

A New Relationship with Schools: Next Steps

Foreword

For the last year the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and other partners have been developing a new relationship with schools. Our aim is to help schools raise standards – with clearer priorities, less clutter, intelligent accountability and a bigger role for school leaders in system-wide reform, and better information for parents.

This new relationship has been actively shaped by some of the major professional associations working in partnership with us. We are testing our ideas extensively, and listening carefully to the views of leading practitioners. We have been helped particularly by the Implementation Review Unit (IRU), an independent panel of people working in schools across England with a remit to minimise red tape and bureaucratic burdens. The IRU has kept us thinking about how to streamline our work with schools.

While there remains much to learn, we are now confident that we are moving in the right direction. Schools, local authorities, the Learning and Skills Council and other partners need to know much more about how this new relationship will work for them, so that they can prepare effectively for it. This document sets out the practical changes that we plan, the timetable for change, and the actions we hope schools and local authorities will now start to take.

The reactions we have so far had to our ideas confirm that this new relationship goes with the grain of the best practice in schools and local authorities. It will enable more schools to shape an excellent education for their pupils and it will give parents greater confidence about the quality of education their children receive.



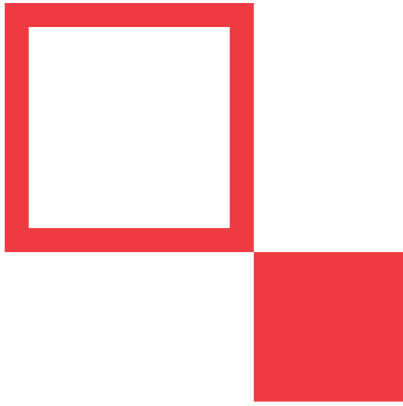
Ruth Kelly



David Bell

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Chapter 1

A New Relationship with Schools

Since 1997 we have seen continuous improvement in education. We have an improving system of education, and one that has in place many of the pre-conditions for further improvement, as the Chief Inspector of Schools, David Bell, commented in his latest annual report. The time is right to reshape the relationship between schools and central and local government, so as to release greater initiative and energy in schools in a way that helps standards rise further.

The new relationship will:

- build the capacity of schools to improve, with rigorous self-evaluation, stronger collaboration and effective planning for improvement
- enable talented school leaders to play a wider part in system-wide reform
- operate an intelligent accountability framework that is rigorous and has a lighter touch, giving schools, parents and pupils the information they need
- reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, making it easier for schools to engage the support they require without duplicative bidding, planning and reporting requirements
- improve data systems to put the most useful data on pupils' progress into the hands of schools and those who work with them
- secure better alignment between schools' priorities and the priorities of local and central government.

Our ultimate goal is to have a school system in which every child matters; in which attention is paid to their individual needs for education and well-being; and in which schools can develop the distinct ethos and approaches that maximise the potential of their **pupils**.

Parents will have greater confidence that their children are being educated and developed in ways that suit their personal abilities and needs. They will have better information, through more frequent inspections and the school Profile, about the quality of the schools their children attend.

Teachers will work in schools that have more autonomy to shape their teaching approach to the learning needs of pupils. They will have better data about their pupils and more opportunity to choose to engage with support programmes of most relevance to their need. Some of the burdens of the old accountability regime, like lengthy preparations for inspection, will be lightened.

The statutory responsibilities of school **Governors** for schools' strategies, targets, budgets and key policies are not altered. Governors will find it easier to set the strategy for their schools, with the ability to plan finances over 3 years and with better external support.

School leaders will have more scope to assess the improvement priorities for their schools, and to concentrate on those, with less distraction caused by multiple bidding and accountabilities. They will each benefit from a "single conversation" about whole-school reform with an accredited, professional partner. They will have more opportunities to be involved in leading the reform of the whole school system.

Local Authorities will have the opportunity to build stronger local capacity for school improvement, and to align the improvement priorities of their schools with local priorities. They remain statutorily responsible for school improvement and for a wide range of children's services.

How will the new relationship work?

These practical changes are under way:

- alignment of 3-year **budgets** for schools with 3-year plans
- shorter, sharper **inspections** that give schools a clearer idea of whether they are pursuing the right priorities for raising pupil attainment
- better information for parents through a school **Profile**, and more frequent inspections
- challenge and support for school heads from high-quality, professional, nationally accredited **School Improvement Partners**, most of whom will be experienced heads
- a “**single conversation**” between each school and its School Improvement Partner about the school’s priorities for improvement, instead of multiple accountabilities to various stakeholders
- more weight on the **school’s self-evaluation** as the starting point for planning, inspection and the “single conversation”
- better **data and information systems**, making use of the latest information on individual pupils’ progress and of electronic systems
- easy to access **communications** that give schools the choice of what to draw on and when.

The Main Changes at a Glance

KEY FEATURES	old	new
inspection	<p>6-10 weeks' notice before an inspection</p> <p>maximum 6-year interval between inspections</p> <p>relatively large inspection teams visiting for a week</p>	<p>2-5 days' notice</p> <p>maximum 3-year interval</p> <p>small team visiting for no more than 2 days – around a quarter of current inspection weight</p>
public accountability	<p>governors' annual report</p> <p>annual parents' meeting</p>	<p>Profile</p>
school funding	<p>1-year funding aligned with financial year</p> <p>over 20 separate grants</p>	<p>3-year funding aligned with academic years</p> <p>fewer than 5 separate grants</p>
external support	<p>link advisers</p>	<p>nationally accredited School Improvement Partners working to local authorities</p>
school self-evaluation and planning	<p>most schools undertake some form of evaluation, but not all, and not linked to planning and inspection</p> <p>multiple accountabilities and support programmes</p>	<p>self-evaluation as the starting point for inspection, planning, external relations</p> <p>"single conversation"</p>
data	<p>multiple surveys</p> <p>data on school performance not aligned across inspection, monitoring, planning</p>	<p>School Census: data collected once, used many times</p> <p>data aligned</p>
communications	<p>monthly batch of paper to all schools</p>	<p>online ordering</p>

The Timetable for Change

Subject to Parliamentary decisions, our plan is to make these changes in a phased way over the period from September 2005 to September 2007. The first wave of change in 2005 to 2006 will be an opportunity for learning more about how to shape the whole school system better.

The target dates are:

before September 2005

- training in effective school self-evaluation available
- local authorities plan for School Improvement Partners
- accreditation for secondary School Improvement Partners to work in about 30 local authorities

from September 2005

- new short-notice inspection system starts (subject to Parliamentary decision)
- schools can start filling in Profile (subject to Parliamentary decision)
- about 30 local authorities introduce School Improvement Partners for secondary schools

from January 2006

- data will be collected from schools through an enhanced School Census

from April 2006

- first school budgets on academic year basis to cover 2006/2007 and 2007/2008
- new simplified grant structure
- training and accreditation for the first 700 primary School Improvement Partners begins

September 2006

- all secondary schools have School Improvement Partners
- 30-40 local authorities introduce School Improvement Partners for primary schools

from April 2007

- first 3-year school budgets on academic year basis to cover 2007/2008 to 2009/2010

September 2007

- all primary schools have School Improvement Partners.

ACTION POINTS

Schools, head teachers, local authorities and governors need to start preparing for the new relationship now.

For all schools

Schools will want to be sure that their approach to self-evaluation is fit for purpose. Schools that have not been inspected for the last 4 years might expect an inspection at very short notice at any time from September 2005. All such schools may wish to give priority before September to reviewing their approach to self-evaluation, and use the new self-evaluation form (go to <http://forms.ofsted.gov.uk/edc2003/>) to update their conclusions.

For local authorities

Local authorities should plan for School Improvement Partners to be phased in. They will want to consider the pace at which they do this and some will want to move quickly enough to allow the 2005-2006 planning cycle in secondary schools to be informed by accredited School Improvement Partners. We suggest that about 30 authorities might move at this pace, securing the benefits of School Improvement Partners earlier than others and contributing substantially to the system's understanding of the implementation issues. These authorities will want to start identifying suitable School Improvement Partners now, and to have them assessed and accredited by the start of the autumn 2005 term. Other authorities will need more time: we suggest that they aim to have accredited secondary School Improvement Partners in place by the start of the autumn 2006 term. We expect a system for accrediting primary School Improvement Partners to follow in the 2006-2007 financial year.

To enable local authorities to arrange for people accredited as School Improvement Partners to work with their schools, we propose to establish a national application, assessment and accreditation process. We plan that by the end of May 2005 the first wave will deliver enough accredited School Improvement Partners for the authorities ready to start in September 2005.

For head teachers and those who have recently served as a head teacher

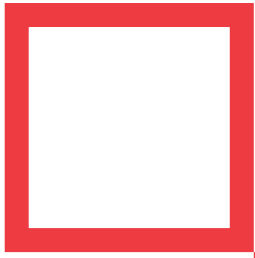
Experienced heads including recently-serving heads who judge they have the qualities to be School Improvement Partners and that their schools' leadership teams are strong enough to allow them to work out of school as a School Improvement Partner should consider applying. National advertisements will appear during March and at intervals thereafter as the programme is implemented.

For local authority personnel

Experienced advisers who judge they have the qualities to be School Improvement Partners should consider applying. National advertisements will appear during March and at intervals thereafter as the programme is implemented.

For governors

Subject to Parliamentary decisions, every school will be required to produce an annual school Profile, starting in the academic year 2005/2006. Every school will be able to start preparing its Profile from autumn 2005 and parents will be able to access the Profile on-line from January 2006. Profiles can be accessed by schools and governing bodies on TeacherNet and GovernorNet. Parents will be able to see Profiles on the Parentscentre.



Chapter 2

What We Have Learned So Far

Listening to practitioners

In his speech to the North of England Education Conference in January 2004, David Miliband, then Minister of State for School Standards, set out a vision for a new relationship between the government and all maintained schools. With David Bell, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, he reported our developing thinking in June 2004.

There is strong support for a package of changes that creates a more intelligent accountability and a better focus on school improvement. However, the many details of our proposals, and the practical reality of how they will work in schools, need working through carefully.

In developing the new relationship we have therefore made an exceptional effort to draw on the experience of people in the frontline. The test of success is "what works best for people in schools?" not "what works best for government?"

The Implementation Review Unit has had a major hand in shaping the new relationship. Its insights into what schools actually experience as a result of external decisions will continue to be valuable.

Trying out the new relationship

We have consulted throughout with leading people from the teacher unions, head teacher associations, parents' organisations, local authorities, school governors, and school improvement specialists. Their contributions have improved and shaped the government's thinking. We will continue to welcome their partnership as we move to implementation. The membership of our key consultative group is in the Annex.

Trials of the new relationship in 92 schools in 8 local authorities started at the beginning of the September 2004 term. At the same time, Ofsted piloted the new inspection arrangements with 92 schools in 15 local authorities and will carry out another 101 pilot inspections up to the end of the summer term 2005. The DfES trials will continue until the end of the same term, and we will begin phased implementation of the new arrangements from September 2005. The learning, however, will not stop at the end of the trials: we will continue to apply lessons learned as the programme rolls out.

The schools in the trial, and the School Improvement Partners working with them, have made a substantial impact on the government's plans for the new relationship. They have already given us practical insights into how to streamline relations between schools and local and central government; how best to inform parents; and how to focus self-evaluation on the identification of the key development priorities. We expect to learn much more from them as the trials develop.

Lessons so far

There is overwhelming support for the changes and particularly for making a coordinated set of changes, so that inspection, schools' planning and relations with external agencies are all aligned, pose consistent questions about how well pupils are served, and use the same data to answer those questions.

Inspection is a powerful tool for school improvement, and one that needs to evolve so that it remains sharp, proportionate, and closely allied to the process of planning improvements within schools. Ofsted's consultation on the future of inspection drew strong backing for a shorter inspection, based on school self-evaluation and conducted with very little notice so that schools do not put unnecessary effort into preparing for the inspectors.

The new trial inspections have demonstrated that it is possible to judge a school accurately in a short inspection. The new approach feels very different from what has gone before, both for inspectors and schools. Schools have welcomed the fact that inspectors start from the school's self-evaluation, and involve the school's leadership team more than before. Both inspectors and schools have found the new process professionally exacting and more likely to guide the future development of the school.

Schools in the pilot inspections have responded well to the emphasis placed on rigorous **self-evaluation**. They do not want the process to be over-prescribed, but to allow freedom for schools to shape it dynamically according to the changing circumstances of the school. Some have found that their approach needs to be strengthened and want training in how to do so. All the schools in the inspection pilots have put considerable effort into completing self-evaluation forms. These painted a picture of the schools which was invaluable to lead inspectors prior to inspection. In turn, the inspectors felt the self-evaluation encouraged a whole-school approach and reduced the demand for additional information from the school prior to and during the inspection. Many of the schools in the pilot set out how they gathered the views of pupils, parents and other stakeholders, rather than how they used those views. A common thread, which came through the evaluations carried out with schools in the pilot, was the need to incorporate pupils' voices more fully in the self-evaluation process. Some schools set out clearly the actions they had taken towards improvement but had not evaluated whether the actions had the desired impact, particularly on outcomes for pupils. This lack of evaluation often made it difficult for the schools to give a clear judgement in the self-evaluation form of the impact of leadership and management.

Even where they were more descriptive than evaluative, self-evaluation forms allowed inspectors to develop a quick understanding of the school and its context and enabled them to plan the inspection with the school. This is particularly important given a model for inspection where there is not usually a pre-inspection visit and no more than 2 days are spent on site. The more self-evaluation was based on an honest assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses, the easier inspectors found it to focus the inspection sharply.

A number of positive features have emerged from the pilots. The use of the self-evaluation forms and the Ofsted Performance and Assessment tool (PANDA) to produce clear pre-inspection briefing notes, which are shared with the school, have been welcomed. The greater involvement of pupils in the inspection and the importance placed on gathering pupils' views has been well received by schools. It is clear that inspectors are making good use of the self-evaluation form and that the evidence gathered has been well tested against the schools' assertions. Staff directly involved in the inspections report that discussions are intensive and searching but well focused and fair.

Some areas remain to be developed further. With the short notice and the limited time inspectors are in the school it is difficult for inspectors to gather the views of parents and governors. Further work will take place in the summer term to develop approaches to ensure that both these important groups are more fully engaged in the inspection process.

Inspection reports are much shorter than under the current inspection arrangements: between 4 and 6 pages in length. 90 percent of the schools involved in the pilot inspections were satisfied with the new style of reporting. In addition, parents surveyed by Ofsted generally found the reports readable and thought that pupils' views were very well reported. Schools welcomed the noticeable focus on the quality of leadership and management in the reports. Given the reports' focus on self-evaluation and the impact made by leaders within the school, this is perhaps to be expected. Schools also report that the recommendations for school improvement have been very helpful.

The trials are showing that it is possible to offer schools a **School Improvement Partner** who has real credibility, and can add value to the thinking of a school's leadership team about how to raise the attainment of pupils. Professional challenge and support have been tested not only in the trials but also in programmes like the Primary Leadership Programme and the Leadership Incentive Grant, and have proved powerful in stimulating hard thinking about pupils' needs. The high quality data School Improvement Partners used in the trials pinpoints the strengths and weaknesses of pupil attainment. Many of those involved see the new data as a fundamental strength of the new relationship.

We believe there will be an adequate supply of people of the right calibre to be School Improvement Partners. The trials have shown that people of the right calibre and experience - experienced head teachers, serving heads, heads who are willing to take a secondment out of school, and experienced link advisers - can be found in the right numbers. They have been accredited for the trials after an exacting assessment which tested their ability to use data to diagnose a school's strengths and weaknesses, their ability to work with schools in a variety of circumstances, and their judgement about effective strategies for school improvement.

A critical question is the effect on a head's own school of taking him or her out of school part-time or on a secondment. A good school often has a strong leadership team, and there are positive benefits in allowing experienced deputy heads, and other staff, to take more responsibility in the head's absence. However, this requires planning within the School Improvement Partner's own school and clear explanations to its wider community. It may entail explicit changes to staff responsibilities.

There has been active debate about the length of time a serving head can spend outside his or her school as a School Improvement Partner. Our assessment is that a head with a strong leadership team can spend upwards of 17 days a year out of school, working with upwards of 3 other schools, without losing momentum on leadership within his or her own school. Some can give more time to the role. Each school where the head wants to work in this way will need to judge what commitment he or she can make.

Schools welcome our intentions to channel the external relations and accountabilities which bear on a school's improvement planning through a "**single conversation**" with a School Improvement Partner. Many in schools and in local government see strong benefits in aligning the single school plan with local and national priority projects, such as the national strategies. It is essential that schools can make the right links between all involved in pupils' achievement and pupils' well-being, so that they can integrate their support for pupils effectively and contribute to the delivery of integrated services locally. This will not prevent schools from engaging specialist help when needed.

Multiple **funding** streams, accompanied by multiple bids or plans and weighty monitoring arrangements, divert resources away from teaching and learning. There is a strong desire for a simplified funding regime which cuts down the number of funding streams, and allows schools to plan several years ahead. This is not simply to lighten the demands on school leaders' time, but also to allow them to plan change in a holistic instead of a fragmented way. Schools want all the agencies that generate funding and accountabilities - not only the DfES, local authorities and the LSC - to conform to the idea of a "single conversation".

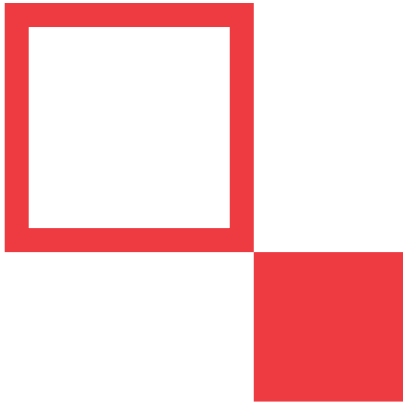
Schools also want to produce a single plan to suit all their planning and accountability purposes. In response to this, we are working on a short, electronic consolidated form on which schools may apply for wider roles. A school should expect to be able to use its single school plan, appended and cross-referenced to the short electronic form, as evidence for any initiatives in which it participates.

Many have suggested that, in addition to the other work on school improvement, the School Improvement Partner should advise the governing body on the head teacher's performance management and objectives. In the trials we tested this and School Improvement Partners found that the performance management work dovetailed extremely well with their other work. Feedback from head teachers and governors was also very positive. They found the process less bureaucratic, felt it led to sharper performance targets for the head, and liked the fact that the performance management advice was being provided by someone who was already knowledgeable about the school.

Parents are attracted to the concept of a concise **Profile** that allows them to see how a school is performing in key areas, including both academic results and the broader aspects of school life. They like the length and coverage of the Profile that has been tested in the trials. But they want the content to be more accessible, and to be jargon-free.

Too often the approach to **data** collection from schools has been to suit the convenience of the agencies using the data, rather than the convenience of people in schools. Therefore we intend to simplify data surveys and to apply the principle that data from schools should be collected once and used many times. There is also support for aligning the data about schools' performance, so that a school knows how the School Improvement Partner, the inspectors and others will look at its performance. Schools want sophisticated data, intelligently presented and easily accessed, about pupils' progress in all aspects of their work.

There is a strong welcome for the shift to electronic **communication**, away from communications to schools in large, undifferentiated paper mailings. Schools want to keep abreast of change, but to have communications that highlight what matters to them and allow them to choose what they want to receive when they want to receive it.



Chapter 3

What the New Relationship means for Schools

Key Changes

Schools will benefit from these key changes:

- clarity that the **school's own evaluation** of its performance will be the starting point for planning, inspection and relations with the maintaining authority
- assurance that the school's development plan is the key planning document, and that supplementary demands for paperwork will be kept to a minimum
- subject to Parliamentary decision, shorter, sharper **inspection**, which will assure the quality of the work of schools in striving for high standards, meeting the needs of all the pupils and ensuring their welfare, with less disturbance to the work of the school
- a **School Improvement Partner** who is accredited to rigorous national standards, is a credible expert in school improvement and is well briefed on the school's performance compared to similar schools. Many School Improvement Partners will be current or very recent heads or experienced local authority advisers
- a **"single conversation"** – a focused dialogue with the School Improvement Partner about how well the school is performing and its priorities for the future
- a **funding** regime which allows schools to plan ahead over 3 academic years, with far fewer distinct funding streams
- **targets** set by schools themselves, on the basis of their knowledge of the potential of their pupils and access to better evidence on individual performance

- **data** about the progress and performance of individual pupils and groups of pupils, to allow school leaders to focus resources on specific areas for development. The national data used by inspectors, School Improvement Partners, and the school itself to assess the progress of pupils will be aligned
- subject to Parliamentary decisions, a new school **Profile** - an opportunity to give a rounded account of what the school offers its pupils and its community, combining centrally-generated data with the school's own narrative
- more streamlined systems of **data collection**
- electronic **communications** from the DfES, which allow the school to choose what information it wants, when it wants it.

These changes are spelled out in detail in this chapter. In chapter 4 the implications for local authorities are explained. In chapter 6 the implications for Governors are explained.

School self-evaluation

Schools' own evaluation of their performance will be the starting point for planning, inspection and relations with the maintaining authority, including the dialogue with the School Improvement Partner. We believe, as do school leaders, that the process of self-evaluation should be designed by each school for its own circumstances, and should be developed by schools for their own needs. We have therefore resisted pressure for a uniform approach. High-level guidance for schools (A New Relationship with Schools: Improving Performance through School Self-Evaluation – see www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications or www.ofsted.gov.uk/sef) has been issued jointly by DfES and Ofsted focusing on how schools can get the best out of self-evaluation and use the findings effectively for school improvement. The publication includes annotated extracts from self-evaluation forms already completed by pilot schools in the trials.

Schools that have not been inspected for the last 4 years might expect an inspection at very short notice at any time from September 2005. All such schools may wish to give priority to reviewing their approach to self-evaluation before September, and use the new self-evaluation form (go to <http://forms.ofsted.gov.uk/edc2003/>) to update their conclusions.

Ofsted is holding a series of regional conferences in March 2005 to raise awareness of the new arrangements among local authorities, head teachers and chairmen of governing bodies. Professional associations are also running courses for their members.

Inspection

It is crucial to school improvement that the system achieves the right balance between, on one side, external accountability and challenge, and on the other, schools' internal quality assurance. It is also clear that effective self-evaluation requires the engagement of all key stakeholders within a school and must focus on learning, teaching and the improvement of outcomes.

Many schools currently use Ofsted's form S4 as a basis for self-evaluation. This form is based on the evaluation schedule within the current Framework for Inspecting Schools. The new proposals for inspection set out an evaluation schedule which builds on the current arrangements but focuses more precisely on the 'central nervous system of the school'. The new Framework which went out for consultation in early November 2004 identifies an evaluation schedule against which schools can identify their progress. The key areas are set out below:

- the overall standards pupils attain and the standards attained by different groups such as girls and boys, gifted and talented pupils, children in public care, those from different ethnic groups and those with different special needs
- the progress made by pupils over time: for example, how well they do between entering nursery and leaving the Foundation Stage, or between Key Stages 2 and 4, or over all the key stages
- the progress pupils make in their personal development and well-being, including the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes: being healthy, being safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being
- teaching, curriculum and the care, guidance and support offered to pupils
- the leadership and management of the school, at all levels, including governance
- those features which are special to a school
- links with other providers of education, services and employment.

Ofsted has identified new inspection criteria to reflect the move from a 7- to a 4-point scale ranging from outstanding to inadequate, together with changes to the evaluation schedule. And it has produced guidance for inspectors, which schools may wish to refer to when undertaking their self-evaluation. The guidance covers the key questions which need to be asked for each part of the evaluation schedule and related inspection criteria.

The purpose of inspection criteria is to enable everyone to understand the judgements that are being made. Criteria have been produced which focus on outcomes rather than processes. It is more important to know, for example, that pupils are safe from bullying than whether the right policies and referral procedures are in place. Equally, we do not wish to create a culture of compliance by creating detailed, process-related criteria. By making inspectors' judgements primarily about what schools deliver, not what they do, we hope to avoid this.

Additional guidance on conducting the inspection has been published for inspectors. This is in 2 parts: the first sets out the process of inspections, indicating the main principles, stages and approaches of inspection; the second explains the procedures for schools causing concern. Schools will find this helpful in understanding the new approaches inspectors will follow; for example, how they will use the self-evaluation form, how they will work with senior managers within the school and how they will be deployed to carry out a range of inspection activities.

Both the guidance and the inspection criteria are published in draft on Ofsted's website. More information about the new inspection arrangements can be found in Ofsted Direct (www.ofsted.gov.uk/ofsteddirect).

School Improvement Partners

School leaders want challenge and support from people who really know the business of school improvement and the realities of school leadership. School Improvement Partners will provide this to a national standard of professionalism. Their role will be key to challenging and supporting schools to improve.

School Improvement Partners should be credible, experienced practitioners. This will be assured through a tightly drawn person specification for the post and a rigorous assessment and accreditation process. The guiding principles of their work are:

- **respect for the school's autonomy** to plan its development, starting from the school's self-evaluation and the needs of the community, especially the children
- **focus on pupil achievement**, and the many aspects of the school's work, including pupil well-being, which can affect that
- **professional challenge and support**, so that the head teacher feels that the practice is improved by interaction with the School Improvement Partner and the school achieves the highest possible standards for all its pupils

- **evidence-based** assessment of the school's performance and of effective strategies for improving teaching and learning
- **coherence**, so that external agencies consistently support the school's normal cycles of evaluation, planning and action.

We intend that every maintained primary and secondary school should have a School Improvement Partner who is accredited to national standards. Each school's Improvement Partner will be accountable to the school's maintaining authority through a contract and will have significant links through the National Strategies contractor to central government. The School Improvement Partner will be assigned to the school by the maintaining authority, and although we expect authorities to take into account any specific objections a school may have to a particular appointment, the final choice is for the authority.

School Improvement Partners will be assessed for:

- their ability to analyse a school's strengths and areas for improvement
- their judgement of effective strategies for school improvement and
- their ability to interact effectively with school leaders in a variety of circumstances.

The process will be managed by the National Strategies contractor.

School Improvement Partners for Primary Schools

We intend that there should be a mixture of people undertaking the School Improvement Partner role. These will include school improvement staff employed by the local authority full-time (current link advisers, usually ex-heads and heads on secondment) and serving or recent head teachers working part-time.

The balance of full- and part-time School Improvement Partners is likely to vary from authority to authority and, though we do not want to be prescriptive, we would encourage local authorities to draw in more School Improvement Partners with recent headship experience (recognising that many primary advisers come from a headship background). This is consistent with our general drive to get primary head teachers better engaged in leading system-wide reform, and will build on the example of the heads deployed in the Primary Leadership Programme as consultant leaders. It is important that the primary School Improvement Partner, whether an adviser or a head, is well-qualified, accredited and supported to carry out the role effectively.

Thirty to 40 authorities can expect to have School Improvement Partners for their primary schools from September 2006. All primary schools can expect to have them from September 2007.

School Improvement Partners for Secondary Schools

It is necessary to bring secondary head teachers into system-wide reform and thereby strengthen and increase the credibility of school improvement services. We believe it is right to give a firm steer to secure a high proportion of secondary head teachers as School Improvement Partners. We intend that three quarters of them should be serving or recent secondary head teachers. Consultations confirm that there is active support for this, and that there will be other benefits: wider career paths for experienced heads; extra local and national capacity for school improvement; and faster development of the next generation of heads.

We are now launching a drive to recruit, train and accredit about 500 School Improvement Partners for secondary schools, of whom we expect about 400 to be current or recent secondary heads. We are looking for about 110 School Improvement Partners to be accredited now to work in about 30 Local authorities from September 2005, and about 420 to be accredited later, to start in 2006.

Academies will be treated in a similar manner to maintained schools in nearly all respects of the new relationship. Even so, Academies are encouraged to be innovatory in all aspects of their work, and we expect them to adapt aspects of the new relationship, for example through groups of Academies coming together to provide services to others, in ways which promote our objectives for the programme. Our current expectation is that Academies' School Improvement Partners will be deployed and managed by the DfES. The School Improvement Partners will have to be assessed and accredited in the same way as all other School Improvement Partners, through the arrangements made by the National Strategies contractor on behalf of the DfES.

School Improvement Partners for Special Schools

Special schools will benefit from the new relationship. There are 2 special schools in the trials: one all-age school in West Sussex and a secondary in Newcastle, both catering for pupils with severe learning difficulties. We have also held detailed discussions with a group of leading special schools and local authority representatives about the new relationship. But we need to consider how the "single conversation" can work for a greater range of special schools, both maintained and non-maintained, across the country and what adaptations are necessary to take account of the particular circumstances of those schools. We will therefore use the remainder of the trials to do this.

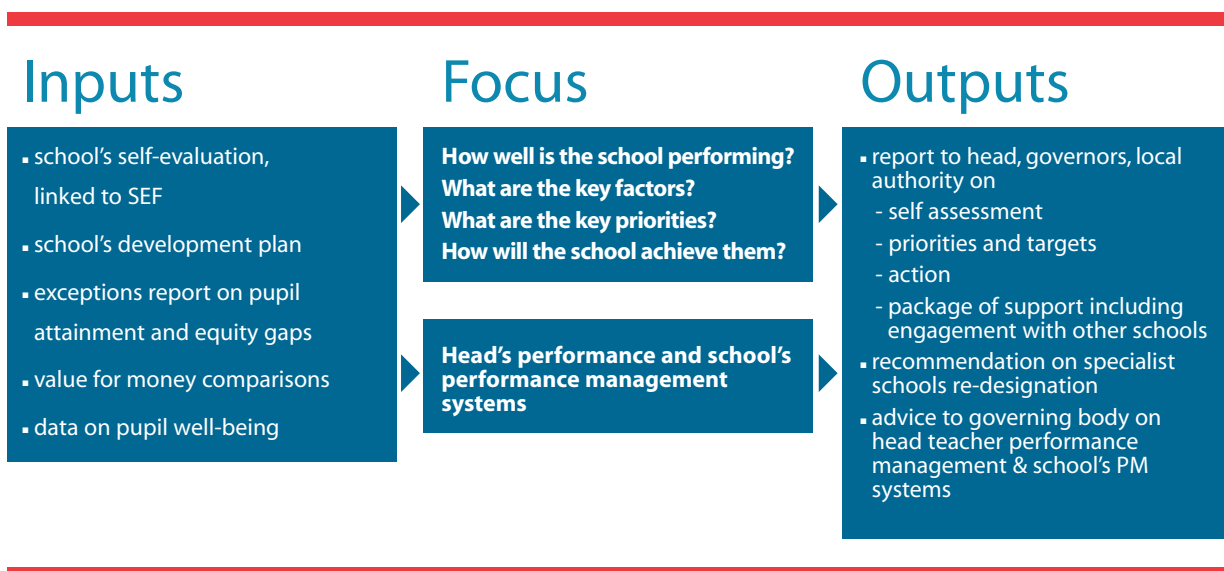
We will also consider carrying out a more extensive trial during the academic year 2005/2006 with a larger number and greater range of special schools, in particular, to clarify the value or otherwise of having School Improvement Partners for special schools.

A “single conversation”

We are aligning the systems that support schools’ forward planning so that schools are well supported in producing effective plans to raise student attainment over the next 3 years. Our Consultation on new school funding arrangements from 2006-07 (available at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/>) proposes that schools will have from April 2006:

- a new Single Standards Grant, combining most grants
- school budget allocations set for 3 academic years at a time.

This alignment will enable a head teacher and a School Improvement Partner to have a brief, focused dialogue about the school’s priorities for improvement. The inputs and outputs related to this are set out in the diagram below.



This “single conversation” brings into alignment several interactions that many schools have hitherto experienced as separate, fragmented discussions. In particular, it brings together the discussions about schools’ future plans and targets, about the support schools need from outside, about re-designation for specialist school status, about local authorities’ categorisation of schools, about head teachers’ performance, and about the follow up to Ofsted reports.

Every Child Matters

Following on from the 2003 White Paper, *Every Child Matters*, the Children Act 2004 is now in place and this has implications for the way in which schools will need to ensure that they are doing all they can to remove the barriers to learning from every child on their rolls. We believe that the new relationship with schools and the work of the School Improvement Partner can assist schools in this task.

Children’s educational attainment is one of the most, if not the most important factor in children’s future success, and schools are already doing much to contribute to the five outcomes for all children and young people. However, the Children Act brings specific issues to schools’ agenda that will need to be addressed in the new relationship.

The National Strategies contractor will ensure that *Every Child Matters* issues form part of the national training and accreditation system for School Improvement Partners. Local authorities will provide data and local contextual information that will give School Improvement Partners a clear understanding of their local plans for the Children’s Services agenda. School Improvement Partners will have focused data on educational progress which pinpoints groups of pupils who are not doing well enough at school. They will also have data on attendance, exclusions and pupil destinations. In addition, they will use the evidence that they will have from the judgements made by Ofsted and the schools’ own self evaluation processes.

School Improvement Partners’ conversations with schools will focus on educational outcomes and those factors which bear on educational outcomes; especially health, behaviour, attendance and engagement. Their brief will be to monitor and challenge the schools to identify inequitable outcomes, factors which contribute to them and the action the school ought to take. In that context School Improvement Partners will challenge and support schools’ contribution to meeting the 5 outcomes of the *Every Child Matters* agenda. In line with the thinking in *Every Child Matters* central and local government will want School Improvement Partners to encourage schools to consider how they can develop childcare and other extended services to the benefit of pupils and the local community.

Performance Management of Head Teachers

School Improvement Partners will also advise governors on head teachers' performance management, including suggesting targets for the head, and provide light-touch validation of schools' performance management systems. In doing so they will provide the functions currently performed by the External Adviser.

Having these functions undertaken by one person helps to reduce the number of partners working with schools, reduces the bureaucracy attached to the performance management process and should ensure that performance management and school improvement reinforce each other.

The Regulations that currently require governors to take external advice on heads' performance management will be amended so that this requirement no longer applies. School Improvement Partners will be allocated to schools by local authorities and, whilst schools will be able to object to a specific appointment where they have good reasons for doing so, the final allocation is for the local authority. The funds for the External Adviser functions will be incorporated in local budgets from April 2006.

The School Plan

We intend that this focused dialogue should end the "bidding culture" that schools complain of and the multiple accountabilities that make schools write more paperwork than is needed. Two documents should be key – the *school's self-evaluation record*, out of which the *school's plan* is formulated. There should normally be no need for schools to produce more than one plan. We are working with the Implementation Review Unit on ways of radically streamlining other requests for paperwork that come from the DfES and other agencies. In particular, we will create a short electronic consolidated form for schools to apply for wider roles and to record what they are committing to deliver. A school will be able to use its single school plan as evidence for the initiatives in which it participates. There will, however, be some bids, for example, for EU funding, controlled by separate guidelines.

Funding

The funding reforms we are putting in place, identified by head teachers as the most beneficial change under the new relationship¹, are key to creating a “single conversation”. These reforms streamline the Standards Fund grants for schools, and take the main school funding out of the local government finance system and pay it to local authorities as a ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant. Our aim is to reduce current grant streams, over and above schools’ main delegated budget, from around 22 separate grants to fewer than 5, as shown in the chart below. In addition, schools may get additional funding for pathfinder/pilot initiatives if they are involved in such programmes. All of this will result in reductions in bureaucracy, releasing more time for the central business of improving schools.

¹DfES termly stakeholder tracking survey, November 2004

Specific grants in the new grants structure from 2006-07 to 2007-08

School Grants	Amalgamated Single Grant	School Targeted Grants	Continuing Separate Grants
School Development Grant	✓		
Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMAG)			✓
Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs)	✓		
Teachers' Pay Reform Grant	To be transferred to the DSG		
Targeted Support for			
Primary Strategy		✓	
Primary Strategy: Networks, Behaviour, MFL* and Foundation Stage subjects		✓	
Targeted Support for Key Stage 3		✓	
Leadership Incentive Grant	**		
Targeted Improvement Grant		✓	
Beacon Schools	n/a	n/a	n/a
Leading Edge	✓		
Specialist Schools	✓		
Training Schools	✓		
Extended Schools			✓
Federations			✓
Gifted and Talented Children	✓		
Excellence in Cities (EiC) and Excellence Clusters	✓		
Targeted Behaviour and Improvement Programme (EiC)	✓		
Aim higher			✓
Fresh Start and New Partnerships		✓	
Enterprise Learning	✓		

* Modern Foreign Languages

** Leadership Incentive Grant is a 3 year programme ending in March 2006. We will continue to offer extra support to the most vulnerable schools through the amalgamated single grant.

Partnership and Collaboration

Collaboration between schools - and among schools and other education institutions and providers - can lead to significant improvements in standards and maximise the value of the various funding streams available, especially when there are firm objectives that bear on pupils' attainment and well-being. Schools which have worked together through specialist school networks, Excellence in Cities, 14-19 and other partnerships have demonstrated a clear "partnership dividend" where functions have been delivered more effectively working together than any single institution can do. But partnership working must not generate unnecessary bureaucracy.

We want to encourage collaboration of this kind to the benefit of all young people in a local area on the basis that schools, colleges and other providers choose for themselves what partnerships to make, rather than have them imposed. Institutions can pool resources and expertise, share effective practice, and deal collectively with common issues, such as delivering the *Every Child Matters* agenda, the wider 14-19 curriculum, and jointly providing continued professional development. Partnerships of institutions could jointly manage the education welfare service or behaviour support, under local service level agreements with local authorities. Schools with the necessary capacity can support others which are failing to provide an adequate education, perhaps brokered by the School Improvement Partner.

Where schools collaborate to provide joint services they may wish to negotiate with their local authority to have the same School Improvement Partners. In addition they may seek to be inspected at the same time. And the consultation on new school funding referred to above proposes options for a group of schools to create a shared partnership fund.

We will publish a prospectus on Education Improvement Partnerships giving the principles and practicalities of working in partnership.

The local authority will work in collaboration with other agencies to provide schools and their Improvement Partners with a coherent picture of local and national priorities, based on the principles of the "Compacts" currently agreed between DfES and local authorities. As the Children's Services Authority, the local authority will be working with a number of agencies under the Children Act.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

The LSC, with its responsibility for planning and funding quality post-16 provision and for work-related learning, is working in active partnership with schools, local authorities and the DfES to implement the new relationship with schools. The LSC's overall aim is to:

- support the embedding of the 14-19 reforms into schools
- improve standards and quality in schools' 14-19 provision, including working with local authorities on target setting, interventions for very weak sixth-form provision, and disseminating best practice across the sector
- expand the contribution of each school to the overall range of 14-19 provision
- develop access by each young learner to opportunities that meet his or her needs
- improve the organisation, funding and planning of 16-19 provision.

The strategic partnerships between local authorities and local LSCs will need to secure the coverage of all these matters in School Improvement Partners' work with schools, especially in relation to school performance, priority setting and planning and those emerging from Strategic Area Reviews. And local authorities' management of School Improvement Partners will need to encompass these elements of work with schools. To achieve this local LSCs and local authorities will need to work in close strategic partnership: for instance, they both need to be fully engaged in School Improvement Partner induction and training nationally and locally.

The LSC will work with local authorities on all matters relating to LSC strategic priorities, including those emerging from strategic area reviews. These are likely to feature: the quality of teaching and learning in school sixth-forms, collaboration, other 16-19 organisational issues, the wider 14-19 agenda and raising the quality of vocational and work-related learning.

To strengthen and simplify schools' accountability for 16-19 and 14-19 education provision, the LSC intends to:

- develop common success rates for all post-16 providers from 2008 and implement new 16-19 value-added and distance-travelled measures by 2006/2007
- move towards 3-year budget planning for schools in line within the LSC's "Agenda for Change"
- integrate with more streamlined central requests for data from schools
- work with local authorities, employers and other partners to ensure that the 14-19 agenda is a key component in the "single conversation".

The LSC's funding arrangements are designed so that schools and local planning support delivery of quality provision for learners. As part of its "Agenda for Change" programme, which aims to transform the further education sector, the LSC is considering its funding system for colleges of further education, and specifically its funding arrangements for 16-19 year-olds, including schools and work-based training providers.

Further support for this aspect of the new relationship with schools will come from a new national quality improvement body for the post-16 sector from April 2006, to be known as the Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning. Its remit is to secure better outcomes for learners, employers, communities and the economy by providing a strategic and national focus on quality improvement in the sector. The agency will help schools, colleges and other providers respond to government priorities (as set out in the 14-19 and Skills White Papers) and it will co-ordinate the effective transfer of good practice and innovation, working with others in the sector to improve quality and responsiveness across vocational provision. Specifically, it will build capacity in the system by commissioning and approving products, materials and services to help drive up quality. The agency will work with the National Strategies contractor to help School Improvement Partners and schools make use of its materials and services.

Data and information systems

Better data is now available than ever before about individual pupils and their progress. We intend to put the best data into the hands of schools, parents, inspectors and School Improvement Partners, and to align the data as closely as possible.

The Pupil Achievement Tracker (PAT), which is software for school self-evaluation and target-setting issued by the DfES, will be combined with the Ofsted Performance and Assessment tool (PANDA), so that there is one source of data which Ofsted and schools use, with both parties clear about what the data is telling them. There will be an Ofsted-managed interactive website, with each school's own data already loaded, making it much easier to use, and more effective at providing pupil-level data, giving schools a really rich source of information about their own pupils.

We will also use a new contextual measure of educational value-added, which will build on the strengths of the current value-added methodology, but introduce a much wider range of factors. For secondary schools these will include not only pupils' prior attainment, measured in fine grades, but also their ethnicity, gender, special educational needs status, free school meals status, whether they have English as an additional language, age in months and whether they have changed school at an unusual time. School factors will also be included: the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the average prior attainment of the school's intake and the range of prior attainment. This model of contextual value added is currently being tried out and will be available in the 2005 PAT for schools to use in their self-evaluation. Final versions will be used for all secondary schools from 2006 and for all primary schools from 2007.

The school Profile will include a distinct 16-19 section for those schools with sixth-forms. Building on work by the LSC this will include student success rates measured in the same way as for all other post-16 providers (from 2008) and new measures of student progress at 16-19 (from 2006-2007).

School Improvement Partners will have an Exceptions Report about each school drawn from the same sources, showing how pupils fare compared to their statistical peers, and highlighting 'exceptions' in performance. This will help the school and its Improvement Partner focus on the school's strengths and weaknesses. It will help schools to assess their priorities, and plan their own improvement.

The introduction of the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) has already made data collection from schools more efficient. PLASC, which is now in its fourth successful year, enables individual pupil data to be collected, validated and aggregated electronically. In 2006 the DfES will build upon this success by introducing an enhanced School Census, covering pupil and school data. There has been a programme to remove some separate data collections by DfES and national education partners and by 2007, 11 separate surveys are likely to have been brought within the Census. In 2006 the collection of individual-level data on the school workforce will be piloted, with a full roll-out planned for 2007. This will enable the DfES to provide improved data to schools and local authorities on the school workforce.

School Profile

Subject to Parliamentary decisions, we propose to replace the statutory requirement for an annual report to parents with a school Profile. The statutory requirement for a separate school prospectus will be retained, but we propose to remove many of the detailed requirements about its content. The intended effect of these proposals is to strengthen schools' communication with parents by giving schools more freedom to tailor their communication to local circumstances, whilst reducing the administrative burden of doing so.

A school's Profile will be a concise document giving key information about the school to parents, including the school's achievements and its plans for the future. It will be an annual document that enables parents to hold schools to account for their performance. It will combine standard data provided centrally with the school's own account of how it is serving its pupils and an excerpt from the latest Ofsted report, bringing together all the key information about the school in one document.

Some special schools will need to have a slightly different version of the Profile, to make sure that it fully reflects their provision. Where significant numbers of pupils take public examinations, it makes sense to include those results in the Profile. However, where there is a significant number of pupils for whom public examinations are clearly inappropriate, we want those pupils' achievements recognised. We will ask special schools to write about the achievements of those pupils who do not take examinations, because this reflects their work more fairly than would an incomplete data set.

The Profile will be adapted so that it is suitable for different types of special schools, but we want to keep it as much in line with mainstream Profiles as is sensible. All schools will be required to write about how they are helping every student achieve their full potential, the ways they support pupils, and what they are trying to improve.

Profiles will be held on a central website, and will be available in different formats for different types of schools. We are investigating how to make it available in languages other than English. A prototype Profile is being developed and tested and will be available to all schools from autumn 2005, for publication to parents when the 2005 performance tables are published, early in 2006.

Improved communications

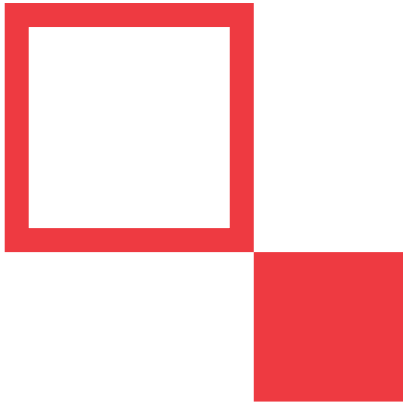
All our work on communications with schools (Teachers' TV, Online Ordering, Email communications, and the integration of all DfES's school websites, known as 'Web Integration') has been built on the guiding principles that any change must make things easier for schools and help drive improved standards. We aim to increase relevance and make information more accessible and digestible – *right message, right channel, right time*.

Online Ordering, Web Integration (SchoolsWeb) and Teachers' TV all support the drive towards 'informed professionalism' and reducing bureaucracy.

An **Online Ordering** fortnightly email replaces the automatic monthly mailing (the 'paper batch') with regular emails notifying schools of the latest materials available. This offers useful and timely information that puts schools in control of what they receive and enables them to choose whether they read a summary of a document or the whole thing, or download or order hard copies of materials in the multiples they need. We have piloted this new service in schools in 4 local authorities and have now rolled it out to all schools.

Web Integration will provide a world class online support service for schools enabling the DfES to provide information in an intelligent and sophisticated way that meets the individual needs of the user and school. The complete physical integration of all web sites will reduce the amount of time that teachers spend on the web looking for the information they need (which is currently spread across a number of websites).

Teachers' TV was launched on Sky, NTL, TeleWest and Freeview on 8th February 2005. The pioneering channel is funded by the DfES although revenue-raising opportunities will be sought in future. The editorially independent channel carries programmes on training and development, resources for the classroom and education news. 24-hour-a-day broadcasts are supported by an extensive website and interactive service.



Chapter 4

What the New Relationship means for Local Authorities

The new relationship entails changes to the way that local authorities manage their responsibilities for the quality of maintained schools. Many local authorities have already moved a substantial distance in this direction; some have offered a national lead.

Our aim is not to alter the statutory responsibilities of local authorities for schools, but to strengthen the way they are carried out. Experienced head teachers will be encouraged to enter school improvement services alongside other expert practitioners, thereby building local capacity for school improvement. National accreditation and networking of School Improvement Partners will raise the stature and credibility of local school improvement services. There will be opportunities to align their work better with other support for teaching and learning, and with wider children's services and there will also be opportunities, where it makes sense to local authorities, to have alignment of school improvement services across authority boundaries.

School Improvement Partners

We want local authorities to have enough time to plan the introduction of School Improvement Partners. About 30 authorities including most of those running the current trials will deploy accredited secondary School Improvement Partners from September 2005. Other authorities will be asked to plan to have School Improvement Partners for all secondary schools from September 2006. Between 30 and 40 authorities will have School Improvement Partners in primary schools from September 2006 and the rest will have them from September 2007.

We want to make agreements with individual local authorities about their preferred timetable for change, the accreditation and quality assurance of School Improvement Partners, and the funding for secondary School Improvement Partners.

We want to give a particular impetus to bringing secondary head teachers into the School Improvement Partner role. We would expect three quarters of them to be serving or recent secondary head teachers.

Many primary link advisers have experience as head teachers of primary schools and will be an important source of School Improvement Partners. We would encourage local authorities to continue to employ primary heads in school improvement service roles, and over time to draw an increasing number of serving heads into the School Improvement Partner role. It is our view that we should not be prescriptive about the balance of full- and part-time primary School Improvement Partners. Local authorities will need to consider the most appropriate balance of serving heads and full-time school improvement staff undertaking the School Improvement Partner role.

Accountability of School Improvement Partners

The accountability of School Improvement Partners is designed to support that of the schools with which they work. Maintained schools' key accountabilities, set out in statute, are to their maintaining authorities and to central government. Likewise a school's Improvement Partner is accountable to the school's maintaining authority which also has significant links to central government.

For each of the schools that it maintains, a local authority will engage a School Improvement Partner from among the people with current accreditation. The authority should consult with the school, and take account of any reasons a school puts forward for not choosing a particular individual as its School Improvement Partner, but the final choice is for the authority. The School Improvement Partner is accountable to the local authority, which will need to manage the School Improvement Partner's performance. Performance management arrangements will need to take account of the professional autonomy of School Improvement Partners, as do local authorities' management arrangements for professionals outside the education service.

School Improvement Partners will advise the maintaining authority where a school is causing concern. The authority may want to use its statutory powers to intervene, and may want the School Improvement Partner to take the lead in instigating action.

It is common good practice for the authority to agree and publish its strategy for school intervention, following consultation with its schools, in which the criteria for levels of engagement are set out. Intervention is in inverse proportion to a school's success and its capacity to improve itself. In all cases, clear lines of communication between the School Improvement Partner and the rest of the authority's organisation are essential.

The School Improvement Partner's link to central government will operate through the DfES's National Strategies contractor. The National Strategies contractor will be responsible for the national co-ordination and quality assurance of School Improvement Partners; in particular, the contractor will assess people against a national standard based on a person specification determined by the DfES and developed with local authorities. The contractor will accredit those who meet the standard.

The contractor will moderate and oversee local authorities' quality assurance of the School Improvement Partner function for all the schools they maintain. The quality assurance arrangements will be linked to local authorities' management of the School Improvement Partner function and will be designed to inform the contractor's renewal and removal of individual School Improvement Partners' accreditation. The arrangements will also inform a continuing dialogue between the contractor and local authorities about the conduct of the School Improvement Partner function and the authorities' part in it.

Support for School Improvement Partners

School Improvement Partners will be supported by the authorities for which they work. They will have access to local data and be part of the local networks which make challenge and support for schools possible. They will be well briefed on local policies, with other agencies such as those concerned with children's services, the LSC and the Specialist Schools Trust, working with the local authority to ensure that the School Improvement Partner has well-ordered, easily accessible information, advice and support. The National Strategies contractor and the DfES will work with local authorities and schools to ensure that there is shared management information on the progress of each school, which will also be available to the individual school.

The National Strategies contractor will work with the local authorities to ensure that SIPs' training enables them to be confident about well-aligned, coherent national and local policies.

Training and Accreditation of School Improvement Partners

All School Improvement Partners will be accredited to national standards. They will be assessed against the 3 main criteria set out earlier in this document. The accreditation process used in the trials and tested on secondary School Improvement Partners has proved rigorous. The process of application, assessment and accreditation will be a development from the trial version. A key feature will be online assessment and development modules which will make possible a high success rate in the final, face-to-face, development and assessment centre. The process will be managed by the National Strategies contractor.

As well as high-quality induction, the National Strategies contractor will provide School Improvement Partners with briefing and continuing professional development. This will include dissemination of good practice and case studies. Our intention is that School Improvement Partners should form a national cadre of experts with a shared knowledge of effective approaches to improving the leadership of teaching and learning, and access to local authority, DfES and Ofsted databases.

The London Context

Schools in London operate in a different context from schools elsewhere and face particular challenges. The DfES is already responding to the unique character of the education system in the capital with the London Challenge, which involves tailoring policy initiatives to the local context as well as offering additional support and opportunities in response to London-specific issues and needs.

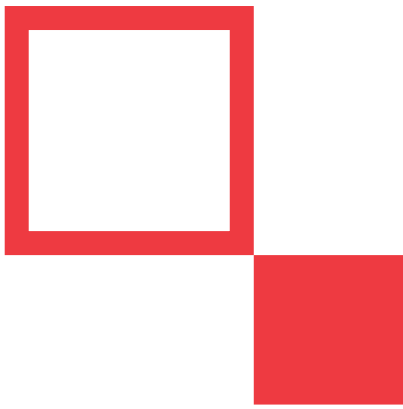
It will be crucial to consider opportunities presented by the new relationship on a London-wide basis, as part of the London Challenge. We are already working with the London boroughs, through the Association of London Chief Education Officers, to design a new relationship that takes full account of the London context and is of maximum benefit to the capital's young people. This will build on the good practice in school improvement that already exists and draw on existing collaborative work across boroughs and between schools. We will make sure that London schools benefit from the scope for developing a London-wide approach to recruiting, managing and deploying School Improvement Partners, as well as from developing regional training on a range of London-specific issues.

Reducing Bureaucracy

The DfES is working through a process of reviewing demands that it places on schools for paperwork. Many of the demands are generated directly by DfES and we are eliminating as many as we can. Some are generated by local authorities, sometimes as a consequence of requests from DfES. As part of the preparation for implementation of the new relationship with schools, we will expect local authorities to review stringently their local demands of this nature.

Funding for an Individual Local Authority

As part of its agreement with DfES, every local authority operating the School Improvement Partner function with its secondary schools will receive additional funding to cover the higher costs compared with the previous arrangements.



Chapter 5

What the New Relationship means for Parents and Pupils

The new relationship with schools is designed to allow schools to plan their future improvement, to account for their performance more intelligently to parents and the community, and to have better data and information systems. These changes should free schools to better shape the education of their pupils to the needs of every child. Parents can have greater confidence that their children will be educated to their full potential.

Parents and pupils will benefit particularly from:

- annual school Profiles, combining performance data with information provided by schools about their achievements and plans
- schools taking more account of the views of parents and pupils in terms of the way they judge their own performance
- inspections at very short notice, so that inspectors see a real picture of each school, and can report to parents more accurately on the real experience of pupils. Schools will be inspected more frequently – every 3 years instead of every 6 years. These shorter-notice inspections will fit in much more naturally with schools' cycles, so that instead of 'preparing for inspection' for 6 weeks, schools will pursue their work and improvement without disruption from the inspection team
- schools, inspectors and School Improvement Partners using much better data, so that they can look more closely at the achievement of all pupils, to make sure that every child is achieving their full potential. They will be able to identify which aspects of the school need to be improved, and what each school's priorities need to be, to ensure that every child gets the teaching and support they need.

Children Looked After (in public care) by local authorities are in a special position. The local authority is the corporate parent and will be helped in discharging its responsibilities by the improved data which will enable School Improvement Partners to discuss progress with schools.

Tailoring teaching to the child

Central to the new relationship is the concept of tailoring teaching to the individual learner's needs, interest and aptitude so that every young person can fulfil their potential. This means teachers having high expectations of every child and providing high quality teaching based on a sound knowledge and understanding of each child's needs. It is not individualised learning where pupils sit alone. Nor is it pupils left to their own devices – which too often reinforces low aspirations. It means shaping teaching around the way different youngsters learn and taking the care to nurture the unique talents of every pupil.

Many schools and teachers have tailored curriculum and teaching methods to meet the needs of children and young people with great success for many years. We now want to help all schools and teachers establish their own approaches to this, so that across the education system the learning needs and talents of young people are used to guide decision making. There will be different models in schools across the country; part of the School Improvement Partners' role is to help ensure that the best practices are shared widely across the system so that every student has the chance to fulfil his or her potential.

The Profile

Subject to Parliamentary decisions, schools will be required to give parents a school Profile every year, starting from January 2006. The Profile is not intended to be the only way that schools communicate with parents – schools will need and want to give parents other information throughout the year. However, it will be a way for the school to summarise its achievements every year, and tell parents what it has done well, and what areas it is trying to improve.

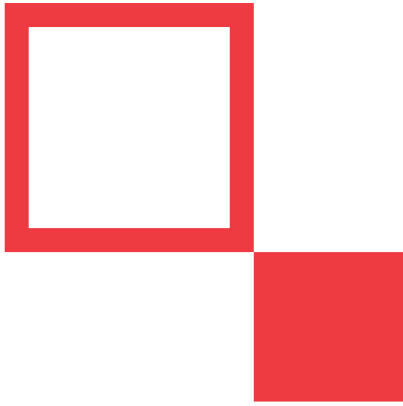
The school Profile will be a concise document giving key information about the school to parents, including the school's achievements and its plans for the future. It will be an annual document that gives parents a clear account of the school's performance. It will combine standard data, provided centrally, with the school's own account of how it is serving its pupils. Schools will be asked to write about other aspects of their education, including how they are helping every student achieve their full potential, the ways they support pupils, and what they are trying to improve. The Profile will also contain an excerpt from the latest Ofsted report.

The Profile will be a better way of giving information to parents about their child's school: it will be brief, clearly laid out and easy to understand at a glance. We have tested a first version of the Profile during the trials and the feedback has been very positive about the concept of a short, sharp document, containing essential information for parents whose children are already at the school. We have tested the Profile with a wide range of different parents, from different places and different backgrounds. Much of the feedback has been consistent: parents find it clear and easy to read; they like the combination of statistics and narrative information; and they like the fact that all schools will have a similar format. Other feedback suggested some changes to the content, adding information about safety, extra-curricular activities and plans for addressing weaknesses and future improvements.

Some special schools will need to have a slightly different version of the Profile, to make sure that it fully reflects their provision. Where significant numbers of pupils take public examinations, it makes sense to include those results in the Profile. However, where there is a significant number of pupils for whom public examinations are clearly inappropriate, we want those pupils' achievements recognised. We will ask special schools to write about the achievements of those pupils who do not take examinations, because this reflects their work more fairly than would an incomplete data set.

The Profile will be adapted so that it is suitable for different types of special schools, but we want to keep it as much in line with mainstream Profiles as is sensible. All schools will be required to write about how they are helping every student achieve their full potential, the ways they support pupils, and what they are trying to improve.

Profiles will be held on a central website, and will be available in different formats for different types of schools. We are investigating how to make it available in languages other than English. A prototype is being tried out and will be available to all schools from autumn 2005, for publication to parents from January 2006.



Chapter 6

What the New Relationship means for Governors

The new relationship with schools is designed to give every school more autonomy to plan its own future improvement, to account publicly for its performance more intelligently, and to have better data and information systems. As a result of these changes, the school's governing body, working with its senior leadership team, should find it easier to set the strategy for the school.

The statutory responsibilities of the governing body for the school's strategy, targets, budget and key policies are **not** altered. The ability of the governing body to exercise these responsibilities will be reinforced, not diminished, because:

- governing bodies will be able to plan 3 years ahead, with the new system based on 3-year budgets
- governing bodies will have clearer pictures of their schools' performance, with self-evaluation processes that are the starting point for each school's inspection and relations with its maintaining authority
- subject to decision by Parliament, a governing body will be able to report publicly through a Profile that provides a broader and fuller picture of the school, with standardised performance data automatically derived from central databases; this will replace the requirement to make an annual report to parents or to hold an annual meeting with parents
- governing bodies will have reports from a nationally accredited, locally managed School Improvement Partner on the school's performance and future priorities
- governing bodies will have the School Improvement Partner's advice on the head's performance for appraisal purposes

- shorter, sharper inspections will give governing bodies more frequent reports on the school's effectiveness, with less disturbance to the work of the school
- the data that inspectors, School Improvement Partners and schools themselves use to assess the progress of pupils will be aligned and will have more depth and focus.

School Self-evaluation

More weight will be placed on a school's own evaluation of how well it serves its pupils and its community as the starting point for planning, inspection and reviews with the School Improvement Partner. There is no legal requirement, and no single approach to self-evaluation, but we recommend that schools use the Ofsted self-evaluation form to record the conclusions of their self-evaluation, and update it once a year.

Through their normal monitoring of the school, members of the governing body can make their own inputs to self-evaluation. The governing body will have ultimate responsibility for the main judgements in the self-evaluation form and will want to assure itself that the process of self-evaluation and planning is based on good evidence.

Profile

Subject to legislation now before Parliament, the governing body will be responsible for issuing an annual Profile of the school. This will contain both the school's own account of what it offers its pupils and community, and standardised data provided from a central database by the DfES and Ofsted.

The Profile gives a school the opportunity to describe in its own words:

- its successes and its plans for the future
- the curriculum and activities and support beyond the curriculum
- how the school helps every pupil to achieve their full potential
- how the school is engaging with the wider community, including parents and carers and other schools
- what has been done in response to the latest inspection.

Subject to Parliamentary decision, the statutory requirement for a Governors' Annual Report to parents is to be removed, as is the requirement for an annual meeting. The requirements about what is contained in the school's Prospectus are to be simplified.

School Improvement Partners

As part of the new relationship, high-quality, nationally accredited School Improvement Partners will be appointed for all primary and secondary schools. Many of these will have recent headship experience. Their role will be to challenge and support head teachers in their assessment of how well the school is performing and their planning for the future.

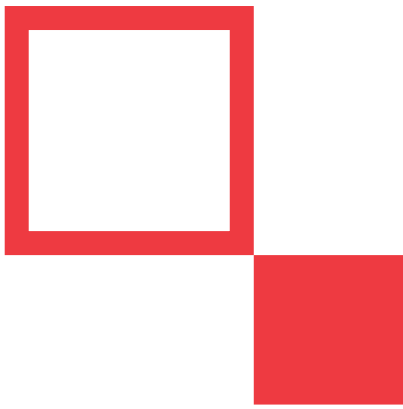
The governing body will receive a report direct from the School Improvement Partner on the annual dialogue between him or her and the school about the performance of the school, based on its self-evaluation, plans and targets. The governing body retains its responsibility for setting statutory targets and for deciding at what levels to set them.

Some governing bodies will want to consider with the head whether the head could give time (part-time or on a secondment) to being a School Improvement Partner, if he or she has the experience and qualities. We hope that governing bodies will approach this decision in the spirit that releasing their head teachers for this role could be beneficial to the wider school system and could provide valuable professional development for the heads and the senior staff who would fill in behind. This will in turn benefit School Improvement Partners' home schools, which will have stronger leadership teams. At the same time, a governing body releasing its head teacher will want to be sure that the school's leadership team has the strength in depth to keep the school on track.

Every governing body will be advised by the school's Improvement Partner on its management of the head's performance and appraisal. This advice will cover the ground currently covered by the External Adviser who has a specific remit for head teacher performance. The Regulations that currently require governors to take external advice on heads' performance management will be amended so that this requirement no longer applies. School Improvement Partners will be allocated to schools by local authorities but schools will be able to ask for another School Improvement Partner where they have good reasons for doing so. The funds for the External Adviser functions will be incorporated in school budgets from April 2006.

Inspection

The new approach to inspection currently before Parliament is intended to be shorter, sharper, more frequent and less disruptive to schools. It is not intended to reduce the opportunities for governors to be involved. Some governors will be consulted during the inspection event. Governors' representation (ideally by the chairman but where that is not possible by a deputy) is expected at the feedback meeting and governors will continue to have a duty to notify parents of the outcome of the inspection, by ensuring that the report is sent to parents. The governing body's own contribution to the school's leadership will be assessed through the inspection.



Annex

Consultative Group members

Partners who have worked actively with us to shape the new relationship

Association of Teachers & Lecturers

Capita

Colegrave Primary School

ConfED

General Teaching Council of England

Hampshire LEA

Haybridge High School

Implementation Review Unit

Learning and Skills Council

Local Government Association

Morpeth Secondary School

National Association of Educational
Inspectors and Consultants

National Association of Headteachers

National Association of
Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers

National Bursars Association

National College for School Leadership

National Governors Council

Office for Public Services Reform

Prime Minister's Delivery Unit

Secondary Heads Association

Specialist Schools Trust

Youth Sport Trust

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Please quote ref: DfES-1288-2005DOC-EN

ISBN: 1-84478-428-2

PPEDW/D(Eng)/0405/353

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