ANDREW MARR:
Now then, it wasn’t quite a reshuffle, was it, or barely. Many of the big beasts were left in the same jobs, including the Education Secretary Nicky Morgan. We don’t know how radical she’s now going to be. She’s written in one of the Sunday newspapers that her priority will be a big push to encourage more state schools in England to become self-governing academies. And Nicky Morgan’s with me now. Thank you very much indeed for coming in.

NICKY MORGAN:
Good morning.

ANDREW MARR:
Now I suppose the underlying question about this whole government – we haven’t really heard from David Cameron himself yet – is: is this going to be a really radical reforming government or is it going to be a sort of slightly one nation, more centrist kind of government? And we don’t know that, but education is one of the things that we’re looking to. So can I ask you, first of all, Michael Gove was seen by a lot of people as one of the great revolutionary figures in the first coalition government and then there were problems with the Liberal Democrats and so forth and he was moved
to one side and you came in. Are you going to carry on the revolution now that you are untrammelled, you have a Tory majority?

**NICKY MORGAN:**
Well let me say that the first thing I think you can be sure of with the Conservative majority government is that we’re going to focus on three things. The first is governing for the benefit of working people. The second is governing with compassion and with a mind of social justice. And then the third is obviously governing for the whole country. Now why have I said that in the context of education? Because if people want a …

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* Because it shuts me up probably.

**NICKY MORGAN:**
No becau… *(laughs)* … because if people want a revolution, what I am going to be revolutionary about in terms of being Education Secretary is about making sure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential. That means every child has an excellent school to attend with great teachers. That means that is the argument for social justice, being on the side of those who don’t yet have the opportunity to go to good and outstanding schools, and …

**ANDREW MARR:**
Okay. Do you believe that, all things being equal, an academy is a better kind of school than a local authority controlled school?

**NICKY MORGAN:**
I do. I think that we can see in the results that actually students do do better in academies – both at Key Stage 2 (that’s the end of primary school) and also in GCSEs. Now let me tell you the other reason why I think it’s …

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* So they’re better schools?
NICKY MORGAN:
Well the other reason I think that they are fantastic schools – and that’s behind part of the announcement today and what’s going to be in the Education Bill – is about giving power to heads and teachers in terms of running their school and showing great leadership. We have some fantastic heads and teachers around the country, we have some fantastic schools, but I’m very conscious … In my first nine months as Education Secretary, what I found was they are not everywhere. We have a million more children in schools rated good or outstanding than we had in 2010, but we have children who don’t yet have that opportunity.

ANDREW MARR:
So, this bill is going to in effect allow you to move in quite fast from schools you call “coasting” schools and impose academy status on them if they don’t change?

NICKY MORGAN:
Well, there are two types of schools we’ll be focusing on in this bill. The first is those that are failing. That means that they are in special measures and they do need swift intervention, and that’ll be the first set of powers that we will be looking at. But the second, as you say, is what’s been dubbed as “coasting” schools. Those are schools where students are not yet making the progress that they should be making based on the attainment that they have shown so far. And there may be some fantastic again teachers and heads working …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) And so what’s actually going to happen? You’re going to have inspectors looking at those schools saying we regard you as a coasting school. You have to do this, this and this, and if you don’t do it we’re going to make you an academy – in effect?

NICKY MORGAN:
Well of course we already have … Well we already have Ofsted who inspect schools and they will grade them. And what we saw in the last Parliament was the change the ‘satisfactory’ rating to ‘requires improvement’. And exactly as you say – we will look and see at the schools whether it is that they are in the ‘requires improvement’
category, but it is also about progress. We’re introducing a new measure in secondary schools looking at the progress that students will make over the course of their time there. Why is it that in some schools students are reaching their full potential and in other schools they’re not? *(Marr tries to interject)* Now it may be down to leadership and we want to give … Let me just make this point because I think it is important. I think given some of the coverage and people watching this programme, I want to be very clear. Where heads show that they absolutely have the capacity to improve, they have a plan, they’re working with their governors, we want to give them time to do that. But where it is clear that a school does not have the capacity or the plan to get themselves out of requires improvement or to be helping their students to fulfil their potential, to make their progress, then yes we will put in …

**ANDREW MARR:**

*(over)* You will intervene?

**NICKY MORGAN:**

We will intervene …

**ANDREW MARR:**

Now …

**NICKY MORGAN:**

… we will put in support. There are …

**ANDREW MARR:**

Okay.

**NICKY MORGAN:**

… national leagues of education and of course we will look at the academy model too.

**ANDREW MARR:**

Now even if every single coasting school became an academy, still well over half the schools in England and Wales would be run by LEAs. Now given that you think academies are a better model for school, by the time you have finished as Education
Secretary would you like to see the end of LEAs, every single state school in Britain a self-governing academy?

**NICKY MORGAN:**
Well I’ll be very clear. I’m not going to set targets, but I would like to see …

**ANDREW MARR:**
(over) But would you like that to happen?

**NICKY MORGAN:**
Well I would like to see many more academies. We have made a pledge in the manifesto to have many more free schools as well. And I go back to the point why are we doing this?

**ANDREW MARR:**
A majority at least of school academies?

**NICKY MORGAN:**
Well we already have a majority of secondary schools who are academies, which have fewer …

**ANDREW MARR:**
(over) But they were all …

**NICKY MORGAN:**
Well I would like to see because exactly this point. I think the best people to run schools are the heads and the teachers and the governors. And actually the unions, the conversations I have up and down the country with teachers and heads saying treat us with … as professionals, give us our heads, we will do the best for the children – that’s what we are all in this for.

**ANDREW MARR:**
The radical thing would be to make every school an academy.
NICKY MORGAN:
Well it would be a radical thing. But I’m not really hung up …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) So why not?

NICKY MORGAN:
… on radical or ideology. I’m interested … Well because I’m interested in …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) No I’m just asking you. If you say they’re better schools, why not make them all academies?

NICKY MORGAN:
Because I’m interested in what works and I want people to make decisions themselves. As a constituency Member of Parliament, I have watched my local schools make those decisions to become academies and they have done that for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it’s been with encouragement. Many of them actually converted. They decided on their own. And one of the most exciting conversations I had with one of my local heads, he said “We’ve just become an academy.” He said, “I now know there are lots of freedoms I’ve got to make this school even better. I now have to have the …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Okay … okay, alright.

NICKY MORGAN:
(over) … the courage to explore all of that.”

ANDREW MARR:
Let’s talk about another area, which is free schools, because that was a kind of stuttering revolution in the first government. It began and it didn’t move nearly as fast as its proponents wanted. And I know you’ve got proposals for more free schools coming, but that’s partly because you wouldn’t let free schools make a profit or their
organisers make a profit. Michael Gove said he had an open mind about it. What’s your view?

**NICKY MORGAN:**
I do not have an open mind. I don’t think there is a place for profit-making schools in this country. I think …

**ANDREW MARR:**
Why not?

**NICKY MORGAN:**
Well …

**ANDREW MARR:**
Why not? I mean if that’s what gets them into the really tough areas, into the council estates, gets them leafleting parents, trying to get parents to send their children to that school – that kind of push factor – what’s … I mean you’re a party that believes in profit. What is it about schools that makes this an impossible bridge to cross?

**NICKY MORGAN:**
Well because I think it’s … what we want and what parents and children want in schools is great teaching, outstanding leadership. And actually we don’t have an issue with people … We have more people than ever coming forward wanting to set up free schools – many in the most challenging areas – and actually that’s what we’ve seen in terms of the free schools set up so far: 70 per cent of them are in areas that are the most deprived, the most challenging. And so actually it’s all about making sure that we’ve got the right people, great people to lead these schools, and that’s what we are seeing happening.

**ANDREW MARR:**
But from Lagos, the slums of Nigeria to Sweden, there are lots of companies running schools for profit inside a state system and they’re really working and they’re really popular. Why can’t we have them in Britain or in England?
NICKY MORGAN:
We were very clear in our manifesto that we do not see there is a role for profit making schools in our education system. And I certainly know as a returning secretary of state that I have five years in which to make a real difference to children in our education system in this country and I want to focus, as I say, on tackling schools that aren’t yet helping children to fulfil their potential – making sure there are excellent schools in all parts of the country.

ANDREW MARR:
Okay. Let’s talk about the money because you also promised in the manifesto you’re going to protect the budgets per capita for children.

NICKY MORGAN:
Yeah.

ANDREW MARR:
Now the number of children in schools is going to rise by I think about 7 per cent …

NICKY MORGAN:
Yeah.

ANDREW MARR:
… during the lifetime of the new government, so that is quite a tough thing to do, and in the context of overall austerity you have to make cuts elsewhere to allow that to happen. So where else in your budget, where are you going to make the cuts to ensure that that promise is kept?

NICKY MORGAN:
Well we are going to enter a spending review as a government. We are very clear and I think one of the reasons that we are having this …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) But you’re the Education Secretary. You must know where you’re going to cut?
NICKY MORGAN:
Well we are going to be … we will of course be having to look at budgets. But I am very clear and the message I’ve had loud and clear from schools in the course of the campaign is that there is a real squeeze on their budgets too – issues like teachers’ pensions, national insurance contributions, teachers’ pay. So I want to make sure as much of our money goes to the front line as possible. If that means making savings in the administration department or in the overall Department for Education, that’s what I’ll have to do to make sure as much money goes to the frontline as possible.

ANDREW MARR:
You’re going to have to slaughter your civil servants - I mean not literally obviously, but in terms of their job numbers – to abide by those promises, aren’t you? Because I know all the things that you’re going to protect. I still don’t understand the things you’re not going to protect.

NICKY MORGAN:
Well and that’s why we’re going to have a spending review looking at the overall government spending – making sure that, as we say, we protect the schools budget, but there are other very important parts of my budget as well: the FE, the 16-19 sector, and of course early as well. But I think again the message from the Op-ed today should be that this government and the prime minister take education incredibly seriously. The reason we have a Schools Bill in the first Queen’s Speech is because education is a priority for us.

ANDREW MARR:
How are you going to force new schools into the toughest areas if you’re not going to allow profits? How are you going to get those new free schools or possibly academies into the really, really tough areas where lots and lots of children are being failed at the moment?

NICKY MORGAN:
Well, as I say, we already see lots of people coming forward wanting to set up free schools – often and in fact mostly in very challenging environments. And one thing
again I’ve learnt in the education system over the course of the last 10 months is that people like a challenge. They know, they can see the areas where education mostly needs to be turned around, where children need to have the best education, and so actually that’s not an issue. But there’s an issue about obviously the DFE offering support to those setting up those schools as well.

ANDREW MARR:
Now we all watched this rather extraordinary reshuffle. We watched you going in one after another to Downing Street and coming back with the same jobs. What did David Cameron say? Did he say that this is not really a reshuffle. We want … I want you all to stay because you haven’t been in the job for long enough? What did he tell you?

NICKY MORGAN:
Well, one of the things that people said to me during the campaign – and I think one of the reasons that we did get that majority – was that people could see that we had made a real difference in the course of the last five years, but as part of a coalition. They wanted actually continuity. They wanted us to build on the economic reforms and things like school reforms certainly got mentioned. And we talked about …

ANDREW MARR
(over) So this is not a big radical break? This is continuity with previous government above all?

NICKY MORGAN:
Well I think the first … Well I think I mean it does have a different tone because of course it’s a majority Conservative government. The first thing people can be assured of is that we are going to implement the manifesto. That’s different from being in a coalition. We’re not spending weeks negotiating. We are as a government – you’ve heard the announcement this week …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Perhaps slightly to your surprise?

NICKY MORGAN:
Well …

ANDREW MARR:
You have to do all of this now.

NICKY MORGAN:
No, no … because actually I have to say as a Member of Parliament or a campaigning parliamentary candidate, I was very clear that actually the polls felt very different from what was happening on the ground. It’s a great pleasure to be back as Education Secretary – very, very exciting.

ANDREW MARR:
Nicky Morgan, thanks for coming in to talk to us.

NICKY MORGAN:
Thank you.

ANDREW MARR:
For now, thank you very much.

INTERVIEW ENDS