

The Importance of Teaching The Schools White Paper 2010 – Summary

The White Paper sets out plans to make our school system successful in an international context. There are three reoccurring themes in the document: to devolve more responsibility to schools, focus on teaching and learning and close the attainment gap between the most and least deprived children and young people.

The plans to improve the school system are structured under seven headings:

- Teaching and leadership
- Behaviour
- Curriculum, assessment and qualifications
- New schools system
- Accountability
- School Improvement, and
- School Funding.

Teaching and Leadership

Improving the quality of teaching is a strong focus of the overall approach to education. Much is made of the changes to initial teacher training. There is also a proposal to develop a national network of Teaching Schools, using the model of Teaching Hospitals, although these plans are less well developed.

In summary, the planned measures are to:

- Stop funding initial teacher training for graduates who do not have at least a 2:2 degree from September 2012.
- Expand Teach First, from 560 new teachers to 1,140 each year, covering the whole of the country for both the primary and secondary phase. Other incentives to encourage the best graduates to teach might include paying off student loans for graduates in shortage subjects and offering scholarships through university.
- Offer financial incentives to attract more of the best graduates in shortage subjects (Maths, Physics and Chemistry) into teaching.
- Develop programmes to enable career changers to become teachers, including Teach Next (to be developed by Teach First), a new employment-based route to attract high-fliers from other professions. Teach Next will begin recruiting in 2011. Other programmes will encourage Armed Forces leavers to become teachers.
- Reform initial teacher training to increase the proportion of time trainees spend in the classroom, with particular focus on teaching maths and English and managing behaviour. The operation of the 'basic skills' tests of literacy and numeracy will also be reviewed; teachers are required to pass these tests before they can practice.
- Develop a national network of Teaching Schools (using the model of teaching hospitals). ***“These will be outstanding schools, which will take a leading responsibility for providing and quality assuring initial teacher training in their area. We will also fund them to offer professional development for teachers and leaders.”*** The government will encourage schools to share and

develop good practice by increasing the numbers of National and Local Leaders of Education.

- Develop continued professional development for all teachers including lifting the limit on the amount of time a teacher can be observed and introducing competitive scholarships to allow teachers to develop their subject knowledge.
- Abolish the General Teaching Council for England and put in place new arrangements to regulate the teaching profession. The National College will become an executive agency with an expanded role, covering governor and children's centre leadership programmes as well as enabling schools to offer their own 'middle leader' development programmes.
- Give schools more freedom to reward good performance and make it easier for them to tackle poor performance by extending pay flexibilities and simplifying performance management and capability procedures.
- Reduce bureaucracy for schools, removing the duty to cooperate with Children's Trusts, removing prescription on school governing bodies, removing the expectation that schools will complete a centrally-designed self-evaluation form and ending centralised target setting.
- ***"Recognise that schools have always had good pastoral systems and understand well the connections between pupils' physical and mental health, their safety, and their educational achievement and that they are all well placed to make sure additional support is offered to those who need it."***

Behaviour

The document emphasises the affect that poor pupil behaviour has on teaching and learning, particularly teacher morale. To tackle this it is intended that the authority of teachers will be strengthened. This additional freedom will be balanced (somewhat) by additional responsibilities, particularly for excluded pupils.

The planned measures are to:

- Give teachers the power to search pupils, issue same day detentions (there is currently a requirement to provide 24 hours notice) and use reasonable force where necessary (additional guidance will be published).
- Increase head teachers' authority to take action to improve behaviour in school, and on the journey to and from school, especially when this is related to bullying.
- Change the exclusions system, so that head teachers have more power in the appeals process but also have additional responsibilities to commission educational provision for excluded pupils (whose attainment will continue to be included in the overall school performance). This approach will be piloted, giving schools the power, money and responsibility to secure (commission) alternative provision for excluded pupils.
- Improve the quality of alternative provision, and encourage new providers to set up alternative provision and Free Schools. PRUs will be able to become Academies. From September 2011 all local authorities are required to provide

full-time education for all children and young people in alternative provision (including children who are ill and teenage mothers).

“Alternative provision Free Schools in particular will be a route for new voluntary and private sector organisations to offer high-quality education for disruptive and excluded children and others without a mainstream school place. Local authorities will be expected to choose the best provision and replace any that is unsatisfactory. We will, if necessary, use the Secretary of State’s powers to close inadequate PRUs and specify what sort of provision will replace it. In doing so, we will use competitions to open the way for high quality new providers to enter the market.”

- Change the response to allegations against teachers, for example, suspension will no longer be a requirement.
- Include “behaviour and safety” (especially bullying) as one of four key areas of inspection. Inspection will consider whether pupils are and feel safe in school. If parents have concerns about behaviour, and feel that the school hasn’t dealt with them properly they can ask Ofsted to carry out an inspection.

Curriculum, assessment and qualifications

The broad intention is to focus the requirement on core required knowledge in key subjects, but allow schools more flexibility in terms of how to deliver this core requirement, and what to supplement it with. The assessment and qualification system will change to reflect this focus on a core requirement.

The planned measures are to:

- Reform the National Curriculum, ***“We want the National Curriculum to be a benchmark not a straitjacket, a body of knowledge against which achievement can be measured. We envisage schools and teachers taking greater control over what is taught in schools innovating in how they teach and developing new approaches to learning.”***
- Ensure there is support for schools to teach systematic synthetic phonics.
- Review the assessment system to include a basic reading test at age 6, and assess progress and achievement at the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4).
- Introduce the English Baccalaureate will be awarded to any student who gets a GCSE at grade A*-C in English, maths, the sciences, a modern or ancient foreign language and a humanity such as history or geography. School performance tables will recognise those schools that successfully deliver this range of achievement to students. Performance tables will also recognise schools that successfully deliver physics, chemistry and biology as separate subjects.
- Follow the recommendations of the Wolf Review regarding vocational qualifications; support young people to continue in education or training to age 18 but remove the statutory nature of this requirement.
- Encourage schools to enter their students for internationally recognised qualifications so that education can be benchmarked in an international context, and legislate to ensure that Ofqual’s remit will include “securing international comparability of qualifications”.

- Reform A-levels and GCSEs to make them less modular, limit the number of A-level modules that can be re-sat, and reintroduce spelling and grammar assessments at GCSE.

New schools system

The vision is for schools to have greater autonomy. The paper refers to a future in which the education landscape is populated by Academies and Free Schools and where few schools are local authority maintained.

The planned measures are to:

- ***“Dramatically extend the Academies programme”***, offering the opportunity to all schools. Schools rated outstanding or good with outstanding features by Ofsted are automatically eligible to become an Academy. All other schools – primary and secondary – are also eligible if they commit to working in partnership with a high performing school, or another sponsor. Failing schools will be asked to convert to Academies, and local authorities will have a responsibility to support this process, including finding a suitable sponsor. In January 2011 the government will invite special schools to apply to become Academies as well. It is envisaged that “Academy chains” will form that are mutually supportive and efficient. Academies will have the freedoms they were originally granted.
- Support teachers and parents to set up new Free Schools to meet parental demand, especially in areas of deprivation. Free Schools will be supported by the New Schools Network. Applications to open a Free School will be considered against criterion including educational standards, due diligence and whether the ideology of the proposer is of concern. It is envisaged that universities, colleges and businesses will set up Free Schools called University Technology Colleges (UTCs) and Studio Schools.
- Give the local authority a reduced role that will include coordinating fair admissions, managing the supply of school places and offering school improvement strategies to support local schools on a more commercial basis.

Accountability

The intention is to make schools accountable, not just to the government but to the public, especially parents. To this end, additional information will be put in the public domain, including financial information as well as attainment data.

The planned measures are to:

- Change the information that is put in the public domain about each school so that it includes financial information, for example, the amount of money that is allocated to each pupil, and performance data that shows the progress that each pupil is making, especially the most deprived. To demonstrate this, a new measure will be introduced that replaces the “contextual value added” data, as well as a new measure to show how a young person does when they leave school. Success in delivering the English Baccalaureate will be highlighted in the performance data.
- Schools will also be required to publish admissions information and oversubscription criterion, the school’s curriculum, the school’s phonics and reading schemes, arrangements for setting pupils, the behaviour policy and home

school agreement, the special needs policy, information about how the school uses the Pupil Premium, and clear signposting for parents who would like more detailed information on any policies and strategies.

- Reform Ofsted inspection. A new framework will come into effect in Autumn 2011 following consultation. The proposed framework will focus on four things, pupil achievement, the quality of teaching, leadership and management and the behaviour and safety of pupils. Ofsted will also be asked to change its timetable for inspection. ***“Subject to legislation, we will exempt primary schools secondary schools and sixth form colleges which have been judged to be outstanding from routine inspection from Autumn 2011 and re-inspect only if there is evidence of decline or widening attainment gaps. We plan to extend the same principle to outstanding special schools and PRUs.”*** However, inadequate schools will be inspected termly. Satisfactory schools will also be inspected regularly if they are deemed to be “stuck”. Schools will be able to request an inspection if they feel they have improved since the last judgement.
- Change the ‘floor standard’ for primary and secondary schools. For secondary schools, a school will be below the floor if fewer than 35 per cent of pupils achieve below 5 A*-C grade GCSEs including English and maths, and fewer pupils make good progress between key stage two and key stage four than the national average. For primary schools a school will be below the floor target if fewer than 60 per cent achieve level 4 in English and maths and fewer pupils than average make the expected levels of progress between key stage one and key stage two. ***“We will make sure that there is an appropriately differentiated approach to supporting schools below the floor to improve.”***
- Change the requirements for governance with the intention of making it clearer, more focused and more flexible. From early 2012 all schools will be able to adopt the model of a smaller governing body with appropriate skills and including at least two parent governors.

School improvement

The vision is that the school system should be self-supporting and self-improving. It is proposed that that there will be less direction from the centre, local authorities will be able to choose the support they offer and schools will be offered incentives to support each other to improve.

The planned measures are to:

- Give the responsibility for improvement to governors, head teachers and teachers and end the requirement for every school to have a local authority school improvement partner (SIP). ***“We will expect schools to set their own improvement priorities. As long as schools provide a good education, we will not mandate specific approaches. Schools will determine what targets to set for themselves, choose what forms of external support they want and determine how to evaluate themselves.”***
- Develop ways to help schools support each other to improve, by increasing the number of head teachers who are National and Local Leaders of Education, developing Teaching Schools and publishing “families of schools” data so that schools can identify another school in their region that they could work with to improve.

- Provide additional support for all schools to access best practice and improvement services, and for schools below the floor target to improve.
- Local authorities will be free to provide whatever forms of improvement support they choose. The balance of how much support will be provided by the local authority, and how much will be provided directly between schools is not specified; there may be the opportunity for this to evolve differently depending on local conditions. There are some additional details that hint at the balance of school improvement delivery between central government, the local authority, other schools and other providers including the private and voluntary sector:
 - ***“As the National Strategies and other field forces come to an end, we will support a new market of school improvement services with a much wider range of providers and services available for schools to choose from. We will work with a growing number of providers to make it easier for head teachers and teachers to find out about improvement services on offer as well as making high quality research, good practice and free resources easily available.”***
 - ***“Local authorities will be free to define how they will support school improvement and will no longer be required to set local authority level targets. Local authorities might choose to offer school improvement as a traded service. This could include continuing to provide support and challenge to schools that want it, running improvement conferences, bring people together to tackle local problems and brokering support from excellent schools to support other schools.”***
 - Where schools are failing, ***“We will work directly with the schools and local authorities concerned, to make sure that there is a comprehensive plan for turning problems around. We will work with and fund local authorities to identify an experienced and effective education professional – typically a serving or recent head teacher – to act as lead adviser.”***
- Introduce a new Education Endowment Fund for funding innovative projects to raise the attainment of deprived children in underperforming schools. Local authorities and schools will be able to apply. There will be £110 million in the fund and it will aim ***“to encourage bold and innovative approaches.”***
- Introduce a collaboration incentive, worth £35 million each year, to financially reward schools that effectively support weaker schools and improve their performance.

School funding

The intention is that funding is made ‘more transparent, fairer and progressive’. Increasingly the Department of Education would like to allocate funding directly to schools, and provide the public with information about how schools spend the money they receive. Funding will continue to pass through the local authority only if schools are local authority maintained.

The planned measures are to:

- Give each school a 'pupil premium' – additional money for each deprived pupil. ***“This will mean that head teachers have money to spend on offering an excellent education to these children: it will also make it more likely that schools will want to admit less affluent children; and it will make it more attractive to open new Free Schools in the most deprived part of the country.”***
- Consult on a new funding formula (consultation to be published in Spring 2011).
- Publish how much money schools receive and how they spend it.
- Set up a new Education Funding Agency (EFA) to replace the Young People's Learning Agency. This will be responsible for the direct funding of Academies, Free Schools and all 16-19 provision.
- Ensure there is equity in the funding of post-16 education so that school sixth forms will receive the same amount of funding as FE colleges. This will begin in 2011-12 and is planned to be complete by 2015.
- Act on the recommendations of the review of capital spending (due to be published by the end of 2010).

Ongoing and planned reviews

Wolf Review	Review of vocational education and qualifications
Bew Review	Effectiveness of KS2 testing and assessment
Henley Review	Improving music education
Tickell Review	Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum review
Independent review of education capital	
Ofsted review of alternative provision	
Internal review to improve the quality of PSHE teaching	

Forthcoming publications

Green paper on special educational needs and disability
 Consultation on school funding (published Spring 2011)

Forthcoming additional guidance

“We will issue a short, clear, robust guide on teachers' powers to use reasonable force and we will give schools greater discretion to decide on the most appropriate approach to monitoring the exercise of these powers”

“We will issue statutory guidance to extend head teachers' powers to punish school pupils who misbehave on their way to or from school”

“We will rationalise and simplify” guidance on bullying.