

EDUCATION

'No evidence' that enjoyable lessons help pupils learn

By Richard Vaughan

The belief that lessons should be made enjoyable for pupils to boost academic achievement is based on a "myth", according to research.

Instead, a more traditional focus on direct instruction and rote learning are "crucial" in improving factual knowledge, critical thinking and problem solving, the study claims.

The debate over the best way to teach children has raged within education for years, with opposition to a "factory model" of schooling proving popular among many teachers.

Whole industries have sprouted up within the education sector to develop teaching resources that are more fun, such as apps and computer games.

But in a report published by the

Centre for Education Economics, researchers claim that more "child-centred" methods are less effective than traditional "teacher-centred" techniques in getting the best results.

Similarly, the research suggests there is little evidence that interventions which may have positive effects on pupils' achievement also raise their happiness and joy for learning.

"The idea that positive emotions

and achievement go hand in hand has become deeply entrenched within the education system.

"Indeed, it is still commonly believed that it is necessary to make learning 'invigorating' for learning to take place at all," report author Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren, said.

"Yet our research has found that there is little rigorous evidence in favour of this assumption."

A more traditional approach to teaching has been encouraged since 2010 under the Conservatives, led in particular by schools minister Nick Gibb.

The study coincides with confirmation from the Government yesterday that all eight- and nine-year-olds in Year 4 will face tests to check they know their times tables up to 12.