


What will the new RISE Scheme mean for schools and academy trusts?

14 November 2024  Charlotte Antoniou

The DfE's newly unveiled Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) Scheme has been met with a mixture of anticipation and scepticism. The scheme seeks to provide consistency and support across each region when it comes to school improvement.

Groups of civil servants and advisers will start supporting schools in 2025 and will be "strongly informed" by the new Ofsted report cards, after September 2025.

The report cards will determine one of three categories:

- Minimal issues with strong capacity requiring "universal support".
- One or several issues needing "targeted support".
- Those "requiring intervention".

Currently, there's clear separation between Ofsted's judgement powers and the DfE's intervention powers. The DfE will need to provide further clarity on the role and powers that will be vested in the RISE teams and how this will fit with the legal status of academy trusts.

Education lawyer Charlotte Antoniou comments: "At the core of any academy trust or school's strategy, is usually the drive to "elevate educational standards and foster excellence", which is at the heart of the RISE Scheme. However, speaking with some of those leaders about this new scheme, there are growing concerns about the vagueness and the actual powers vested in the RISE teams required to effect meaningful change."

Education secretary Bridget Phillipson has said: "For too long, support for school improvement has been fragmented and complex. I want to change that.", likely referencing the 'two-tier' system of maintained schools and academies.

Does there need to be seamless cooperation between local authorities and academy trusts for the RISE Scheme to succeed?

The success of RISE will be in the detail. We'll be following developments closely and will provide further guidance on what RISE will mean for schools and trusts, once we have more clarity on its implementation and powers.

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