

Schools White Paper Briefing

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The paper is divided into four chapters:

- An excellent teacher for every child
- Delivering high standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance
- Targeted support for every child who needs it
- A stronger and fairer school system

Some of the headline-grabbing features include:

Teacher development – The single biggest programme of teacher development ever undertaken in this country, including 500,000 teacher training and development opportunities, the introduction of a specialist qualification for Leading Literacy and a £30,000 starting salary for teachers.

Achievement - 90% of primary school children to achieve the expected standard in Key Stage 2 reading, writing and maths by 2030. Aims to see the national average GCSE grade in both English Language and maths increase from 4.5 in 2019 to 5 by 2030.

Curriculum – The introduction of a new arm's-length national curriculum body which will create packages of expert-crafted optional, free, adaptable digital curriculum resources for schools to use.

Uniformity of school hours – All schools will be expected to offer a minimum school week of 32.5 hours by September 2023.

Attendance - New legislation to create new statutory guidance on attendance, including a requirement for every school to publish a clear attendance policy. Legislation to include new rules on recording attendance.

Targeted support – A 'Parent Pledge' that the Government, via schools, will identify children who need help and provide targeted support, including small group tuition. The Government has invested £1 billion to establish the National Tutoring Programme and promises to deliver up to six million tutoring packages by 2024.

SEND – A focus on ensuring that pupils with SEND have the same opportunities as their peers. The Government will be consulting on a new professional qualification for new SENCOs and promises to invest £2.6bn in support for high needs in next three years. More detail can be found in the SEND Green Paper released on 29 March 2022.

Inspections - Ofsted will inspect every school by 2025, including the backlog of 'outstanding' schools that haven't been inspected for many years.

Education Endowment Foundation - At least £100m will be made available to put the Education Endowment Foundation on a long-term footing so it can continue to evaluate and spread best practice in education across the country.

"A stronger and fairer school system"

The schools and academies sector has been waiting with bated breath to see what the Government's take will be on academisation within the Schools White Paper.

What is now clear is that:

- Government envisages a move to a fully trust-led system with a single regulatory approach. This will drive up education standards through the growth of strong trusts and the establishment of new ones, as there is much to be learned from strong trusts.
- By 2030 all children will benefit from being taught in a school in (or in the process of joining) a strong trust. This will help transform underperforming schools and deliver the best possible outcomes for children.
- Government will consult on moving schools that have received two consecutive below 'Good' reviews into a trust and on the circumstances in which a good school could request that the regulator agrees to the school moving to a stronger trust.
- Government will introduce new powers enabling the Secretary of State to bring maintained schools into the academy system in certain circumstances.
- Local authorities will be given legal powers to establish trusts and to request their non-academy schools join a trust, where that is the right approach for local schools.
- Government will avoid converting schools as standalone academies but will consider bids for high-quality free schools to open initially as standalone trusts (although with the expectation that most trusts will serve a minimum of 7,500 pupils/10 schools).
- The Department for Education will review how best to hold trusts accountable against a new 'strong' trust definition, focused on the quality and inclusivity of the education they provide, how they improve schools and maintain their local identity, how they protect value for money for the taxpayer and how they develop their workforce (regulatory review expected in May 2022).
- £86m will be made available to grow and strengthen trusts over the next three years, with a particular focus on investment in 55 'Education Investment Areas' (and within that, 24 'Priority Education Investment Areas' where outcomes in literacy and numeracy are the poorest. Government will also introduce financial incentives for teachers to work in schools in those areas.

The Government's last White Paper on the schools system, 'Educational Excellence Everywhere', was in 2016 and many of its policy proposals were not subsequently progressed. As such, it is important to note that, by comparison, much of the vision set out in new the Schools White Paper, 'Opportunity for All', is less politically radical and more pragmatic and solution focused.

At this juncture, many of the new White Paper's aspirations and proposals remain at a relatively early stage and it is for this reason that some commentators have described it as a 'White Paper with Green stripes'. Certainly, while the White Paper contains some big statements of intent, the devil will, as always, be in the detail.

However, notwithstanding that, the Government has now put forward a clear overarching framework designed to have secured by 2030 a unified, single schools system made up of multi academy trusts, with well-defined roles for all of parts of the sector, including its regulators. We anticipate that the availability of a greater level of clarity about the Government's strategic intent will be helpful to many in the schools and academies sector.

We will be watching carefully as the further consultations to inform the associated future legislation and guidance are progressed over the coming months and we will keep you advised. However, in the meantime, if you have any immediate concerns or want to have a discussion about what the Schools White Paper could mean for your school/trust, do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

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