:
Alright. Sir Michael, thank you very much indeed for joining us this morning.

SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW:
Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS