

# The Importance of Teaching

The Schools White Paper 2010



Department for Education

# **The Importance of Teaching**

Presented to Parliament  
by the Secretary of State for Education  
by Command of Her Majesty

November 2010

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# Contents

<b>Foreword by the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Foreword by the Secretary of State for Education</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1. Introduction – the future of schools</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2. Teaching and Leadership</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>3. Behaviour</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>4. Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>5. New Schools System</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>6. Accountability</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>7. School Improvement</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>8. School Funding</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>91</b>

## 2 The Importance of Teaching

# Foreword by the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister



So much of the education debate in this country is backward looking: have standards fallen? Have exams got easier? These debates will continue, but what really matters is how we're doing compared with our international competitors. That is what will define our economic growth and our country's future. The truth is, at the moment we are standing still while others race past.



In the most recent OECD PISA survey in 2006 we fell from 4<sup>th</sup> in the world in the 2000 survey to 14<sup>th</sup> in science, 7<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> in literacy, and 8<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> in mathematics. The only way we can catch up, and have the world-class schools our children deserve, is by learning the lessons of other countries' success.

The first, and most important, lesson is that no education system can be better than the quality of its teachers. The most successful countries, from the Far East to Scandinavia, are those where teaching has the highest status as a profession; South Korea recruits from their top 5 per cent of graduates and Finland from the top 10 per cent.

There is no question that teaching standards have increased in this country in recent decades and that the current cohort of trainees is one of our best ever. But we have much further to go. We have already increased investment in the fantastic Teach First programme which will be doubled in size and train primary teachers for the first time. This White Paper goes much further in raising standards and giving outstanding schools a much greater role in teacher training in the same way that our best hospitals train new doctors and nurses.

Raising the status of teaching also requires a significant strengthening of teachers' authority in the classroom. We know that among undergraduates considering teaching, fear of bad behaviour and violence is the most common reason for choosing an alternative career. The measures contained in this White Paper to boost teachers' and head teachers' authority – including new powers on detentions and searching – will have a powerful impact.

The second lesson of world class education systems is that they devolve as much power as possible to the front line, while retaining high levels of accountability. The OECD has shown that countries which give the most autonomy to head teachers and teachers are

## 4 The Importance of Teaching

the ones that do best. Finland and South Korea – the highest performing countries in PISA – have clearly defined and challenging universal standards, along with individual school autonomy.

In this country we have seen the success over the past two decades of the City Technology Colleges (CTCs) and then the Academies programme. CTCs and former CTCs are now some of the best schools in the country and children on free school meals who attend them do twice as well as the national average. Academies improved at GCSE level twice as fast as other schools in 2008 and 2009. This week's Ofsted Annual Report confirms their success – explaining that their freedoms allow them to innovate and 'ensure that educationalists can concentrate on education'.

This White Paper, for the first time, offers these freedoms to all schools in a way that encourages them to work with each other to improve. Our best schools will be able to convert directly to Academy status but will have to work with less successful schools to help them improve. Other schools will be able to become Academies by joining federations or chains. Teachers, parents and charities will be able to open new schools where there is a clear demand for something not offered at the moment. All schools, whether they choose to become Academies or not, will see a massive reduction in the bureaucracy foisted on them in recent years.

As the best education systems have shown, this power shift to the front line needs to be accompanied by a streamlined and effective accountability system. So we propose to re-focus Ofsted inspections on their original purpose – teaching and learning – and strengthen the performance measures we use to hold schools accountable.

The third lesson of the best education systems is that no country that wishes to be considered world class can afford to allow children from poorer families to fail as a matter of course. For far too long we have tolerated the moral outrage of an accepted correlation between wealth and achievement at school; the soft bigotry of low expectations. Children on free school meals do significantly worse than their peers at every stage of their education. They are just half as likely to get good GCSEs as the average. More children from some private schools go to Oxbridge than from the entire cohort of children on free school meals.

This vast gap between rich and poor is not pre-ordained. In Finland and Canada the gap is much smaller. Even in this country there are some groups – Chinese girls on free school meals for example – who significantly outperform the national average.

Of course schools are not solely responsible for this problem. In far too many communities there is a deeply embedded culture of low aspiration that is strongly tied to long-term unemployment. The Coalition Government's Work Programme and welfare reforms will help to tackle these issues. But schools do have a crucial role to play.

That is why the Pupil Premium lies at the heart of our reform programme: £2.5 billion of extra money by 2014–15 that will follow poorer children directly to the school they attend. While we won't tell schools how to spend this money, there will be clear transparency requirements to ensure it is spent on improving the life chances of our poorest young people.

This White Paper signals a radical reform of our schools. We have no choice but to be this radical if our ambition is to be world-class. The most successful countries already

combine a high status teaching profession; high levels of autonomy for schools; a comprehensive and effective accountability system and a strong sense of aspiration for all children, whatever their background. Tweaking things at the margins is not an option. Reforms on this scale are absolutely essential if our children are to get the education they deserve.



**David Cameron**  
Prime Minister



**Nick Clegg**  
Deputy Prime Minister

# Foreword by the Secretary of State for Education



Education reform is the great progressive cause of our times.

It is only through reforming education that we can allow every child the chance to take their full and equal share in citizenship, shaping their own destiny, and becoming masters of their own fate.

Throughout history, most individuals have been the victims of forces beyond their control. Where you were born, both geographically and in class terms, was overwhelmingly likely to dictate your future. Jobs were rarely a matter of choice and normally decreed by who your father was. Opportunities for women outside the home were restricted. Wealth governed access to cultural riches. Horizons were narrow, hopes limited, happiness a matter of time and chance.

But education provides a route to liberation from these imposed constraints. Education allows individuals to choose a fulfilling job, to shape the society around them, to enrich their inner life. It allows us all to become authors of our own life stories.

That is why it matters so much that access to educational opportunities is spread so inequitably in England. The gulf between the opportunities available to the wealthy and the chances given to the poor, is one of the widest.

In each year around 600,000 children enter state education. Of those, the poorest 80,000 are eligible for free school meals.

In the last year for which we have figures just 40 of those 80,000 made it to Oxbridge. More children from an individual public school, such as Winchester, made it to those top universities than from the entire population of young people eligible for that basic benefit. What makes this tragedy sadder still is that, far from opportunity becoming more equal, our society is becoming less socially mobile. In the year before last, the number of children eligible for free school meals who made it to Oxford or Cambridge was actually 12.5% higher – at 45.

Our schools should be engines of social mobility, helping children to overcome the accidents of birth and background to achieve much more than they may ever have imagined. But, at the moment, our schools system does not close gaps, it widens them.

Children from poorer homes start behind their wealthier contemporaries when they arrive at school and during their educational journey they fall further and further back. The achievement gap between rich and poor widens at the beginning of primary school, gets worse by GCSE and is a yawning gulf by the time (far too few) sit A levels and apply to university.

This injustice has inspired a grim fatalism in some, who believe that deprivation must be destiny. But for this Government the scale of this tragedy demands action. Urgent, focused, radical action.

Other regions and nations have succeeded in closing this gap and in raising attainment for all students at the same time. They have made opportunity more equal, democratised access to knowledge and placed an uncompromising emphasis on higher standards all at the same time. These regions and nations – from Alberta to Singapore, Finland to Hong Kong, Harlem to South Korea – have been our inspiration.

While each of these exemplars has their own unique and individual approach to aspects of education, their successful systems all share certain common features. Many have put in place comprehensive plans for school improvement which involve improving teacher quality, granting greater autonomy to the front line, modernising curricula, making schools more accountable to their communities, harnessing detailed performance data and encouraging professional collaboration. It is only through such whole-system reform that education can be transformed to make a nation one of the world's top performers.

This White Paper outlines the steps necessary to enact such whole-system reform in England. It encompasses both profound structural change and rigorous attention to standards. It includes a plan for attracting and training even better teachers. It outlines a direction of travel on the curriculum and qualifications which allows us to learn from, and outpace, the world's best.

At the heart of our plan is a vision of the teacher as our society's most valuable asset. We know that nothing matters more in improving education than giving every child access to the best possible teaching. There is no calling more noble, no profession more vital and no service more important than teaching. It is because we believe in the importance of teaching – as the means by which we liberate every child to become the adult they aspire to be – that this White Paper has been written. The importance of teaching cannot be over-stated. And that is why there is a fierce urgency to our plans for reform.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mich. Gove". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'M' and a stylized 'G'.

**Michael Gove MP**  
Secretary of State for Education

# Executive Summary

1. We are fortunate that our school system has important strengths. But our commitment to making opportunity more equal means that we cannot shy away from confronting its weaknesses.
2. There are many outstanding school teachers and leaders. But teachers consistently tell us that they feel constrained and burdened, required to teach the same limited diet to successive classes of young people. Most children and young people behave well, but teachers consistently tell us that their authority to deal decisively with bad behaviour has been undermined. More children are participating in education for longer, but the curriculum they are following contains too much that is non-essential and too little which stretches them to achieve standards matching the best in the world.
3. More young people are achieving qualifications, but it is no coincidence that many of the qualifications which have grown in popularity recently are not those best recognised by employers and universities, but those which carry the highest value in school performance tables. Schools have become skilled at meeting government targets but too often have had their ability to do what they think is right for their pupils constrained by government directives or improvement initiatives. Schools have more money overall, but it is distributed unfairly, with too much consumed by bureaucracy, both local and national.
4. As a result, our school system performs well below its potential and can improve significantly. Many other countries in the world are improving their schools faster than we are. Many other countries have much smaller gaps between the achievements of rich and poor than we do. The very best performing education systems show us that there need be no contradiction between a rigorous focus on high standards and a determination to narrow attainment gaps between pupils from different parts of society; between a rigorous and stretching curriculum and high participation in education; or between autonomous teachers and schools and high levels of accountability. Indeed, these jurisdictions show us that we must pay attention to all of these things at once if our school system is to become one of the world's fastest improving. Even the best school systems in the world are constantly striving to get better – Singapore is looking again at further improving its curriculum, while Hong Kong is looking at ways in which it can improve its teacher training.
5. In England, what is needed most of all is decisive action to free our teachers from constraint and improve their professional status and authority, raise the standards set by our curriculum and qualifications to match the best in the world and, having freed schools from external control, hold them effectively to account for the results they achieve. Government should make sure that school funding is fair, with more money for the most disadvantaged, but should then support the efforts of teachers, helping them to learn from one another and from proven best practice, rather than ceaselessly directing them to follow centralised Government initiatives.

6. This White Paper sets out our plans for continuing to take the action that is urgently needed.

## Teaching and leadership

7. All the evidence from different education systems around the world shows that the most important factor in determining how well children do is the quality of teachers and teaching. The best education systems in the world draw their teachers from among the top graduates and train them rigorously and effectively, focusing on classroom practice. They then make sure that teachers receive effective professional development throughout their career, with opportunities to observe and work with other teachers, and appropriate training for leadership positions.
8. So, we will:
- Continue to raise the quality of new entrants to the teaching profession, by: ceasing to provide Department for Education funding for initial teacher training for those graduates who do not have at least a 2:2 degree; expanding Teach First; offering financial incentives to attract more of the very best graduates in shortage subjects into teaching; and enabling more talented career changers to become teachers.
  - Reform initial teacher training, to increase the proportion of time trainees spend in the classroom, focusing on core teaching skills, especially in teaching reading and mathematics and in managing behaviour.
  - Develop a national network of Teaching Schools on the model of teaching hospitals to lead the training and professional development of teachers and head teachers, and increase the number of National and Local Leaders of Education – head teachers of excellent schools who commit to working to support other schools.
  - Sharply reduce the bureaucratic burden on schools, cutting away unnecessary duties, processes, guidance and requirements, so that schools are free to focus on doing what is right for the children and young people in their care.
  - Recognise that schools have always had good pastoral systems and understand well the connections between pupils' physical and mental health, their safety, and their educational achievement and that they are well placed to make sure additional support is offered to those who need it.

## Behaviour

9. The greatest concern voiced by new teachers and a very common reason experienced teachers cite for leaving the profession is poor pupil behaviour. We know that a minority of pupils can cause serious disruption in the classroom. The number of serious physical assaults on teachers has risen. And poorly disciplined children cause misery for other pupils by bullying them and disrupting learning. It is vital that we restore the authority of teachers and head teachers. And it is crucial that we protect them from false allegations of excessive use of

## 10 The Importance of Teaching

force or inappropriate contact. Unless we act more good people will leave the profession – without good discipline teachers cannot teach and pupils cannot learn. So, we will:

- Increase the authority of teachers to discipline pupils by strengthening their powers to search pupils, issue same day detentions and use reasonable force where necessary.
- Strengthen head teachers' authority to maintain discipline beyond the school gates, improve exclusion processes and empower head teachers to take a strong stand against bullying, especially racist, homophobic and other prejudice-based bullying.
- Change the current system of independent appeals panels for exclusions, so that they take less time and head teachers no longer have to worry that a pupil will be reinstated when the young person concerned has committed a serious offence.
- Trial a new approach to exclusions where schools have new responsibilities for the ongoing education and care of excluded children.
- Improve the quality of alternative provision, encouraging new providers to set up alternative provision Free Schools.
- Protect teachers from malicious allegations – speeding up investigations and legislating to grant teachers anonymity when accused by pupils.
- Focus Ofsted inspection more strongly on behaviour and safety, including bullying, as one of four key areas of inspections.

## Curriculum, assessment and qualifications

10. Raising the status of teachers and giving them renewed freedom and authority will make a significant contribution to improving schools. However, the best performing education systems also set clear expectations for what children must know and be able to do at each stage in their education, and make sure that the standards they set match the best in the world. Our system of curriculum, assessment and qualifications gives us the ability to do that in this country, but at present the National Curriculum includes too much that is not essential knowledge, and there is too much prescription about how to teach.
11. We need a new approach to the National Curriculum, specifying a tighter, more rigorous, model of the knowledge which every child should expect to master in core subjects at every key stage. In a school system which encourages a greater degree of autonomy and innovation the National Curriculum will increasingly become a rigorous benchmark, against which schools can be judged rather than a prescriptive straitjacket into which all learning must be squeezed.
12. So, we will:
  - Review the National Curriculum, with the aim of reducing prescription and allowing schools to decide how to teach, while refocusing on the core subject

knowledge that every child and young person should gain at each stage of their education.

- Ensure that there is support available to every school for the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics, as the best method for teaching reading.
- Ensure that there is proper assessment of pupils at each vital transitional stage of their education, to provide information to parents about how well their child has done and about the effectiveness of schools, and objective evidence for teachers: at age 6, a simple test of pupils' ability to decode words; at 11, as pupils complete primary education; and at 16 as pupils complete compulsory schooling.
- Introduce the English Baccalaureate to encourage schools to offer a broad set of academic subjects to age 16, whether or not students then go down an academic or vocational route.
- Hold an independent review of key stage two testing, seeking to retain a strong basis for accountability and information to parents and secondary schools, while alleviating the damaging effects of over-rehearsal of tests.
- Give the independent regulator, Ofqual, the task of making sure that exam standards in this country match the highest standards overseas.
- Reform vocational education so that it supports progression to further and higher education and employment, and overhaul our vocational qualifications following Professor Alison Wolf's review to ensure that they match the world's best.
- Raise to 17 by 2013 and then 18 by 2015 the age to which all young people will be expected to participate in education or training.

## The new school system

13. Across the world, the case for the benefits of school autonomy has been established beyond doubt. In a school system with good quality teachers, flexibility in the curriculum and clearly established accountability measures, it makes sense to devolve as much day-to-day decision-making as possible to the front line.
14. In this country, the ability of schools to decide their own ethos and chart their own destiny has been severely constrained by government guidance, Ministerial interference and too much bureaucracy. While Academies and City Technology Colleges (CTCs) have taken advantage of greater freedoms to innovate and raise standards, these freedoms too have been curtailed in recent years. Meanwhile, it has been virtually impossible to establish a new state-funded school without local authority support, despite convincing international evidence of the galvanising effect on the whole school system of allowing new entrants in areas where parents are dissatisfied with what is available.
15. We want every school to be able to shape its own character, frame its own ethos and develop its own specialisms, free of either central or local bureaucratic

## 12 The Importance of Teaching

constraint. It is our ambition, therefore, to help every school which wishes to enjoy greater freedom to achieve Academy status. Some schools will not want to acquire Academy status just yet, others do not yet have the capacity to enjoy full Academy freedoms without external support or sponsorship. But our direction of travel is towards schools as autonomous institutions collaborating with each other on terms set by teachers, not bureaucrats.

16. So, we will:

- Increase freedom and autonomy for all schools, removing unnecessary duties and burdens, and allowing all schools to choose for themselves how best to develop.
- Restore for all Academies the freedoms they originally had while continuing to ensure a level playing field on admissions particularly in relation to children with Special Educational Needs.
- Ensure that the lowest performing schools, attaining poorly and in an Ofsted category or not improving, are considered for conversion to become Academies to effect educational transformation.
- Dramatically extend the Academies programme, opening it up to all schools: already there are 347 Academies, up from 203 in July.
- Ensure that there is support for schools increasingly to collaborate through Academy chains and multi-school trusts and federations.
- Support teachers and parents to set up new Free Schools to meet parental demand, especially in areas of deprivation.
- Give local authorities a strong strategic role as champions for parents, families and vulnerable pupils. They will promote educational excellence by ensuring a good supply of high quality school places, co-ordinating fair admissions and developing their own school improvement strategies to support local schools.

## Accountability

17. Analysis of the international evidence also demonstrates that, alongside school autonomy, accountability for student performance is critical to driving educational improvement.
18. It is vital that schools should be accountable to parents for how well pupils do, and how taxpayers' money is spent. Clear performance information and good comparative data are positive features of our system. But we must do better. Greater transparency in the funding system will mean that every parent will know the money which is allocated for their child's education, the amount spent by local government, and the amount available to the school. Comparisons between different schools and local authority areas will drive higher performance and better value for money.
19. Clear accountability measures are vital if we are to identify good practice in the best schools and identify those schools where students are being let down. But

existing measures of performance encourage 'gaming' behaviour – with primary schools over-rehearsing tests and secondary schools changing the curriculum to embrace 'equivalent' qualifications which count heavily in performance tables.

20. So, we will:

- Put far more information into the public domain, so that it is possible to understand a school's performance more fully than now.
- Place information on expenditure, including the amount allocated per pupil, online.
- Reform performance tables so that they set out our high expectations – every pupil should have a broad education (the English Baccalaureate), a firm grip of the basics and be making progress.
- Institute a new measure of how well deprived pupils do and introduce a measure of how young people do when they leave school.
- Reform Ofsted inspection, so that inspectors spend more time in the classroom and focus on key issues of educational effectiveness, rather than the long list of issues they are currently required to consider.
- Establish a new 'floor standard' for primary and secondary schools, which sets an escalating minimum expectation for attainment.
- Make it easier for schools to adopt models of governance which work for them – including smaller, more focused governing bodies, which clearly hold the school to account for children's progress.

## School improvement

21. Over recent years, centralised approaches to improving schools have become the norm. Government has tended to lead, organise and systematise improvement activity seeking to ensure compliance with its priorities. Government has ring-fenced grants, fettered discretion, imposed its will through field forces and intervened to micro-manage everything from the hours allocated to specific kinds of teaching to the precise nature of after-school activities.
22. We think that this is the wrong approach. Government should certainly put in place the structures and processes which will challenge and support schools to improve. And where schools are seriously failing we will intervene. But the timetabling, educational priorities and staff deployment of schools cannot be decided in Whitehall. And the attempt to secure automatic compliance with central government initiatives reduces the capacity of the school system to improve itself. Instead, our aim should be to support the school system to become more effectively self-improving. The primary responsibility for improvement rests with schools, and the wider system should be designed so that our best schools and leaders can take on greater responsibility, leading improvement work across the system.

## 14 The Importance of Teaching

23. So, we will:

- Make clear that schools – governors, head teachers and teachers – have responsibility for improvement. We will end the requirement for every school to have a local authority school improvement partner (SIP) and end the current centralised target-setting process.
- Instead, increase the number of National and Local Leaders of Education – head teachers of excellent schools committed to supporting other schools – and develop Teaching Schools to make sure that every school has access to highly effective professional development support.
- Make it easier for schools to learn from one another, through publishing ‘families of schools’ data for every part of the country, setting out in detail how similar schools in a region perform, so that schools can identify from whom it is possible to learn.
- Make sure that schools have access to evidence of best practice, high-quality materials and improvement services which they can choose to use.
- Free local authorities to provide whatever forms of improvement support they choose.
- Ensure that schools below the floor standard receive support, and ensure that those which are seriously failing, or unable to improve their results, are transformed through conversion to Academy status.
- Encourage local authorities and schools to bring forward applications to the new Education Endowment Fund for funding for innovative projects to raise the attainment of deprived children in underperforming schools.
- Establish a new collaboration incentive, which financially rewards schools which effectively support weaker schools and demonstrably improve their performance.

## School Funding

24. Our school funding system needs radical reform to make it more transparent, fairer and progressive. The lack of clarity about how Government allocates funds means that it is almost impossible, as things stand, to state definitively and transparently how much is allocated for each pupil in each school. And that opacity generates unfairness.
25. At present, one school may receive up to 50 per cent more funding than another school in similar circumstances serving a similar pupil body. The current funding system means that the money that schools receive depends more on history than on the current composition of their pupil body. At the same time, only around 70 per cent of the money that is intended by Government for the most deprived pupils is actually allocated to schools on that basis. We need to ensure there are appropriate incentives for schools to attract poorer students and raise their attainment.

26. The schools budget was protected in the recent Spending Review. At a time when deficit reduction is an urgent national priority, and other budgets are being cut, there is a real terms growth in school funding. It is vital that we now ensure that this money is distributed fairly and spent wisely. And with more limited capital resources, it is equally important that money is allocated more efficiently and less wastefully.
27. So, we will:
- Target more resources on the most deprived pupils over the next four years, through a new Pupil Premium. In total we will be spending £2.5 billion per year on the Pupil Premium by the end of the Spending Review period.
  - Consult on developing and introducing a clear, transparent and fairer national funding formula based on the needs of pupils, to work alongside the Pupil Premium.
  - In the meantime, increase the transparency of the current funding system by showing both how much money schools receive and what they spend their funds on.
  - End the disparity in funding for 16–18 year-olds, so that schools and colleges are funded at the same levels as one another.
  - Take forward the conclusions of the review of capital spending, cutting bureaucracy from the process of allocating capital funding and securing significantly better value for money.
28. The actions we set out in this White Paper learn systematically from the most effective and fastest improving school systems in the world. They are designed to tackle the weaknesses of our system, strengthening the status of teachers and teaching, reinforcing the standards set by the curriculum and qualifications, giving schools back the freedom to determine their own destiny, making them more accountable to parents, and helping them to learn more quickly and systematically from good practice elsewhere. Through taking these steps, we believe that we will create a system in which schools are better able to raise standards, narrow the gap in attainment between rich and poor and enable all young people to stay in education or training until at least the age of 18.

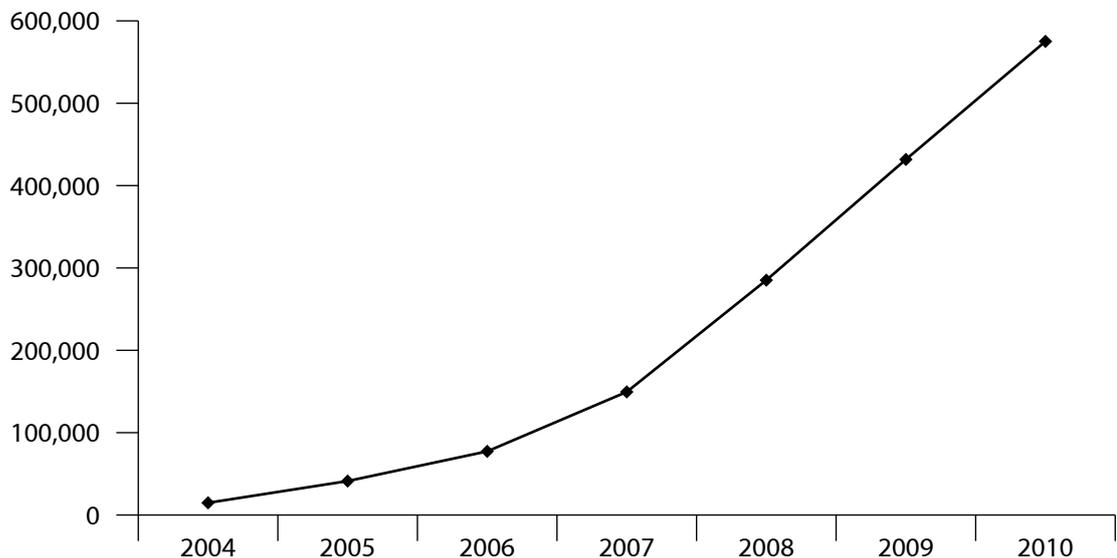
# 1. Introduction – the future of schools

- 1.1 There is much that is good and to be celebrated in schools in England today. There are many excellent teachers, working hard and succeeding with children and young people. There are many outstanding school leaders, some of them taking the opportunity to extend their impact more widely as executive head teachers of more than one school, or as National Leaders of Education, supporting other schools to improve. There are many schools which take seriously the task of raising achievement and narrowing attainment gaps, focus sharply on the progress of every child and teach a rigorous and demanding curriculum in an inspiring way, opening up opportunity to many more young people. Third sector organisations including Teach First, Teaching Leaders and Future Leaders are helping to attract more of the best graduates and school leaders to working in disadvantaged schools. Academies are beginning to transform attainment in some of the most disadvantaged and low performing schools in the country.
- 1.2 But we can do much better. Teachers consistently tell us that they feel constrained and burdened, limited to repetitive teaching of the same narrow syllabus to successive classes of young people, often feeling that they are in a straitjacket which gives them little scope to pursue avenues which might unlock the potential of their pupils. The majority of pupils behave well<sup>1</sup>, but teachers consistently tell us that their authority to deal decisively with bad behaviour has been undermined. Consequently, too many lessons are disrupted, new teachers rate behaviour management as their biggest worry<sup>2</sup> and poor behaviour is an important factor for teachers deciding to leave the profession<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.3 Meanwhile, head teachers frequently say that they too feel constrained to comply with the wishes of government, even where in theory they have the powers to do something innovative and different. They say that in the face of many different government agencies pursuing different goals, often holding schools to account for the use of dedicated 'single issue' budgets, it can be hard to establish and maintain their own improvement plan, and it takes great determination to pursue their own approach. Consequently, schools have become skilled at meeting government targets, but frequently head teachers feel that their ability to do what is right for their pupils and communities is constrained by government directives and improvement initiatives.
- 1.4 The approach some schools have taken to meeting targets falls some way short of meeting the needs of their pupils. In a significant number of primary schools, preparation for key stage two tests goes well beyond what would be sensible familiarisation with the tests into excessive rehearsal and repeated practice of tests, eating into valuable teaching time and creating a very narrow curriculum for some children in year six. Meanwhile in many secondary schools, there have been very significant changes to the curriculum. Some of these have served pupils well.

But it is no accident that some of the qualifications which have become very popular recently are not those which have the most support from employers and universities, but those which count for more than one GCSE in performance tables, can be taught in a single option block and can be less demanding than most GCSEs.

- 1.5 For the period 2004–2010 the number of vocational qualifications taken up to age 16 rose from about 15,000 to 575,000: an increase of 3,800 per cent<sup>4</sup>. So, while more young people are participating in education for longer, the curriculum and qualifications they are pursuing contain too much that is not essential and too little which stretches them to achieve standards matching the best in the world.

### Number of entries by KS4 pupils for VRQs, NVQs and BTEC vocational qualifications for the period 2004–2010



- 1.6 And at the same time as these qualifications have grown in popularity, there are worrying signs of a decline in the study of academic subjects. In some schools, the number of pupils studying languages or stretching qualifications in science and humanities has declined alarmingly<sup>5</sup>.
- 1.7 For example in 2009 around half of schools entered no pupils at all for all three sciences<sup>6</sup>. It is pupils in deprived areas who suffer the most from this trend: where schools struggle to attract good teachers of academic subjects<sup>7</sup> they are more likely to stop teaching those subjects altogether. Deprived pupils are then less well prepared for university, especially for the highest status universities: out of the 80,000 pupils eligible for free school meals when they were 16 years old, in the last year for which we have figures only 40 pupils went to Oxbridge<sup>8</sup>.

**'[...] in a knowledge economy, education is the new currency by which nations maintain economic competitiveness and global prosperity [...]** opportunities to land a good job are vanishing fast for young workers who drop out of school or fail to get college [HE] experience'

*Arne Duncan UNESCO speech*

## 18 The Importance of Teaching

- 1.8 Given these problems, it is perhaps unsurprising that employers and universities consistently express concerns about the skills and knowledge of school leavers, while international studies show that other countries are improving their school systems faster, and the difference in achievement between rich and poor is greater in this country than in other comparable countries. We are clear that our school system is performing below its potential: our pupils, teachers and head teachers are capable of achieving more than the current structures allow them to.
- 1.9 It does not have to be like this. The best performing and fastest improving education systems in the world show us what is possible. These systems consistently combine a rigorous focus on high standards with a determination to narrow attainment gaps between pupils from different parts of society<sup>9</sup>. They combine high levels of autonomy for teachers and schools with high levels of accountability: so that professionals both feel highly trusted to do what they believe is right and highly responsible for the progress of every child<sup>10</sup>. They ensure that every child and young person learns through a coherent and stretching approach to the curriculum<sup>11</sup>.
- 1.10 Indeed, what these best performing jurisdictions tell us is that we must pay attention to all of the key elements – the recruitment, training and practices of teachers and leaders, the standards being set by curriculum and qualifications, the autonomy and accountability of schools – if our system is to become one of the world’s fastest improving. In this White Paper we set out to learn the lessons, so that more schools succeed and more of our skilled teachers feel that they have the support they need.

# 2. Teaching and Leadership

- 2.1 The evidence from around the world shows us that the most important factor in determining the effectiveness of a school system is the quality of its teachers<sup>12</sup>. The best education systems draw their teachers from the most academically able, and select them carefully to ensure that they are taking only those people who combine the right personal and intellectual qualities<sup>13</sup>. These systems train their teachers rigorously at the outset, focusing particularly on the practical teaching skills they will need. At each stage of their career, and especially as they move into leadership positions, teachers in the highest performing systems receive further focused training and development<sup>14</sup>.
- 2.2 In the highest performing countries, teachers and teaching are held in the highest esteem. Rightly so, because all the evidence shows that good teachers make a profound difference. Studies in the United States have shown that an individual pupil taught for three consecutive years by a teacher in the top ten per cent of performance can make as much as two years more progress than a pupil taught for the same period by a teacher in the bottom ten per cent of performance<sup>15</sup>.
- 2.3 In this country, the evidence about who is being attracted into teaching now is encouraging: where once the average degree class of those joining postgraduate initial teacher training was below average for the graduate population, it is now above average<sup>16</sup>. But we still have some way to go before the status of teaching here matches its status in the highest performing countries: some 43 per cent of teachers here rate the status of teaching as low<sup>17</sup>, and 66 per cent of final-year students at 30 top universities believe that teaching offers slow career progression and limited chances for promotion<sup>18</sup>. We continue to struggle to attract enough graduates in some shortage subjects like physics, chemistry and mathematics<sup>19</sup>. And while some countries draw their teachers exclusively from the top tier of graduates, only two per cent of graduates obtaining first class honours degrees from Russell Group universities go on to train to become teachers within six months of graduating from university<sup>20</sup>.
- 2.4 Equally, we do not have a strong enough focus on what is proven to be the most effective practice in teacher education and development. We know that teachers learn best from other professionals and that an 'open classroom' culture is vital: observing teaching and being observed, having the opportunity to plan, prepare, reflect and teach with other teachers<sup>21</sup>. Too little teacher training takes place on the job, and too much professional development involves compliance with bureaucratic initiatives rather than working with other teachers to develop effective practice. Only 25 per cent of teachers report that they are regularly observed in classroom practice and two-thirds of all professional development is 'passive learning'<sup>22</sup> – sitting and listening to a presentation.

2.5 In training leaders, we face equally significant issues. One in four head teachers is due to retire in the next three years<sup>23</sup>. And head teachers consistently tell us that their ability to lead their school is constrained by the burdens of bureaucracy, legislation and central guidance, making headship much less attractive for the next generation.

2.6 So, we will:

- Continue to raise the quality of new entrants to the teaching profession, by: ceasing to provide Department for Education funding for initial teacher training for those graduates who do not have at least a 2:2 degree, expanding Teach First: offering financial incentives to attract more of the very best graduates in shortage subjects into teaching; and enabling more talented career changers to become teachers.
- Reform initial teacher training so that more training is on the job, and it focuses on key teaching skills including teaching early reading and mathematics, managing behaviour and responding to pupils' Special Educational Needs.
- Create a new national network of Teaching Schools, on the model of teaching hospitals, giving outstanding schools the role of leading the training and professional development of teachers and head teachers.
- Give schools more freedom to reward good performance and make it easier for them to tackle poor performance by extending pay flexibilities and simplifying performance management and capability procedures.
- Increase the number of Local and National Leaders of Education: excellent head teachers who provide support to other schools.
- Dramatically reduce bureaucracy, cutting out unnecessary duties, requirements, guidance and red tape.

### **We will continue to raise the quality of new entrants to the teaching profession**

2.7 We want to continue to improve the quality of teachers and teaching, and to raise the profession's status. Part of the solution will be to recruit more of the most talented people to the profession. Top-performing countries consistently recruit their teachers from the top third of graduates<sup>24</sup>. Some go further: South Korea recruits from the top five per cent and Finland from the top ten per cent of the cohort who graduate from their school system<sup>25</sup>. Evidence also suggests that prior academic attainment makes the biggest difference when combined with a high level of overall literacy and numeracy, strong interpersonal and communication skills, a willingness to learn, and the motivation to teach<sup>26</sup>.

2.8 So, there are three key areas where we need teachers to be very well equipped: subject knowledge and academic preparation, overall literacy and numeracy, and the personal and interpersonal skills that are necessary in order to interact

successfully in the classroom. We will take steps to raise expectations and make improvements in each of these areas.

- 2.9 First, for recent graduates, we will raise the bar for entry to PGCE teacher training by ceasing to provide Department for Education funding for applicants who do not hold at least a 2:2 degree or equivalent from September 2012.
- 2.10 Second, we will review the operation of the current 'basic skills' tests of literacy and numeracy which teachers are required to pass before they can practice. We will make sure student teachers take the test at the start rather than the end of the course, reduce the scope for retaking (currently one in seven teachers re-sits one of the tests more than three times), and strengthen the rigour of the tests to ensure they set a high enough standard.
- 2.11 Third, we know that highly effective models of teacher training (including those of Finland, Singapore, Teach First and Teach for America) systematically use assessments of aptitude, personality and resilience as part of the candidate selection process<sup>27</sup>. We are trialling such assessments and, subject to evaluation, plan to make them part of the selection process for teacher training.
- 2.12 As well as raising the minimum standard, we also need to make sure that teaching is sufficiently attractive to the country's most able young people. So we will develop and extend routes into teaching which have proven to be attractive to this group. Teach First is a very effective third sector organisation backed by business and government which has shown what is possible. It recruits highly able graduates, who would not otherwise have considered teaching<sup>28</sup>, to work in some of the country's most challenging schools for at least two years. It trains graduates for six weeks in the summer and then places them in schools as paid trainees, also offering a range of opportunities for them to develop as leaders. In 2010 over 5,000 graduates competed for 560 places on the scheme and Teach First is currently seventh in the Times Top 100 list of graduate employers<sup>39</sup>. Ofsted, in its first review of Teach First in 2008 said that half of the trainees were 'outstanding' while some were 'amongst the most exceptional trainees produced by any teacher training route'<sup>30</sup>. Even though they are chosen because they would not otherwise have considered teaching, some 60 per cent do stay in teaching<sup>31</sup>.
- 2.13 We will provide funding to more than double the size of Teach First from 560 new teachers to 1,140 each year by the end of this Parliament. This will include extending it across the country, and into primary schools.
- 2.14 We will also ask Teach First to develop Teach Next, a new employment-based route to attract high-fliers from other professions. The proportion of people who train to teach having changed career has grown very sharply, but we are aware that some of the most able potential career changers are put off by the thought of re-training and 'starting again at the bottom'. So, Teach Next will seek to draw in talented professionals with similarly strong academic records and interpersonal skills to those on Teach First, and with experience of the world of work. It will provide an accelerated route to leadership, will begin recruiting in 2011, and by September 2013 will have trained and placed around 200 highly talented career changers.

## 22 The Importance of Teaching

- 2.15 We will also encourage Armed Forces leavers to become teachers, by developing a 'Troops to Teachers' programme which will sponsor service leavers to train as teachers. We will pay tuition fees for PGCEs for eligible graduates leaving the Armed Forces and work with universities to explore the possibility of establishing a bespoke compressed undergraduate route into teaching targeted at Armed Forces leavers who have the relevant experience and skills but may lack degree-level qualifications. We will encourage Teach First to work with the services as they develop Teach Next, so that service leavers are able to take advantage of new opportunities to move into education. Service leavers also have a great deal to offer young people as mentors and we will be looking to increase opportunities for this. The charity Skill Force does fantastic work in this area enabling more former Armed Forces personnel to work alongside the children who benefit most from their support.
- 2.16 More generally, we wish to provide stronger incentives for the best graduates to come into teaching, especially in shortage subjects. We think that there is scope to provide stronger incentives at the point at which students would start post-graduate initial teacher training, including exploring how we might pay off the student loans of high-performing graduates in shortage subjects who wish to enter teaching. Incentives could be tailored to offer more to graduates with good degrees and to those who would teach shortage subjects.
- 2.17 We also think that there is scope to provide support for particularly capable students through their undergraduate degrees, as the Armed Forces do with officer cadets. We will examine how to provide scholarships through university for capable students who commit to entering teaching after graduation. Students might be expected to commit themselves to teach for a fixed period of time, and either to train or work with young people during university holidays, in return for financial support as undergraduates.
- 2.18 The reforms to higher education and to student finance announced by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, following the Browne Review, are likely to mean significant wider change for higher education. We will therefore publish for consultation our detailed proposals for the funding of initial teacher training early in the New Year.

### **We will reform the way in which new and existing teachers are trained and developed**

- 2.19 Just as important as attracting the right people into teaching is that teachers should get the right training and development as they learn to teach, and throughout their careers.

### **We will reform Initial Teacher Training so that it focuses on what is really important**

- 2.20 The initial training of teachers is perhaps the most important part of their professional development. Over a twenty-year period, initial teacher training has tended to focus more sharply on classroom practice. Even so, new teachers report that they are not always confident about some key skills that they need as teachers, for example the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics as the proven

best way to teach early reading<sup>32</sup>, and the management of poor behaviour in the classroom.

- 2.21 We will provide more opportunities for a larger proportion of trainees to learn on the job by improving and expanding the best of the current school-based routes into teaching – school-centred initial teaching training and the graduate teacher programme. A central application system will make it easier for potential trainees to find a suitable place. Our strongest schools will take the lead and trainees will be able to develop their skills, learning from our best teachers. Increased opportunities for school-based training will suit career changers, new graduates and existing members of the school workforce wanting to learn on the job and receive a salary as they train.
- 2.22 Subject to legislation, the key functions of the Training and Development Agency (TDA), some of which are outlined above, will transfer to the Department for Education, where they will be exercised by an executive agency that is directly accountable to Ministers.

### **We will develop a national network of new Teaching Schools to lead and develop sustainable approaches to teacher development across the country**

- 2.23 Over a number of years, more training of teachers has taken place in schools, through school-centred programmes, through the graduate teacher programme and in Training Schools – effective schools which have been asked to lead a cluster of other schools to train teachers. More recently, in London and Greater Manchester, the model of a Teaching School has been developed, modelled on teaching hospitals. These are outstanding schools led by outstanding head teachers (National Leaders of Education), which have a track record in improving pupil outcomes through supporting other schools.
- 2.24 We intend to bring together the Training School and Teaching School models, to create a national network of Teaching Schools. These will be outstanding schools, which will take a leading responsibility for providing and quality assuring initial teacher training in their area. We will also fund them to offer professional development for teachers and leaders. Other schools will choose whether or not to take advantage of these programmes, so Teaching Schools will primarily be accountable to their peers. We intend there to be a national network of such schools and our priority is that they should be of the highest quality – truly amongst the best schools in the country. The National College will be responsible for quality assurance of their work, and will remove accreditation from any school not meeting the standards.
- 2.25 In parallel, we will invite some of the best higher education providers of initial teacher training to open University Training Schools. These are used widely in Finland as a means of training teachers in practice. There are similar successful models in the US, including for example ‘lab schools’ in Chicago. We already have interest from some higher education providers in trialling this approach.

**Every university offering Education Sciences in Finland is closely linked to a school**, in which prospective teachers undertake classroom teaching practice under the constant guidance and supervision of experienced teacher trainers. These schools act as a link between teaching and the latest academic research and innovation.

One such school is *Jyväskylän Normaalikoulu* (the *Jyväskylä* Teacher Training School) in central Finland. According to *Jyväskylän Normaalikoulu*'s head Kirsti Koppi, 'by training highly motivated and skilled teachers who are able to make educational decisions based on theory and research – in addition to intuitive argumentation – we best fulfil our duty towards Finnish pupils and students.'

### **We will make sure that teachers have support for their professional development**

- 2.26 As part of their work, we will expect Teaching Schools to draw together outstanding teachers in an area who are committed to supporting other schools. There are currently many designations for these teachers, including Advanced Skills Teachers, Excellent Teachers and Leading Teachers. We will re-examine this range of designations to create a single simple designation which identifies more clearly leading practitioners who work to support others. Alongside this, as we create the national network of Teaching Schools, we will also designate 'Specialist Leaders of Education' – excellent professionals in leadership positions below the head teacher (such as deputies, bursars, heads of department) who will support others in similar positions in other schools.
- 2.27 At the same time, we will work to support the professional development of all teachers. As opportunities to observe and be observed are central to effective professional development, we will make clear that there is no 'three hour limit' on the amount of time a teacher can be observed. The Chartered London Teacher model provides a reward for teachers reaching the 'threshold', who have undertaken a programme of collaborative professional development and met challenging standards. We will look at the scope for learning lessons from this nationally.
- 2.28 It is also vital that we give teachers the opportunity to deepen their subject knowledge and renew the passion which brought them into the classroom. So from 2011 we will introduce a competitive national scholarship scheme to support professional development. An independent panel will make awards to support those who wish to pursue further study in their subject or broaden their expertise.

**'You can have the best curriculum, the best infrastructure, and the best policies, but if you don't have good teachers then everything is lost... We provide our teachers with 100 hours of professional development each year... If you do not have inspired teachers, how can you have inspired students?'**

*Singapore Education Official, quoted in Barber and Mourshed*

## **We will give head teachers greater freedoms to reward good performance and address poor performance**

- 2.29 Every member of school staff has an important role to play in ensuring that pupils and students get an excellent education – not only head teachers, teachers and teaching assistants, but also bursars, canteen staff, mentors, caretakers and other support staff. In the best schools, well-deployed teaching assistants support teachers in achieving excellent results with pupils.
- 2.30 The urgent national need to cut the budget deficit has made it necessary to introduce a two-year pay freeze in the public sector, which will affect teachers following the implementation of the 2.3 per cent pay award in September 2010. Nevertheless, schools will still be able to use incentives to recruit and retain their best staff, particularly where schools receive extra money through the Pupil Premium or are looking to recruit good teachers in shortage subjects.
- 2.31 We want to see schools making more use of existing pay flexibilities. We also wish to extend these flexibilities, so that schools can attract good graduates into the profession and reward high performance. So early in 2011 we will ask the School Teachers' Review Body to make recommendations on introducing greater freedoms and flexibilities that will make the pay and conditions framework less rigid. We will consult on their recommendations, so that new and more flexible pay arrangements can be introduced at the end of the current pay freeze.
- 2.32 As well as giving schools more flexibility to reward good performance, we want to make it easier for schools to tackle poor performance. No-one is helped when poor performance remains unaddressed. Underperforming teachers place additional pressures on their colleagues and let down the children in their care. We will encourage schools to help underperforming teachers address their professional weaknesses and many will be able to improve, with the right support.
- 2.33 But head teachers must have the ability to deal with persistent and entrenched underperformance and unprofessional conduct. The current regulations on teacher competence are complex, lengthy and fragmented. We will shorten and simplify them and remove the current duplication between the performance management and the 'capability' procedures for managing poor performance. This will enable head teachers to deal more swiftly, effectively and fairly with underperforming members of staff.
- 2.34 The proliferation of existing teacher standards means that our expectations of teachers are unclear, and makes it hard to assess teacher performance and steer professional development. We will review existing measures of teacher performance and conduct, including the current professional standards for teachers and the General Teaching Council for England's (GTCE) code of conduct and practice, to establish clear and unequivocal standards. The review will be led by excellent head teachers and teachers.

- 2.35 As part of that review we will look at the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), which define what teachers must know and be able to do in order to qualify to teach. There are currently 33 QTS standards, only one of which focuses solely on teaching and learning. We will ensure that the new standards have a stronger focus on key elements of teaching, including: the best approaches to the teaching of early reading and early mathematics, how best to manage poor behaviour, and how to support children with additional needs, including Special Educational Needs.
- 2.36 After we abolish the GTCE in the forthcoming Education Bill we will put new arrangements in place for the regulation of the teaching profession and for dealing with professional misconduct and incompetence. The Department will have the powers, where necessary, to bar teachers from the profession. There will be a simple list of those who have been barred which employers and the public will be able to access, and the disciplinary process will be simplified further by reducing the current range of sanctions to a ruling that a teacher will either be barred or not.

**Old Ford Primary School in Tower Hamlets focused on teaching and transformed standards in every classroom.** The school had suffered from ten years of poor results. A large school by primary standards, the proportion of pupils on free school meals is very high, with a majority speaking English as an additional language. In 2001, Ofsted judged the school to have serious weaknesses.

New headteacher Amanda Philips took a rigorous approach. In her first week Amanda, with two senior local authority officers, undertook a full review of the quality of teaching and gave direct and detailed feedback to each teacher, along with strategies to improve. A rubric for teaching good lessons was introduced, and dates were set to reassess the quality of their teaching.

Each teacher received tailored support on what needed to improve, including one-to-one mentoring, modelled support and opportunities for teachers to observe those performing better. Formal observations were used and day-to-day drop-ins became part of accepted practice.

Today, Ofsted reports are glowing. By the end of key stage two, pupils in the school are working above national expectations. The school has won numerous awards and has been designated a National Support School in recognition of the role it plays in helping other schools to improve.

## We will support strong and confident leadership for every school

- 2.37 After the quality of teaching, the quality of school leadership is the most important determinant of pupils' success<sup>33</sup>. As we make schools more autonomous, taking up a leadership role will become more attractive and more important. As one in four head teachers is due to retire over the next three years<sup>34</sup>,

it is vital that we secure the supply of head teachers in the future and give them the training and support they need to succeed.

### **We will reform the National Professional Qualification for Headship**

- 2.38 All new head teachers in maintained schools are required to hold the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). We are concerned that the qualification has been overly focused on how to implement government policy rather than on the key skills required for headship.
- 2.39 We will ask the National College to review the content of the NPQH, to make sure that it meets the highest standards for leadership development set in other countries and in other sectors of the economy. We will expect it to focus on the occupational requirements of being a head, and we will ask the National College to learn from MBA and Masters in Public Administration courses. We will ask the National College to enable a range of providers, including universities, to offer new qualifications to suitable candidates from September 2011.
- 2.40 The National College has done some extremely important work in strengthening school leadership in England. It is vital that this should continue, and we want to enhance the College's role, asking it to train chairs of governors and leaders of children's centres. Consistent with our wider reforms of arms length bodies, we will also streamline its governance so that it becomes an executive agency.

### **We will continue with successful leadership development programmes**

- 2.41 We will continue to support programmes which are successful in developing leaders in schools. Through the new Teaching Schools network, we expect the National College to enable many more clusters of schools to offer their own high quality 'middle leader' (e.g. heads of department or heads of year) development programmes. This will be significantly more cost effective than offering centralised programmes, and builds on a successful pilot.
- 2.42 We will also support third sector organisations to expand the availability of their programmes. For example, Future Leaders is a three-year programme which is designed to support highly talented teachers to progress quickly to leadership positions in challenging schools. Teaching Leaders is a two-year programme designed to support the development of outstanding subject or middle leaders in challenging schools. We will continue to support both programmes. The Future Leaders programme will place 50–100 talented teachers a year in challenging urban secondary schools across the country, and we will expand the pilot of the Teaching Leaders programme beyond London, to develop 75 outstanding subject/middle leaders each year.

### **We will significantly increase the number of National and Local Leaders of Education**

- 2.43 Some of the country's most successful head teachers have been designated National or Local Leaders of Education. The National Leaders are outstanding head teachers of outstanding schools who commit to supporting other schools. Their schools are designated National Support Schools, because as head teachers working with other schools which may be struggling, they are expected to draw on the established strengths of their own school in order to support

improvement. Local Leaders of Education are successful head teachers who offer support to head teachers of other schools through coaching and mentoring. These models have had significant impact. Primary schools which received NLE support in 2007–8 saw a ten percentage point increase in pupils reaching the expected level by age 11 and secondary schools which received NLE support during 2007–8 improved pupils' success at GCSE twice as fast as the national average<sup>35</sup>.

- 2.44 We will work with the National College to double the number of National and Local Leaders of Education by 2015. We will continue to make high quality the priority, and will expect the College to de-accredit any head teachers not meeting the standards. We will work with the National College to ensure that NLEs and LLEs continue to be deployed effectively, often across local authority boundaries, to create productive working partnerships.
- 2.45 As the Teaching School network grows, we expect that it will increasingly take on some of these functions, brokering partnerships and quality assuring and supporting development. In particular, we will expect the Teaching Schools to identify and develop teachers with the potential to take on headship. We will continue to fund succession planning work (via the Teaching Schools) in the areas with the biggest challenges.

## **We will free head teachers and teachers from bureaucracy and red tape**

- 2.46 An important part of making teaching and school leadership more attractive is that we should reduce unnecessary prescription and bureaucracy. It is not necessary for government to issue detailed advice or instruction about most matters which are the responsibility of schools. Head teachers and teachers enter education because they are guided by a sense of moral purpose and a desire to help children and young people succeed. They do not need to be patronised, directed and hectored at every turn. We will not approach every issue or problem with the starting assumption that another government directive, circular or statutory duty is the answer.
- 2.47 Instead, we will make sure that head teachers and teachers feel empowered to do what they think is right, know where they can go for support if they want it and are accountable for the results they achieve. These principles apply both to teaching and learning, and the wider support schools provide to their pupils and their families.
- 2.48 The majority of the important work that schools do is not as a result of government prescription – for example intervening early and offering additional support to pupils who need it, protecting pupils from harm, and working with their local communities. Good schools play a vital role as promoters of health and wellbeing in the local community and have always had good pastoral systems. They understand well the connections between pupils' physical and mental health, their safety, and their educational achievement. They create an ethos focused on achievement for all, where additional support is offered early to those who need it, and where the right connections are made to health, social care and

other professionals who can help pupils overcome whatever barriers to learning are in their way. Good schools work with parents, community organisations and local agencies to create a healthy, safe and respectful environment in school, after school, and on the way to and from school. Good teachers instil an ethos where aspiration is the best reason for children to avoid harmful behaviour.

**'Supporting pupils' health and wellbeing** is something we are committed to at Culloden Primary School – because this is the right thing to do. We don't need the government to tell us that we should be doing this, or how we should do it.'

*Bill Holledge, head teacher of Culloden primary school*

- 2.49 So we will remove statutory duties and requirements which we do not think need to be a legal requirement. Many of these requirements are 'declaratory' – they have little practical force – or else cannot reasonably be policed and enforced. Legislating in these areas is in our view ineffective: at most it reinforces a compliance culture in schools, which is undesirable; at worst it brings the law into disrepute as some schools feel able to ignore such duties, while other schools change perfectly good practice because they think that they must.
- 2.50 We will legislate to remove the duty on schools and colleges to cooperate with Children's Trusts and abolish the requirement for local authorities to produce a Children and Young People's Plan. Government can leave schools and local authorities to make decisions for themselves in all of these areas – because central government is not as well-placed as local people to make decisions.
- 2.51 Nationally, we will continue to work with the Department of Health in line with their forthcoming Public Health White Paper, the Home Office and other Departments to ensure that schools have access to high quality, evidence-based information. Locally, we will rely on schools to work together with voluntary, business and statutory agencies to create an environment where every child can learn, where they can experience new and challenging opportunities through extended services, and where school buildings and expertise are contributing to building strong families and communities.
- 2.52 We will remove prescription on school governing bodies, simplifying the list of decisions that they are required to take. We will allow them, for example, to take decisions about the length of the school day in whatever way they consider appropriate.
- 2.53 We are also removing the expectation on every school to complete a centrally designed self evaluation form. We strongly support the view that good schools evaluate themselves rigorously. But we do not believe that imposing a very long form in a standard format, which requires consideration of many issues which may be of limited importance to a particular school, helps schools to evaluate themselves in a focused way against their priorities.

**'I'm delighted the SEF has gone.** It took hours of head teachers' time or schools were paying consultants thousands of pounds. Working with the head teachers, the Kennal Academies Trust has improved and reduced the information down to just two sides saving time and money. It did not improve teaching, learning or exam results.'

*Diane Khanna, head teacher of Welling School*

- 2.54 We support the idea that good schools set themselves targets, identify the strengths and weaknesses that might either help or hinder them to achieve those targets, and come up with a plan for succeeding. But having a centralised target-setting process, in which central government challenges local government to come up with a large number of targets which add up to the ideal national total, and local government challenges schools to come up with targets which add up to the local authority total, does not help schools to succeed with more pupils. Instead it creates a dynamic in which the centre tries to argue targets up and the locality tries to argue them down – the very opposite of the aspirational approach we want to see and most schools would naturally follow. So we are ending centralised target-setting for schools.
- 2.55 Similarly, we support the idea that teachers should have a plan for their lessons. But that doesn't mean imposing a centralised planning template on schools. So we will make clear that neither the Government nor Ofsted require written lesson plans, let alone in a particular format. And we support the view that skilled and precise assessment of pupils' work – both of the level at which children are working and of what they should be learning next – is an essential part of good teaching. But we do not need to impose national requirements as to how this should be done. So we will not be prescriptive about the use of the 'Assessing Pupil Progress' materials and the new National Curriculum will not specify the methods teachers use.
- 2.56 And while good financial management is important, we will abolish the Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS) because it has become a tick-box paper exercise, taking far too much of head teachers' time without providing real confidence in the quality of a school's financial management. We will replace it with something simpler and more effective.

**'FMSiS was a bureaucratic burden on schools and did not equate to good financial management.** The scrapping of it has freed up the business manager's time to work on the school budget rather than on a piece of paper to show how the school manages its budget.'

*Christian Cavanagh, head teacher of Debden Park High School*

- 2.57 As well as specific duties and requirements, there is so much guidance in circulation that it is virtually impossible for even the most conscientious head teacher or chair of governors to absorb it all. Having a total of over 600 pages of guidance on improving behaviour and tackling bullying is not a sign of diligence or of taking the issue seriously. It is a counter-productive exercise and wastes teachers' time.

- 2.58 So we are reviewing all existing guidance, aiming to remove what is not necessary and sharply cut back what is left. We aim to establish a simple, definitive suite of guidance which can reasonably be read by a head teacher over a half-term break. Getting to there from this point will take some time, but we intend to make guidance on key areas short and clear about what schools have to do, should do and can choose to do.
- 2.59 Through taking these steps we will free schools from externally imposed burdens and give them greater confidence to set their own direction.

# 3. Behaviour

- 3.1 We know that no issue is more important when it comes to attracting good people into teaching than tackling poor pupil behaviour. Among undergraduates considering becoming teachers, the most common reason for pursuing another profession is the fear of not being safe in our schools<sup>36</sup>.
- 3.2 And poor discipline is forcing good people out of the classroom. Two thirds of teachers say that negative behaviour is driving people out of the profession<sup>37</sup>, and the most frequent factor cited as a cause of classroom stress is pupils' lack of respect towards teaching staff<sup>38</sup>: in 2007, almost 18,000 pupils were permanently excluded or suspended for attacking a member of staff<sup>39</sup>. Only around half of teachers believed that there was appropriate support available in their school for teachers struggling to manage pupil behaviour<sup>40</sup>. Far too many teachers are also exposed to false or even malicious allegations of misconduct by pupils or parents<sup>41</sup>.
- 3.3 For parents and the majority of well-behaved pupils, good behaviour in school is important to their future success. Pupils have the right to come to school and focus on their studies, free from disruption and the fear of bullying.
- 3.4 For all these reasons, we need to act to restore the authority of teachers and head teachers, so that they can establish a culture of respect and safety, with zero tolerance of bullying, clear boundaries, good pastoral care and early intervention to address problems. As a last resort, head teachers need the ability to exclude disruptive children and to be confident that their authority in taking these difficult decisions will not be undermined.
- 3.5 We must also address serious issues of inequality – both black boys and pupils receiving free school meals are three times more likely to be excluded than average<sup>42</sup>. Giving teachers the power to intervene early and firmly to tackle disruptive behaviour can get these children's lives back on track. And by improving the quality of education for those children who are excluded we can ensure they are given a necessary second chance, and provided with the means to turn their lives around.
- 3.6 So we will:
- Increase the authority of teachers to discipline pupils by strengthening their powers to search pupils, issue detentions and use force where necessary.
  - Support teachers to challenge behaviour by legislating to grant them anonymity when accused by pupils and speeding up investigations.
  - Strengthen head teachers' authority to maintain discipline beyond the school gates and improve exclusion processes.
  - Expect head teachers to take a strong stand against bullying – particularly prejudice-based racist, sexist and homophobic bullying.

- Focus Ofsted inspections more strongly on behaviour and safety, including bullying, as one of four key areas of inspection.
- Change the current system of independent appeal panels for exclusions so that they take less time and ensure that pupils who have committed a serious offence cannot be re-instated.
- Ensure that all children being educated in alternative provision get a full-time education.
- Improve the quality of alternative provision by giving existing providers more autonomy and encouraging new providers – including new alternative provision Free Schools.
- Pilot a new approach to permanent exclusions where schools have the power, money and responsibility to secure alternative provision for excluded pupils.

## **We will increase the authority of classroom teachers and support them to discipline pupils appropriately**

- 3.7 We want all teachers to be clear about the powers they have to deal with disruption in the classroom and to have confidence in exercising their authority. Teachers tell us that they are not clear about what they can do, and that existing powers do not equip them to discipline effectively. So we will strengthen and simplify the existing position and powers, ensuring that teachers feel supported and protected when they address difficult behaviour.

## **We will strengthen powers to search pupils, issue detentions and use reasonable force where necessary**

- 3.8 Staff should be able to punish unacceptably poor behaviour immediately in the way that they think most appropriate, using their professional judgement and understanding of the child concerned. This should include being able to issue an immediate detention to take place on the same day. So we will legislate to abolish the requirement to give 24 hours' notice for detentions.
- 3.9 Teachers have been given powers to use force or physical restraint where necessary. They should feel able to remove disruptive children from the classroom, or indeed prevent them from leaving a room where that is necessary to maintain order. But many teachers fear the rules are not strong enough to support them. And in almost half of schools surveyed in 2006, over-cautious 'no-touch' policies have been put in place<sup>43</sup>. To ensure teachers feel confident in the exercise of their powers, we will strengthen the rules. We will issue a short, clear, robust guide on teachers' powers to use reasonable force and we will give schools greater discretion to decide on the most appropriate approach to monitoring the exercise of these powers.
- 3.10 We will strengthen the powers that teachers have to search for and confiscate items which may be dangerous or cause harm. Teachers already have powers to search for alcohol, knives and other weapons, controlled drugs and stolen property. This will be extended to include pornography, tobacco, and fireworks.

## 34 The Importance of Teaching

We will legislate through the forthcoming Education Bill to give teachers a more general power to search for any item which they reasonably believe is going to be used to cause harm to others or to break a law so that, for example, teachers can search for items such as phones or cameras which they believe are going to be used in this way.

### **We will better protect teachers from false allegations**

- 3.11 The fact that teachers are often the only adult in a classroom of young people means that they can be subject to false or even malicious allegations. In a recent survey, 50 per cent of staff questioned reported that they or a colleague have had a false allegation made against them<sup>44</sup>. As well as being a distressing experience, this can affect career progression and damage the perception of teachers. So we will legislate to give anonymity to teachers accused by pupils and we will speed up the progress of investigations.
- 3.12 It is of course absolutely essential that genuine cases of misconduct or abuse are dealt with fairly and effectively. And to do this, false allegations need to be identified and dismissed quickly. Governors and head teachers should ensure that all allegations are investigated without delay. We will work with local authorities, the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) to address this issue. ACPO are committed to looking at new ways in which investigations can be speeded up, without compromising their integrity, by eradicating all unnecessary delays.
- 3.13 Many head teachers have felt that the only option while investigating an allegation is to suspend the teacher in question, regardless of the nature or seriousness of the allegation. We will update guidance to schools to ensure that allegations against a teacher do not automatically result in their being suspended. Where there are no risks to children, we want to see alternatives explored so that teachers do not have to endure the stigma and speculation that accompanies suspension.
- 3.14 False allegations can damage teachers' career prospects even once disproved. We will clarify that in future when employers are asked to give references for teachers they should never be required to report prior allegations which were found to be malicious or untrue. We will legislate to introduce reporting restrictions that prevent a teacher's identity being revealed until the point at which they are charged with a criminal offence.
- 3.15 We will consider whether these measures should also be applied to the wider children's workforce.

### **We will support head teachers to maintain a culture of discipline and respect**

- 3.16 Head teachers support their teachers to maintain good discipline in the classroom every day by establishing a whole school culture that promotes respect, safety and good behaviour.

### **We will strengthen head teachers' authority beyond the school gates**

- 3.17 It is important that head teachers are able to maintain a culture of good behaviour and respect by reinforcing the school's expectations beyond the school gates. Bullying can happen or continue outside school, and behaviour on the way to and from school affects the perception of the school in the wider community. We will therefore issue statutory guidance to extend head teachers' powers to punish school pupils who misbehave on their way to or from school.

### **We will support head teachers to take a strong stand against bullying**

- 3.18 Parents and teachers want pupils to be able to learn in safety, but we know that bullying is still a significant problem. Unsurprisingly, pupils who are bullied are more likely to be disengaged from school and do substantially worse in their GCSEs than their classmates<sup>45</sup>. So tackling bullying is an essential part of raising attainment.
- 3.19 Teachers, pupils and charities report that prejudice-based bullying in particular is on the increase. It is of course unacceptable for young people to be bullied because of their sexuality, yet this happens to two thirds of lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils<sup>46</sup>. Ninety-eight per cent of young gay pupils hear the word 'gay' used as a form of abuse at school, and homophobic bullying is often directed at heterosexual pupils as well<sup>47</sup>. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and disabilities are also more likely to be victims of bullying. Over a three-year period, 81 per cent of pupils with statements of SEN reported being bullied<sup>48</sup>, and bullying specifically relating to their special needs is increasing<sup>49</sup>.
- 3.20 Schools should take incidents of prejudice-based bullying especially seriously. It is important that they educate children about the differences between different groups of people and create a culture of respect and understanding.

#### **St. George's School in Herfordshire takes homophobia extremely seriously.**

St George's is a multi-denominational Christian foundation school, educating pupils with diverse religious backgrounds. The school used materials and DVDs from Stonewall to train staff to tackle homophobia.

The school always presents anti-homophobic work in the Christian context of treating everyone with respect. Staff are encouraged to take a simple and consistent line of 'we don't treat people like that here'. Where issues of homosexuality arise in lessons, staff have been trained to be confident to manage and challenge inappropriate comments. Older students have also been key in putting forward the case against homophobia in Chapel and school assemblies.

As a result, the school has seen a near elimination of overt homophobia. The use of the word 'gay' as a derogatory term has almost disappeared.

- 3.21 While we will reduce significantly the amount of central guidance given to schools overall, schools rightly look to us for support and guidance on dealing with bullying. Existing anti-bullying guidance is too long and fragmented, so we will rationalise and simplify this from nearly 500 pages to around 20 pages. This will help head teachers to develop an anti-bullying approach for the whole school

which protects the most vulnerable. And we will work with non-government organisations such as Stonewall and the Anti-Bullying Alliance to promote best practice and make sure that schools know where to go for support.

## **Ofsted will focus more strongly on behaviour and safety**

- 3.22 Our planned reforms to school inspections will free Ofsted to focus on schools' core educational purpose. This includes focusing more strongly on behaviour and safety, which will be one of only four areas that inspectors consider in future.
- 3.23 Inspectors will be given more time to look for evidence of how well pupils behave, by observing lessons and pupils' conduct around the school. They will also expect schools to demonstrate that the standards of behaviour seen during the inspection are maintained at all times. Inspection will consider whether pupils are and feel safe in school. It is particularly important that pupils are protected and feel safe from bullying in the playground and corridors as well as in the classroom. Inspectors will look for evidence of how much bullying there is in school and how well it is dealt with. Evidence from pupils and parents will be considered alongside evidence from teachers.
- 3.24 If parents have concerns about behaviour, and feel that the school has not dealt with them properly, they can ask Ofsted to carry out an inspection. In deciding how to proceed, Ofsted will consider whether evidence suggests that standards of behaviour have dropped since the last inspection and whether they give cause for concern. Ofsted may choose to contact the school for more information before deciding whether it needs to inspect the school, or it may carry out an inspection immediately if the problems are serious.
- 3.25 Inspectors gather this information about parent, pupil and staff views of behaviour through surveys and discussions during an inspection. Ofsted will review how this information is collected and used during inspections, including the best ways to make findings available to the schools and parents. Ofsted will also undertake a survey of effective and ineffective practices which address bullying. We will make this information available to all, along with case studies from the most effective schools.

## **We will confirm head teachers' authority to exclude pupils and improve provision for excluded pupils**

- 3.26 Of course, no head teacher or teacher sees permanent exclusion from school as a positive outcome for a child. Exclusion should always be the last resort and good schools always seek to intervene early with pupils whose behaviour is a problem. Indeed, the best offer such effective support that they rarely permanently exclude any pupil. A range of approaches both in and outside school can be effective, including in-class support, separate learning support units and broader parenting support.
- 3.27 Effectively promoting good behaviour reduces the number of children causing low-level disruption. Resources can then be focused on those with serious behaviour problems who are perhaps at risk of exclusion and may need additional

or specialist support to tackle underlying problems that are causing their bad behaviour. Effective measures to promote good behaviour are well-known to teachers and supported by academic evidence. For example, schools can encourage good behaviour by having clear and simple rules, rewards and sanctions for pupils, encouraging pupils to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour and that of others, providing pastoral support for all pupils not just those who misbehave, and having traditional blazer and tie uniforms, prefects and house systems. To work, approaches have to be implemented consistently and intelligently, led by head teachers who have the freedom to respond to the particular needs of their school.

**ARK Plus is a programme to intervene in the lives of under-attaining Year 7 students** with acute behavioural and emotional needs and with potential to improve both their academic attainment and their resilience and ability to thrive in school.

The key principle is that prevention is better than cure. The twelve children in the pilot spent six months away from the main school site, with academic catch-up including intensive English and mathematics tuition in the mornings. In the afternoons, pupils were offered a range of enrichment activities including sport, music and drama with a focus on developing the students' social and interpersonal skills.

The students on the pilot programme all made at least one year's progress in English and mathematics in just six months, and have reintegrated effectively into school with many fewer behavioural incidents.

### **We will reform the exclusion appeals process**

- 3.28 We are clear that head teachers must be able to exclude pupils from school as a last resort, where behaviour is unacceptable and everything else has been tried. But there are a number of problems with the way that exclusions currently work.
- 3.29 The current process for appeal against an exclusion, where cases are referred to Independent Appeal Panels, is problematic in several ways. By its nature the appeal process can become unduly adversarial, rather than encouraging schools and parents to continue to work together in the interests of the child. And the possible reinstatement of an excluded pupil – however rarely this happens – can undermine the head teacher's authority. We will legislate to reform independent appeals panels, so that there is still an independent review of decision-making, but the review will not be able to compel re-instatement. If the review panel judges that there were flaws in the exclusion process they can request that governors reconsider their decision and schools may be required to contribute towards the cost of additional support for the excluded pupil. But schools will not be forced to re-admit children who have been excluded.

### **We will improve the quality of alternative provision by increasing autonomy and encouraging new providers**

- 3.30 Children and young people being educated in alternative provision are some of the most vulnerable in society. They include excluded pupils, but around half of

pupils are there for other reasons: for example those who have been bullied and are too scared to attend school, children who are ill, and teenage mothers<sup>50</sup>. Currently there is no requirement to provide these pupils with a full-time education. We think that this is wrong. So we will make sure that from September 2011 all local authorities are required to provide full-time education for all children in alternative provision.

- 3.31 At the moment, pupils who have been excluded or are for some other reason unable to attend mainstream school, receive their education in alternative provision which includes local authority-run pupil referral units (PRUs). The quality of provision is mixed, with significant proportions of PRUs judged outstanding by Ofsted and many others judged inadequate<sup>51</sup>. Large numbers of pupils in PRUs do not go on to achieve meaningful qualifications – in 2010 only 3.1 per cent of pupils in PRU and hospital schools achieved 5 A\*-C GCSEs<sup>52</sup> – and some go on to cause serious problems for themselves and their communities. PRUs are inspected by Ofsted, but few other providers of alternative education are inspected.
- 3.32 We will increase the autonomy, accountability and diversity of alternative provision. Autonomy within the state sector is linked with improving quality, but PRUs are not currently benefiting from this as they are much more closely linked to local authorities than schools. We will legislate for all PRUs to gain the same self-governing powers as community schools including, for the first time, giving their governing bodies powers over staffing and finance.
- 3.33 There is not enough diversity of provision. We estimate that less than half of alternative provision is provided by the voluntary sector, despite experience suggesting that this sector can offer good and innovative provision. This may be because local authorities tend to see their own PRUs as the default option, and because the contracting process that local authorities operate does not suit the sector. For example, short-term contracts are common, offering little security for small and new providers.
- 3.34 We will open up the alternative provision market to new providers and diversify existing provision by legislating to allow PRUs to become Academies, encouraging Free Schools that offer alternative provision, and supporting more voluntary sector providers alongside Free Schools. Alternative provision Free Schools in particular will be a route for new voluntary and private sector organisations to offer high-quality education for disruptive and excluded children and others without a mainstream school place. Local authorities will be expected to choose the best provision and replace any that is unsatisfactory. We will, if necessary, use the Secretary of State's powers to close inadequate PRUs and specify what sort of provision will replace it. In doing so, we will use competitions to open the way for high quality new providers to enter the market.
- 3.35 Small voluntary sector providers tell us that it is difficult to offer alternative provision, because there is no common or transparent measure of their quality and therefore no easy way of demonstrating the outcomes they achieve. Many of these organisations can provide high-quality, tailored education, and we want to remove the unnecessary barriers which keep them out. At the same time, schools and local authorities need to be able to identify which providers are not of sufficient quality.

3.36 Ofsted are currently undertaking a study of alternative provision. In the light of their findings we will consider how best to ensure high-quality provision. It may be that a quality mark for alternative provision will be effective or that tighter regulation may be needed.

### **We will pilot a new approach to permanent exclusions**

3.37 Over time, we think there is a strong case for organising exclusion and alternative provision differently. We want to make it clear that head teachers have the authority to exclude pupils where there is no other option. But we want to balance this authority with clear responsibility for both the quality of the education their excluded pupils receive and what they achieve.

3.38 So we plan to trial a new approach. Schools will be free to exclude pupils, but they will then be responsible for finding and funding alternative provision themselves. In line with our plans to give schools greater autonomy and more control of funding, we will explore shifting the money for alternative provision from local authorities to schools so schools can purchase for themselves the alternative provision they think will best suit disruptive children. They could either collaborate with other schools to provide suitable places, or buy them from the local authority, the voluntary sector or local colleges.

3.39 In order to ensure the decision to exclude is never abused, schools will be held accountable for the pupils they exclude. The academic performance of excluded children would count in the school performance tables. This would create a strong incentive for schools to avoid exclusion where possible, and ensure that where it does happen it is appropriate and pupils receive good alternative provision.

3.40 We believe this change of approach could see much improved outcomes for some of our most vulnerable children. However, we recognise that this is a big step. So we will begin by working with local authorities and head teachers to test the approach, identify issues and barriers, develop solutions, and ensure that the incentives work effectively.

3.41 Certainly in the short to medium term, we would need local authorities to retain a duty to ensure that sufficient provision is available, and to take responsibility for quality assurance. Over time, we hope to see responsibility pass more and more to schools themselves. We will work closely with schools and local authorities as we trial and implement these reforms.

# 4. Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications

- 4.1 It is our ambition to reduce unnecessary prescription, bureaucracy and central control throughout our education system. That means taking a new approach towards the curriculum. At over 200 pages, the guidance on the National Curriculum is weighing teachers down and squeezing out room for innovation, creativity, deep learning and intellectual exploration. The National Curriculum should set out only the essential knowledge and understanding that all children should acquire and leave teachers to decide how to teach this most effectively.
- 4.2 The National Curriculum was never meant to be the whole school curriculum – the totality of what goes on in any school. It was explicitly meant to be limited in scope yet in practice has come to dominate. We propose to take a new approach to the curriculum, which affirms the importance of teaching and creates scope for teachers to inspire. We want the National Curriculum to be a benchmark not a straitjacket, a body of knowledge against which achievement can be measured.
- 4.3 We envisage schools and teachers taking greater control over what is taught in schools, innovating in how they teach and developing new approaches to learning. We anticipate that in a school system where Academy status is the norm and more and more schools are moving towards greater autonomy, there will be much greater scope for teachers to design courses of work which will inspire young minds. But there will still be a need for a national benchmark, to provide parents with an understanding of what progress they should expect, to inform the content of the core qualifications and to ensure that schools which neither wish, nor have the capacity, to pursue Academy status have a core curriculum to draw on which is clear, robust and internationally respected.
- 4.4 Similarly, we must make sure that the standards set by our qualifications match up to the best internationally in providing a good basis for future education and employment. And while it is vital that at each stage in their education, there is good quality assessment of pupils to provide information for parents and others, we need to make sure that this is done without excessive drilling or narrowing of the curriculum.
- 4.5 Through reforming our curriculum and qualifications, more children should be motivated to stay in education or training. At the end of 2009, 183,000 16–18 year-olds were not in education, employment or training (NEET) – 9.2 per cent of that age group – and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to become NEET than their peers<sup>53</sup>. We must have high expectations for all

young people, ensuring that they continue their education to age 18 and beyond and are supported to achieve to the highest standards.

#### 4.6 We will:

- Review and reform the National Curriculum so that it becomes a benchmark outlining the knowledge and concepts pupils should be expected to master to take their place as educated members of society.
- Ensure that all children have the chance to follow an enriching curriculum by getting them reading early. That means supporting the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics and introducing a simple reading check at age six to guarantee that children have mastered the basic skills of early reading and also ensure we can identify those with learning difficulties.
- Hold an independent review of assessment at the end of primary school to improve the current system so that parents have the information they need and schools can be properly accountable without feeling that they must drill children for tests.
- Encourage schools to offer a broad set of academic subjects to age 16, by introducing the English Baccalaureate.
- Following Professor Alison Wolf's review of vocational education, make necessary reforms so that vocational qualifications support progression to further and higher education and employment.
- Support more young people to continue in education or training to age 18.
- Obtain an honest view of our national performance by ensuring pupils take part in international tests of literacy, mathematics and science.
- Ask Ofqual to measure qualifications against the best in the world so that, at age 16 and beyond, students are able to choose from a range of high-quality and rigorous qualifications respected and valued by universities and employers.

## **We will review and reform the National Curriculum to focus on essential knowledge and concepts**

4.7 The National Curriculum should set out clearly the core knowledge and understanding that all children should be expected to acquire in the course of their schooling. It must embody their cultural and scientific inheritance, the best that our past and present generations have to pass on to the next. But it must not try to cover every conceivable area of human learning or endeavour, must not become a vehicle for imposing passing political fads on our children and must not squeeze out all other learning.

4.8 Teachers, not bureaucrats or Ministers, know best how to teach – how to convey knowledge effectively and how to unlock understanding. In order to bring the curriculum to life, teachers need the space to create lessons which engage their

## 42 The Importance of Teaching

pupils, and children need the time to develop their ability to retain and apply knowledge<sup>54</sup>. To too great an extent, the National Curriculum has been over-prescriptive, has included material that is not essential and has specified teaching method rather than core knowledge. We will therefore ask teachers to work with us to review the National Curriculum in order to reform it. The curriculum should embody rigour and high standards and outline a core of knowledge in the traditional subject disciplines.

- 4.9 The new National Curriculum will therefore have a greater focus on subject content, outlining the essential knowledge and understanding that pupils should be expected to have to enable them to take their place as educated members of society. Teachers must be free to use their professionalism and expertise to support all children to progress. So, in outlining what children should expect to know in core subjects, the new curriculum will allow a greater degree of freedom in how that knowledge might be acquired and what other teaching should complement this core.
- 4.10 The review will look at both the primary and secondary curriculum, to ensure coherence between the two, and will look in particular at the evidence from the highest performing jurisdictions, to ensure that our curriculum can stand comparison with theirs.
- 4.11 As well as the review of the National Curriculum, we have commissioned Dame Clare Tickell to review how the curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) prepares all children for school, and she will report in Spring 2011. The essential stages of children's education begin long before they reach school at age five, and children from disadvantaged backgrounds have already begun to fall behind by then. Making sure that early years education is as effective as possible is vital, so that more children are ready when they start school. The National Curriculum review will take account of the review of the EYFS.
- 4.12 The National Curriculum will act as a new benchmark for all schools. It will be slim, clear and authoritative enough for all parents to see what their child might be expected to know at every stage in their school career. They will be able to use it to hold all schools to account for how effectively their child has grasped the essentials of, for example, English language and literature, core mathematical processes and science.
- 4.13 The National Curriculum will continue to inform the design and content of assessment at the end of key stage two, which will apply to every child and which will provide a guide to the performance of primary schools. It will also continue to inform the design and content of GCSEs, the benchmark examination which most state secondary school pupils sit and which provides the principal accountability mechanism for those schools.
- 4.14 Academies and Free Schools will retain the freedom they have at the moment to depart from aspects of the National Curriculum where they consider it appropriate. But they will be required by law, like all schools, to teach a broad and balanced curriculum. And all state schools will be held accountable for their performance in tests and exams which reflect the National Curriculum.

## **We will improve early numeracy and literacy, promoting systematic synthetic phonics and assessing reading at age six to make sure that all children are on track**

- 4.15 Learning to read is the first and most important activity any child undertakes at school. Having this basic foundation unlocks all the other benefits of education. Despite the efforts of dedicated teachers, one in five 11 year-olds still leaves primary school struggling to read and write at the standard expected of them. This figure is much higher for deprived pupils – more than one in three<sup>55</sup>.
- 4.16 The evidence is clear that the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics is the most effective way of teaching young children to read, particularly for those at risk of having problems with reading<sup>56</sup>. Unless children have learned to read, the rest of the curriculum is a secret garden to which they will never enjoy access. As this is an area of such fundamental importance, we will go further than in any other area in actively supporting best practice. We will provide the resources to support the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics in primary schools. We will support all schools with key stage one pupils to implement this approach by providing funding for high-quality training and classroom teaching resources.

**North Walsham Infant School & Nursery, Norfolk, used systematic synthetic phonics to improve literacy across the school.** Up until 2005, teachers were using a variety of reading schemes with variable outcomes for different groups of pupils, and wanted to improve the way literacy was taught.

The school adopted a programme of systematic synthetic phonics. Pupils are assessed regularly and organised into groups for daily sessions at their own phonic level. This ensures that every child has acquired the skills and understanding needed before advancing to the next phonics level, and means staff can respond swiftly to support those children not making the expected progress. The school's systematic phonics programme is supported by continuing professional development for staff to ensure teachers and teaching assistants are using consistent and up-to-date strategies for successful literacy teaching.

Since implementing the programme, pupils at North Walsham have demonstrated an ability to read and write significantly above the national average for their ages.

- 4.17 To reinforce this, Ofsted will enhance its inspectors' expertise in assessing the teaching of reading, so that their judgements reflect appropriate expectations and recognise particular features of systematic synthetic phonics teaching. We will also reform initial teacher training to ensure that trainee teachers have the confidence to teach systematic synthetic phonics.
- 4.18 Pupils who are struggling to learn to read must be identified as early as possible so that they can be given extra help. We will therefore introduce a new age six reading check. This screening exercise will be designed to check that children are on track and to help schools to identify those who need more support. Schools'

results will be reported through the RAISE Online database, which will allow teachers to analyse and improve their teaching practices.

- 4.19 We are clear that effective teaching of English and mathematics in primary schools is the bedrock of a good education. As part of the review of the National Curriculum, we will also make sure that children are expected to master the core arithmetical functions by the time they leave primary school.

### **We will promote achievement of a broad academic core at 16 and a rounded education**

- 4.20 In order to encourage and facilitate a more rounded educational experience for all students we will create a new way of recognising those students, and schools, who succeed in achieving real breadth.

### **The English Baccalaureate will encourage schools to offer a broad set of academic subjects to age 16**

- 4.21 In most European countries school students are expected to pursue a broad and rounded range of academic subjects until the age of 16. Even in those countries such as the Netherlands where students divide between academic and vocational routes all young people are expected, whatever their ultimate destiny, to study a wide range of traditional subjects. So we will introduce a new award – the English Baccalaureate – for any student who secures good GCSE or iGCSE passes in English, mathematics, the sciences, a modern or ancient foreign language and a humanity such as history or geography. This combination of GCSEs at grades A\*-C will entitle the student to a certificate recording their achievement. At the moment only around 15 per cent of students secure this basic suite of academic qualifications and fewer than four per cent of students eligible for free school meals do so<sup>57</sup>. So to encourage the take-up of this combination of subjects we will give special recognition in performance tables to those schools which are helping their pupils to attain this breadth of study.
- 4.22 Alongside the number of students who secure five good GCSEs including English and mathematics, the performance tables will record the number who secure the combination of GCSEs which make up the English Baccalaureate. Those schools which succeed in giving their pupils a properly rounded academic education will be more easily identified. This will provide a powerful incentive for schools to drive the take-up of individual science subjects, humanities such as history and, especially, foreign languages.
- 4.23 The proportion of young people studying a modern language at GCSE has fallen from 79 per cent in 2000 to just 44 per cent in 2008 and 2009<sup>58</sup>. The introduction of the English Baccalaureate will encourage many more schools to focus more strongly on ensuring every student has the chance to pursue foreign language learning to the age of 16.

**'Ultimately, education is the great equaliser. It is the one force that can consistently overcome differences in background, culture and privilege. As the author Ben Wildavsky writes in his new book, *The Great Brain Race*, in the global economy 'more and more people will have the chance [...] to advance based on what they know rather than who they are.'**

*Arne Duncan, UNESCO speech*

- 4.24 The English Baccalaureate will be only one measure of performance, and should not be the limit of schools' ambitions for their pupils. Schools will retain the freedom to innovate and offer the GCSEs, iGCSEs and other qualifications which best meet the needs of their pupils. Pupils will of course be able to achieve vocational qualifications alongside the English Baccalaureate. With the proper structures in place through the reform of the National Curriculum and the introduction of the English Baccalaureate schools will have the freedom and the incentives to provide a rigorous and broad academic education.

### **We will focus central government support on strategic curriculum subjects, particularly mathematics and science**

- 4.25 We will continue to provide additional support for the uptake of mathematics and the sciences. A strong national base of technological and scientific skills is essential to growth and employers continue to report shortages of these skills.
- 4.26 This deficit will be tackled by providing support to increase the number of specialist teachers in physics, chemistry and mathematics and to improve the skills of existing teachers. We need more specialist mathematics teachers in primary schools and will encourage and support schools in developing this specialism. We will support schools which offer students the chance to study GCSE physics, chemistry and biology as separate subjects by exploring how performance tables can reward this raising of aspirations. The teaching of A level further mathematics will be supported by funding initiatives such as the further mathematics support programme. We will also look at ways of supporting the in-depth study of physics. Already other organisations, for example the Physics Factory, are enabling more state school students to enjoy high-quality physics teaching. And we will initiate two new competitions with prizes for the best engineering projects from male and female students in state schools.

### **We will ensure all schools are given the resources and space they need to offer a truly rounded education**

- 4.27 There is much of value that children need to learn and experience which sits outside the traditional subject disciplines – the languages, sciences, humanities and mathematics which make up national curricula across the globe. So we will ensure there is space in the school day, and resources for school leaders, to guarantee a truly rounded education for all.
- 4.28 Children need access to high-quality physical education, so we will ensure the requirement to provide PE in all maintained schools is retained and we will provide new support to encourage a much wider take up of competitive team sports. With only one child in five regularly taking part in competitive activities

against another school, we need a new approach to help entrench the character-building qualities of team sport<sup>59</sup>.

- 4.29 Children need high-quality sex and relationships education so they can make wise and informed choices. We will work with teachers, parents, faith groups and campaign groups, such as Stonewall to make sure sex and relationships education encompasses an understanding of the ways in which humans love each other and stresses the importance of respecting individual autonomy.
- 4.30 Children can benefit enormously from high-quality Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE) education<sup>60</sup>. Good PSHE supports individual young people to make safe and informed choices. It can help tackle public health issues such as substance misuse and support young people with the financial decisions they must make. We will conduct an internal review to determine how we can support schools to improve the quality of all PSHE teaching, including giving teachers the flexibility to use their judgement about how best to deliver PSHE education.
- 4.31 Children should expect to be given a rich menu of cultural experiences. So we have commissioned Darren Henley to explore how we can improve music education and have more children learning to play an instrument. The Henley Review will also inform our broader approach to cultural education. We will support access to live theatre, encourage the appreciation of the visual and plastic arts and work with our great museums and libraries to support their educational mission.
- 4.32 And there needs to be room in the life of the school for an exploration of wider social issues which contribute to the well-being and engagement of all students. It should be for teachers, not government, to design the lessons and the experiences which will engage students. Government can help by clearing away the clutter of unnecessary curricular detail, and restricting itself to outlining the core knowledge children should expect to acquire.
- 4.33 Freeing teachers to construct a broader, deeper, more enriching curriculum needs to be complemented by ensuring we have a fairer, sharper, and clearer method of assessing progress.

## **We will compare ourselves with the best in the world**

- 4.34 The challenge facing our education system is not merely to improve year-on-year, but to keep pace with the best education systems in the world.

## **We will benchmark our pupils' performance against the best in the world**

- 4.35 One of the most valuable ways we have of understanding the standards our children and young people are attaining in comparison with children in other countries is the regime of sample tests organised by the OECD and IEA<sup>61</sup>. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a worldwide evaluation of 15 year-olds' performance in reading, mathematics and science applied to real-world contexts. PIRLS, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, measures literacy among 10 year-olds. The Trends in International Mathematics

and Science Study (TIMSS) measures the mathematics and science knowledge of 10 and 14 year-olds around the world.

- 4.36 The evidence from these tests tells us that, over recent years, we have been slipping back in the rankings as others improve faster. For example, England fell in the PIRLS rankings from 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 35 in 2001 to 15<sup>th</sup> out of 40 in 2006<sup>62</sup>. In the most recent PISA survey in 2006, England fell from 4<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> in science, 7<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> in literacy, and 8<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> in mathematics<sup>63</sup>. Our highest performing students do well but the wide attainment gap between them and our lowest achievers highlights the inequity in our system.
- 4.37 On a number of occasions, England has struggled to get enough schools and pupils to take part in international tests to give a valid sample and gather sufficiently reliable data. When this happens, we miss out on the opportunity to compare ourselves with the performance of other education systems around the world. To help avoid this happening in future, we will ensure a sufficient sample of English schools participate in the international education surveys such as PISA, PIRLS and TIMSS.
- 4.38 We will also participate in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) for the first time, opening up important aspects of our teachers' professional development to international comparison. This survey looks at teachers' beliefs, attitudes and practices, processes for teacher appraisal and feedback, and school leadership. TALIS will provide us with valuable lessons on how to attract the best into the profession and how the underperformance of some teachers can be addressed.

### **Ofqual will measure our qualifications against the best in the world**

- 4.39 The independent regulator of exam standards, Ofqual, plays a vital role, but until now has been asked to focus too narrowly on simply maintaining the standards of qualifications over time. This does not help us when other countries are improving faster and making their education systems more rigorous. So we have asked Ofqual to widen its view to reflect the importance of keeping pace with – and learning from – the rest of the world.
- 4.40 We will legislate in the forthcoming Education Bill so that Ofqual's objectives include securing international comparability of qualification standards. And we will strengthen Ofqual's governance by establishing the Chief Executive as the Chief Regulator. This will create a single figurehead within Ofqual who is able to act as the guardian of qualification and examination standards.
- 4.41 We will invite Ofqual to review and report on the quality and standards of tests and exams at ages 11 and 16, comparing England with high-performing nations and building on work already started for 18 year-olds. Subsequently, Ofqual will make international comparisons an ongoing part of regular reviews of standards.

### **We will reform assessment and qualifications**

- 4.42 It is right that at key points in a child's education there should be independent, objective assessment of their progress. As they begin school, as they reach a critical moment in learning to read and as they move from one phase to the next,

rigorous assessment is important. It provides sound information for parents on their child's progress and the effectiveness of schools. It provides a useful objective check for teachers and head teachers in support of transition. It is also right that schools should be accountable for the progress that children make, and that information about this should be publicly available. Other countries are adopting similar approaches. In the United States, 37 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the new Common Core Standard in mathematics and English, which has been benchmarked against other countries' expectations. The new assessments will tell parents for the first time whether their children have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and throughout their careers<sup>64</sup>.

### **We will reform the key stage two tests – the principle measures of progress at primary schools**

- 4.43 In primary schools, the only tests required in the four years of key stage two are in English and mathematics, at the end of the key stage. But we are concerned that especially in year six, there is excessive test preparation – with some children practising test questions for many weeks in advance of the tests. This is poor practice, and not even an effective way to do well in the tests, as compared to teaching well across a broad curriculum for the same period. We want to see whether there can be improvements to the current system, so that parents have the information they want and schools can be properly accountable for pupil progress, without encouraging over-rehearsal of test questions.
- 4.44 We have asked Lord Bew to conduct an independent review of the effectiveness of the existing key stage two tests. With a small review team, he will consider how to deliver rigorous, valid and reliable assessments which promote attainment and progression and ensure schools are properly accountable to pupils, parents and the public for the achievement of every child. The report will also consider how to ensure that assessments provide parents with good quality information on their child's progress whilst being simple for schools and teachers to administer, and that the data gathered is used and interpreted appropriately.
- 4.45 Similarly, we want to make sure that assessment in key stage one is appropriate and proportionate. Following the introduction of the age six reading test, and the reviews of the EYFS and the National Curriculum, we will look closely at the assessment and reporting burdens in the early years and key stage one. Following the abolition of the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, a new testing agency will oversee statutory tests and assessments for children up to age 14. Its remit will be confirmed following Lord Bew's review.
- 4.46 Because schools tell us that they would find it helpful to have a national benchmark that they could use for their own purposes at the end of key stage three, around the age of 14, we will ask the new testing agency to provide a suite of national tests for this key stage and age group. The tests will be based on National Curriculum expectations of where children should be at 14, and will be for schools to use on an entirely voluntary basis.

## **We will reform GCSEs and A levels**

- 4.47 A levels are a crucial way that universities select candidates for their courses, so it is important that these qualifications meet the needs of higher education institutions. To ensure that they support progression to further education, higher education or employment, we are working with Ofqual, the awarding organisations and higher education institutions to ensure universities and learned bodies can be fully involved in their development. We specifically want to explore where linear A levels can be adapted to provide the depth of synoptic learning which the best universities value.
- 4.48 The current GCSE and A level system allows for re-sits of modules, which can be seen as undermining the qualifications and educationally inappropriate. In 2008, QCDA collected information from a sample of A levels and found that between two thirds and three quarters of students re-sat at least one unit<sup>65</sup>. It is our view that this is a cause for concern. We will ask Ofqual to change the rules on re-sits to prevent students from re-sitting large numbers of units. We will consider with Ofqual in the light of evaluation evidence whether this and other recent changes are sufficient to address concerns with A levels.
- 4.49 We believe that it was a mistake to allow GCSEs to be fully modularised, because GCSEs are too small as qualifications to be taken sensibly in small chunks across two years. We also believe that it is creating too much examination entry in secondary schools – with many schools entering pupils for units in years 9 and 10 as well as years 11, 12 and 13. We will therefore ask Ofqual to consider how best to reform GCSEs so that exams are typically taken only at the end of the course.
- 4.50 When young people compete for jobs and enter the workplace, they will be expected to communicate precisely and effectively so we think that changes in the last decade to remove the separate assessment of spelling, punctuation and grammar from GCSE mark schemes were a mistake. We have asked Ofqual to advise on how mark schemes could take greater account of the importance of spelling, punctuation and grammar for examinations in all subjects.

## **We will review vocational education**

- 4.51 This country suffers from a long-standing failure to provide young people with a proper technical and practical education of a kind that we see in other nations. Vocational education has been the poor relation – its inherent value ignored, and its content made pseudo-academic – rather than developing the different but equally rich cognitive skills associated with practical and technical education. While good vocational qualifications are important and valuable, too many young people are following courses because they are easy for schools or colleges to deliver or because they confer advantages in the accountability system. In 2004 around 15,000 vocational, or vocationally related, qualifications were taken in schools. By 2010 this had risen to around 575,000 – mostly at age 16 – a 3,800 per cent increase<sup>66</sup>.
- 4.52 We have commissioned Professor Alison Wolf of King's College London, to conduct a review of vocational qualifications, with the objective of providing considered advice on how to ensure all young people are in valuable education or

training, that supports progression to employment or further and higher education. An important element of Professor Wolf's review will be measures to ensure that the education received by low-attaining pupils – who are often those with Special Educational Needs, or from deprived backgrounds – is most likely to ensure that they do not disengage, and are on track to progress to further education and employment. Professor Wolf will also consider what controls are needed to ensure that vocational qualifications offered to students in schools, colleges or independent training providers up to the age of 19 are as robust and appropriate as GCSEs and A Levels. She will make her recommendations in Spring 2011.

- 4.53 We will continue to support Apprenticeships for 16–19 year-olds, which offer paid jobs with training to industry standards in nearly 200 different occupations and can get people started on a fulfilling and prosperous career. Apprenticeship can be a challenging and rewarding option from age 16 onwards for young people, and we are reshaping the programme to place more emphasis on Apprenticeships at advanced and higher levels, and on progression through the programme and beyond, to higher level skills or higher education.
- 4.54 As we expand the programme, we will also make sure there are clear routes into Apprenticeships to widen access to the programme (while maintaining standards) and to increase the numbers of young people who have the skills and attributes to secure and complete an Apprenticeship with an employer. Some 113,700 young people aged 16–18 have become an apprentice in 2009/10 so far<sup>67</sup>; in 2010/11 we expect 131,000 young people to join the programme. A recent OECD report notes that 'few countries have achieved strong employer engagement without an equally strong apprenticeship system'<sup>68</sup>.

## **We will support more young people to continue in education to 18**

- 4.55 We are committed to increasing the minimum age at which young people can leave education or training to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015. This is in the national economic interest, as well as in the economic interests of young people. We will make sure that it is possible for young people to train while working, through an Apprenticeship or in other ways, as well as undertaking education at school or college. However, we think that it is important to avoid criminalising young people. So we will legislate to allow the enforcement process to be introduced progressively over a longer period.

# 5. New Schools System

- 5.1 Across the world, the case for the benefits of school autonomy has been established beyond doubt: in a school system with good quality teachers and clearly established standards, devolving as much decision-making to school level as possible ensures that decisions are being made by the professionals best able to make good choices for the children and young people they serve. Analysis of PISA data shows that the features of the strongest education systems combine autonomy (e.g. over staffing powers at school level) with accountability (e.g. systematic and external pupil-level assessments)<sup>69</sup>.
- 5.2 In many of the highest performing jurisdictions, school autonomy is central. In high-performing US States, Charter Schools – publicly funded independent schools set up by a legal ‘charter’ – have been engines of progress<sup>70</sup>. For example, over 85 per cent of young people from deprived urban communities who attended one of the national network of Knowledge is Power Programme (KIPP) charter schools go on to college<sup>71</sup>. In Alberta, Canada all schools are afforded significant autonomy in relation to how they teach and how they manage themselves<sup>72</sup>. In Sweden, pupils who attend state-funded independent Free Schools outperform those in other state schools and a higher proportion (eight per cent more) go on to higher education<sup>73</sup>.
- 5.3 In this country, the record of independent state schools provides a striking testimony to the power of autonomy. City Technology Colleges (CTCs) were introduced in the late 1980s as innovative new schools outside local and central bureaucratic control. They were the forerunners of Academies: independent state schools established in urban areas, which often had a history of low attainment, offering pupils aged 11–18 a truly stretching curriculum. CTCs are now among the best schools in the country, with great results and a record of continued improvement. CTCs not only have high standards, they also close the attainment gap. Poor pupils in CTCs, those eligible for free school meals, are more than twice as likely to achieve 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics than other pupils eligible for free school meals<sup>74</sup>.
- 5.4 Academies have built on the success of the CTC model and have been securing improvements in standards well above the national average, turning around some of the worst-performing secondary schools in the country<sup>75</sup>. Schools which had become sink schools with chronically low aspirations, poor behaviour and a culture of failure are now centres of excellence and engines of social mobility. In Academies, the attainment of pupils receiving free school meals is already improving faster than in other schools<sup>76</sup>. Twenty-six per cent of Academies this year were judged to be outstanding by Ofsted, compared to 18 per cent of all maintained schools<sup>77</sup>. And a real success has been the establishment of powerful Academy chains supporting schools to improve even more rapidly.

## 52 The Importance of Teaching

Those Academies, which are part of chains or federations such as ARK schools or the Harris group have an even larger proportion of their pupils achieving 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE on average than pupils of Academies not in a chain<sup>78</sup>.

- 5.5 But the success of the Academies programme has been limited by its narrow ambition. The first Academies opened in 2003 and prior to September 2010 there were only 203 open Academies in England, making up about 6.5 per cent of all of our secondary schools<sup>79</sup>. At the same time, the autonomy and freedoms enjoyed by Academies have been eroded over recent years as they were made subject to more and more bureaucratic requirements and targets. Equally, it has been extremely difficult for parents or other groups to set up new state-funded schools, even where the need was great.
- 5.6 So there is great scope for us to extend autonomy and freedom for schools in England. It is our ambition that Academy status should be the norm for all state schools, with schools enjoying direct funding and full independence from central and local bureaucracy. Some schools are not yet in a position to enjoy full Academy freedoms and we will ensure that all schools, whatever their status, are freed from unnecessary bureaucracy, and enjoy progressively greater autonomy, with their own funding, ethos and culture. We expect schools to use their increased autonomy to explore new ways of working together – but collaboration in the future will be driven by school leaders and teachers – not bureaucrats.
- 5.7 In order to help all schools enjoy greater freedom to excel we will:
- Restore for all Academies the freedoms they originally had, while continuing to ensure a level playing field on admissions, particularly in relation to children with Special Educational Needs.
  - Dramatically extend the Academies programme so that all schools can take on the autonomy Academy status offers, using it to raise standards and narrow the attainment gap.
  - Ensure that the lowest performing schools, attaining poorly and in an Ofsted category or not improving, are considered for conversion to become Academies to effect educational transformation.
  - Support – not turn away – teachers, charities, parent groups and others who have the vision and drive to open Free Schools in response to parental demand, especially in areas of deprivation where there is significant dissatisfaction with the choices available.
  - Ensure that local authorities play a critical new role – as strengthened champions of choice, securing a wide range of education options for parents and families, ensuring there are sufficient high-quality school places, coordinating fair admissions, promoting social justice by supporting vulnerable children and challenging schools which fail to improve.

## We will restore Academy freedoms

- 5.8 Academies have succeeded in tackling failure because they have the opportunity to set their own direction. Head teachers are given the freedom to innovate with the curriculum, insist on tougher discipline, pay staff more, extend school hours and develop a personal approach to every pupil. We will enhance the abilities of Academies to innovate and improve by removing burdens, duties and bureaucratic requirements that have accrued over time, while continuing to ensure a level playing field on admissions, particularly in relation to children with Special Educational Needs. We have already taken out many of the requirements which had been shoe-horned into the model Academy funding agreement – the contract between the Secretary of State and the Academy. We have removed unnecessary central prescription about curriculum and qualifications, target setting and the production of rigid plans. We believe that Academies will do more to serve their pupils well as a result of having freedom to do so in the way that their leaders and teachers think best.

**In September 2008, Hatcham Temple Grove School replaced a previously underperforming local authority primary school. It became the primary phase of an existing outstanding Academy, Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College and so, unusually for a primary school at the time, was able to benefit from the freedoms associated with Academy status.**

Penny Jones, the new head teacher, describes the new freedoms Academy status has brought: 'I had experienced many frustrations regarding the bureaucracy which often got in the way of creating opportunities to benefit children's lives. Our ability to respond quickly and autonomously to obvious needs has been a joy.' One of the first things Penny and her team decided to do was change the school day so that the pupils at the primary school finished at the same time as those in the senior school. They have also adapted their curriculum, taken a decision to pay for every pupil to have a free school meal and created a number of new cross-phase teaching posts within the Academy.

Hatcham Temple Grove is still only in its second year, but its first set of results showed significant improvement at key stage two<sup>80</sup>. Of the new school's structure, Penny says, 'Academy status in itself is not fairy dust. The children and the teachers do not change overnight and problems do not disappear. But what does change is the ability to combat challenges and to chart your own flight plan. The agenda is set and reviewed by the leadership team. I am a teacher and being an Academy leader has allowed me to focus on the things I know most about – learning and teaching.'

## **We will rapidly expand the Academies programme so that – over time – all schools can make the most of greater autonomy and strong leadership**

5.9 In the best school systems autonomy is not rationed as it has been in England. Extending greater autonomy to all schools is an absolute priority for this Government. We passed the Academies Act within 100 days of taking office to enable more schools to become Academies – including, for the first time, free-standing primary and special schools. The forthcoming Education Bill will legislate to go even further by allowing Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) to become Academies.

### **All schools will be able to become Academies, with outstanding schools leading the way**

5.10 We invited the best schools in the country to convert to Academy status first, because their proven leadership and management capacity means that they are well placed to make the most of Academy freedoms, and become system leaders without the need for an external sponsor's support. Since May 2010, 1,132 schools judged to be outstanding by Ofsted asked to be sent information on becoming Academies, representing 72 per cent of outstanding secondary schools and 22 per cent of outstanding primary schools<sup>81</sup>. Eighty of these outstanding schools have already opened as Academies since September 2010 and a further 118 will open shortly as a result of Academy Orders already made<sup>82</sup>.

**'With the new Academy freedoms we will continue to develop our autonomy and take the school forward** in an area of London that faces significant challenges and disadvantage. We will now have the flexibility to adapt and extend the curriculum, target resources more effectively, deploy specialist staff and above all build sustainable capacity to ensure continued and long term outstanding educational provision, to best meet the needs of our children and wider school community.'

*Patricia Sowter, Head of Cuckoo Hall Primary School, Enfield*

5.11 In November 2010, we extended the invitation to other primary and secondary schools. Alongside outstanding schools, all schools that Ofsted has identified as good, and which also have outstanding features, will automatically be eligible for Academy status. All other schools – primary and secondary – that wish to benefit from Academy freedoms will be able to do so, providing they work in partnership with a high performing school that will help support improvement, or another sponsor. We expect that the first group of these schools will be able to open as Academies as early as April 2011.

### **New Academies**

In May 2010, the Secretary of State invited outstanding schools to benefit from the freedom that Academy status brings. Since August 2010, 80 new Academies have opened. A further 118 Academies in the near future. Here are some of their experiences:

Andrew Fielder is head of the new **Sandy Hill Academy** in Cornwall. He says the case for becoming an Academy is compelling: 'We chose more autonomy, clearer leadership, less interference from local and central policy makers, less bureaucracy, and a freer hand to do what's right for staff and children. In four months we have taken Sandy Hill School to Sandy Hill Academy. It has been a blast. It has been the right thing to do.'

Paul Gazzard, head of the new **St. Buryan Academy**, also in Cornwall, says that Academy status gives the whole school community greater freedom and flexibility to make a range of decisions: 'The school staff have the opportunity to shape the curriculum and to concentrate on the areas they feel will most benefit the pupils, and to prepare them for the challenges ahead.'

**Seaton Academy** in Cumbria replaced Seaton Infant School. According to Seaton's head Lesley Grace, 'the whole school community has been given a huge boost and is taking on the new role with great enthusiasm. Academy status means that, as part of providing the very best education for our children, we now have the financial and operational freedoms to make changes to the curriculum to better meet their needs.' Already, bureaucracy has been reduced, 'we no longer have to duplicate information for the local authority, freeing up staff time to focus on teaching and learning in classrooms.'

- 5.12 We will expect every school judged by Ofsted to be outstanding or good with outstanding features which converts into an Academy to commit to supporting at least one weaker school in return for Academy status. This will provide an additional pool of excellent potential sponsors to accelerate the transformation of some of our weakest schools, just as Tollbar Academy in North East Lincolnshire has done with the nearby Cleethorpes Academy. Thanks to the energy and expertise of the staff and head teacher at Tollbar, both schools were able to open as Academies in September 2010.

**'[An Academy] belongs not to some remote bureaucracy, not to the rulers of government, local or national, but to itself, for itself.** The school is in charge of its own destiny. This gives it pride and purpose. And most of all, freed from the extraordinarily debilitating and often, in the worst sense, political correct interference from state or municipality, Academies have just one thing in mind, something shaped not by political prejudice but by common sense: what will make the school excellent.'

*Tony Blair, A Journey*

**'You cannot mandate greatness, it has to be unleashed'**

*Joel Klein, quoted in Instruction to Deliver (Michael Barber, 2007)*

- 5.13 The complexity of funding issues in particular has meant that we have had to move more slowly with special schools. But in January 2011 we will invite special schools to apply to become Academies as well. We believe that this will be a major opportunity to transform provision for special needs, and the forthcoming Green Paper on Special Educational Needs and Disability will consider how to maximise the impact of these new freedoms for special schools.
- 5.14 Taking on Academy status is an opportunity for every school, but – as long as a school is meeting minimum standards – we will not force any school to take on the increased autonomy if the head teacher and governors do not want to.

### **We will build on Academies' proven success in transforming some of the most challenging schools in the country**

- 5.15 The position is very different with the weakest schools. These schools are systematically failing some of the country's most vulnerable children. Eighty-five per cent of the lowest performing schools have a pupil population which is more deprived than average<sup>83</sup>. We will ensure that the very lowest performing schools, attaining poorly and in an Ofsted category or not improving, are partnered with a strong sponsor or outstanding school and converted to become Academies to effect educational transformation. We expect that more low-performing schools will be converted to Academy status than ever before, including for the first time the lowest performing infant and primary schools and the weakest special schools. We know that this is simplest where there is consensus about the way forward, but we also know that we cannot let down pupils who are having a poor experience of school, so we will use the powers in the Academies Act to require conversion if need be, and will legislate to extend the Secretary of State's closure powers to schools subject to a notice to improve.
- 5.16 Strong Academy sponsors have made a critical difference to individual Academies, and underpin the success of the Academies programme in turning around the lowest performing schools. The National Audit Office reported that staff, parents and governors ascribed their Academies' business-like practices, positive values or renewed focus on educational improvement to the sponsor's influence. We are fortunate to have a number of very experienced and successful sponsors, many of whom are keen to extend their reach and impact. We are also keen to welcome

sponsors who have relevant expertise as well as strong leadership and management capability.

- 5.17 Schools working together leads to better results. Some sponsors already oversee several Academies in a geographical group, or chains of Academies across the country, and already seven organisations sponsor six or more Academies. These chains can support schools to improve more rapidly – by providing a common approach to professional development, sharing effective practice, and providing shared ‘back-office’ support. Along with our best schools, we will encourage strong and experienced sponsors to play a leadership role in driving the improvement of the whole school system, including through leading more formal federations and chains.

**The Harris Federation of South London Schools has taken over a number of underperforming and unpopular schools and turned them around rapidly.**

The Federation has a model for new schools: it introduces new policies, systems, internal staffing structures, rigorous performance management, high-quality training, focused co-operative working and complete rebranding, whilst seeking to maintain and develop any aspects where the predecessor school was successful.

The Federation provides many services to its nine Academies, often at a lower cost and higher quality than they would have been able to obtain previously. These include an approach to attendance monitoring and educational welfare which has significantly improved attendance and timely procurement of educational psychology and special needs support. Harris schools struggling to find teachers in key subject areas are assisted by other schools in the group and, if performance begins to dip, resources from the rest of the group are rapidly redeployed to address the problem.

The Federation has overseen some dramatic improvements. Harris Academy Falconwood opened in September 2008, replacing a school in which just 17 per cent of students achieved 5 or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics. Two years later 60 per cent of the school’s pupils achieve this standard, and the school is judged by Ofsted to be making outstanding progress<sup>84</sup>. For the Harris Federation as a whole, results for English and mathematics have improved by up to four times the national average in each of the last four years<sup>85</sup>.

**We will actively support teachers, charities, parent groups and others to open Free Schools in response to parental demand**

- 5.18 It has been virtually impossible in this country to establish a new state-funded school without local authority support, despite convincing international evidence of the galvanising effect on the whole school system of allowing new entrants in areas where parents are dissatisfied with what is available. We want to see schools

like the innovative KIPP, Green Dot and Uncommon schools, all of which are independent charter schools in America, open in this country.

**In the US, networks of charter schools have made some remarkable progress in raising attainment, especially in deprived urban areas.**

**Green Dot Charter schools** in Los Angeles are designed to be small, safe personalised schools with high expectations for all pupils, local control with extensive professional development and parent participation, maximum funding focused on the classroom and a longer school day. Pupil performance in standardised tests is significantly higher than for other schools serving the same areas<sup>86</sup>.

**Uncommon Schools** is a not-for-profit organisation managing 24 Charter Schools in New York City, New York State, Newark, New Jersey and Boston. They have a mission to prepare all students for higher education, high standards for academic attainment and developing students' character, a highly structured learning environment, a longer school day and longer school year, a focus on accountability and an emphasis on recruiting committed and talented leaders and teachers. In 2010, Uncommon Schools in New York State outperformed the state average and also closed the racial achievement gap – 82 per cent of pupils were found to be advanced or proficient in mathematics, well above the state average of 61 per cent, and the state average for white students of 71 per cent<sup>87</sup>.

- 5.19 We too want to support teachers, charities, parent groups, faith organisations and others who have the vision, drive and skills to set up a new school – and to give them the freedoms to try out new approaches and make a real difference in their communities.
- 5.20 In June 2010, we invited Free School applications of any type or phase (including special schools, alternative provision and 16–19 proposals) from teachers, charities, parents and others. Free Schools will be independent state schools which benefit from all the same freedoms and autonomy as Academies. Over 180 people and organisations have already submitted proposals and so far 25 Free School projects are in the formal business case and planning stage and some will be open as early as September 2011<sup>88</sup>. The projects range from an outstanding young teacher, Sajid Hussein, who has plans to open King's Science Academy in a poor area of Bradford, to the Stour Valley Community School in Suffolk, which is an example of a community coming together to open the secondary school it wants, and Cuckoo Hall, an outstanding primary school in Enfield, proposing to open a new school.
- 5.21 In the United States, the most effective Charter Schools are those in states with a carefully designed approval process. Learning from the Charter School experience, we have set up a simple but rigorous approval process. Before a Free School proposal is approved in England, we will carry out rigorous suitability and vetting tests, including the content of the proposals and whether the new school will offer high standards, as well as due diligence and Criminal Records Bureau

- (CRB) checks about the organisations and individuals associated with them. We will reject any proposals put forward by organisations or individuals who advocate violence or other illegal activity, or those whose ideology runs counter to the United Kingdom's traditions of tolerance and our shared democratic values.
- 5.22 People and organisations wanting to open Free Schools should be actively supported in doing so. We will look to the New Schools Network and others to offer experience and expertise to Free School proposers. Every proposer of a Free School which gets through the initial stage will also have a named Department for Education official who they can contact if they have any questions or difficulties. Department officials will work alongside pioneer Free Schools to iron out any difficulties, and to refine and simplify processes as much as possible, rather than trying to pre-empt every possible issue before the first Free School has opened its door.
- 5.23 Free Schools will be demand-led, and their geographical distribution will depend on individuals and organisations coming forward to play a role in improving provision in their community. We know from other countries – and from some of the early Free School proposers – that a significant proportion of the proposals will be motivated by the desire to make a difference in disadvantaged areas. We will prioritise such proposals.
- 5.24 One of the biggest barriers to setting up a new school is securing land and premises. The Department for Communities and Local Government is working with the Department for Education to make it easier to secure land and premises for new schools, and is consulting on changes to planning regulations which will make it easier for schools to be set up in buildings which currently have other uses.
- 5.25 We will lead the way by supporting new Free Schools to open in buildings that the Department owns or leases. We will also legislate to strengthen controls on the disposal of existing school premises to ensure they can be available for potential Free Schools. All Free Schools will be able to access financial support in order to secure premises where necessary. We have committed to support capital investment in pioneer Free Schools so that they can find and finance the buildings they require quickly.
- 5.26 We know from countries with the best technical education systems that a more innovative approach to vocational education has a positive impact on standards and the overall quality of provision<sup>89</sup>. One of the most exciting ways in which Free Schools will drive innovation here in England will be through University Technology Colleges (UTCs) and Studio Schools. Universities, colleges and businesses are forming partnerships to open UTCs. The model was developed by Lord Baker and the late Lord Dearing, and provides a vivid example of the way in which diversity and innovation can raise standards and offer pupils and parents a new approach to education. Each UTC will be sponsored by at least one leading local business and a local higher education institution, and will offer high-quality and high-prestige technical qualifications in shortage subjects, such as engineering. Pupils will combine real practical education with a series of academic GCSEs, to ensure that they have a base of core academic knowledge as well as their technical or vocational qualifications. The JCB Academy in Staffordshire was

the forerunner of the UTC model, and plans to become a UTC. We hope that many more will open.

**Pupils at the JCB Academy in Rocester, Staffordshire, will study a curriculum designed to produce the engineers and business leaders of the future.**

Pupils at the Academy will study a core academic curriculum, and alongside this they will focus on engineering and business. They will complete engineering tasks that have been set by JCB and other Academy partners including Rolls-Royce, Toyota and Network Rail. In their induction to the school, pupils were asked to build a speaker for an MP3 player – laser cutting and thermoforming its plastic casing, and soldering the electronic components onto a circuit board.

To help and inspire pupils with their engineering studies, the Academy has been equipped with modern engineering equipment which will help them turn design ideas into reality. Among many other features, it boasts a 3D room where pupils see 3D colour animations of the projects they are designing.

The JCB Academy is the brainchild of Sir Anthony Bamford. On opening the Academy, Sir Anthony said, 'I am passionate about engineering and committed to British manufacturing but we need the right calibre of young people to ensure that we continue to be a nation that makes things in an innovative way. The JCB Academy is one small step to helping achieve that aim. The facilities here are second-to-none and offer the students the opportunity to learn in a way that is exciting and practical, and aligned to the needs of employers when they qualify in a few years time.'

- 5.27 New Studio Schools will also drive innovation in vocational education as Free Schools. They are 14–19 institutions with an entrepreneurial and vocational focus, catering for students of all abilities who are disengaged by an entirely academic curriculum. Each Studio School will have several business partners connected to one sector of industry. Students will spend part of their week working in these businesses, with older students receiving payment, getting them ready for the world of work while gaining credible qualifications. The first Studio Schools opened in September 2010 in Luton and Kirklees and we expect that many more will open.

**In the US, one of the most successful networks of Charter Schools is the Knowledge is Power Programme, a nationwide network providing a high-quality education to the children of deprived urban communities.**

Susan Schaeffler, who began her career as a teacher with the Teach for America programme, founded a KIPP school in Washington DC in 2001. Susan explains her motivation for applying to establish the school: 'I wanted to set up a charter school primarily because I believed in the benefits an extended day could offer. The current public school system does not allow for extended learning time so I decided to best serve the students of DC, I would open up a KIPP network in DC. In addition, I wanted to create a school with a strong school culture that encourages teachers to have a 'whatever it takes' attitude. For instance, my teachers are available to students by phone during weekday evenings to help with homework and dedicate weekend time to Saturday school activities.'

KIPP DC has now expanded to eight schools from pre-school through to high school and serves over 2,100 students, 99 per cent of whom are African American and among the most disadvantaged pupils in Washington DC. Over 83 per cent qualify for the free or reduced price lunch programme, yet 100 per cent graduate from high school in the standard five years. Currently 72 per cent of the class of 2009 are still pursuing their college degrees and 80 per cent of the class of 2010 are beginning college this year<sup>90</sup>.

Of KIPP's success, Susan says, 'we are proving what's possible. We're demonstrating what the kids in DC are capable of. We are raising the bar for education in our city.'

## **Local authorities will have a strong strategic role as champions for parents and families, for vulnerable pupils and of educational excellence**

- 5.28 In a more autonomous school system, local authorities have an indispensable role to play as champions of children and parents, ensuring that the school system works for every family and using their democratic mandate to challenge every school to do the best for their population.
- 5.29 They also have a unique role in bringing together all services for children in a local area so that every child is ready and able to benefit from high-quality teaching in excellent schools. They are well-placed to help schools manage the twin challenges of delivering an aspirational National Curriculum and ensuring that teaching and learning reflects the nature of their local community. In order to help local authorities deliver this strategic role in the new system we will give them progressively greater freedom, by stripping away targets, rules, regulations and ring-fencing.

## 62 The Importance of Teaching

5.30 Their key roles will be to:

- Support parents and families through promoting a good supply of strong schools – encouraging the development of Academies and Free Schools which reflect the local community.
- Ensure fair access to all schools for every child.
- Use their democratic mandate to stand up for the interests of parents and children.
- Support vulnerable pupils – including Looked After Children, those with Special Educational Needs and those outside mainstream education.
- Support maintained schools performing below the floor standards to improve quickly or convert to Academy status with a strong sponsor, and support all other schools which wish to collaborate with them to improve educational performance.
- Develop their own school improvement strategies – they will be encouraged to market their school improvement services to all schools, not just those in their immediate geographical area.

### **We expect that local authorities will encourage good schools to expand and encourage Free Schools or Academies to meet demand**

5.31 This will be particularly important in areas of significant demographic growth, where birth rates have risen and there is a particular need for new places. Even in areas where there is not significant demographic growth, we want local authorities to focus on supplying enough good places rather than removing surplus places.

5.32 In practical terms, where there is a need for a new school, the first choice will be a new Academy or Free School. Where the Secretary of State considers the impact of Free Schools on other schools in the local area, he will also consider the view of the local authority. We will legislate in the forthcoming Education Bill to simplify significantly the bureaucratic competition process currently required to open a new school. Where a local authority is unable to identify a suitable sponsor to open a new school, it will be able to contact the Secretary of State, so that they can work together to find a sponsor.

**In Enfield, demand for primary places has increased significantly in recent years, with further steep rises forecast over the next six years. This left Enfield local authority with an immediate shortfall of around 200 primary school places.**

Oasis Academy Hadley, part of the Oasis 'family' of schools, had planned to offer primary places from 2012, when the Academy was due to move into purpose-built all-age accommodation. To address the urgent shortfall in primary places, Enfield Council asked them to become an all-age Academy in September 2010, two years earlier than planned, and admit 60 reception-age pupils, followed by another 60 in 2011.

Oasis accepted the proposal. They could see the need to act to minimise disruption to pupils. Enfield local authority agreed to meet the capital costs and provide temporary accommodation for two years.

The Academy has made a good start with sound progress towards improved examination results, increased levels of attendance, good standards of behaviour and greatly reduced exclusion rates.

- 5.33 Local authorities will be expected to identify and work with sponsors who will take over weaker schools and transform them into Academies. In undertaking this role, local authorities will be able to use their wider position in local regeneration, employment and community development, and their knowledge of existing schools, to seek sponsors and partners who will fit with the character of the local community – and help raise aspirations.

**Local authorities will coordinate admissions and ensure fair access to all schools, including Academies and Free Schools**

- 5.34 The local authority's democratic mandate to act on behalf of all its population also means that local authorities have a critical role in securing fair access to schools. They will continue to lead the coordination of admissions arrangements for all schools, and, to make the system more flexible, we will legislate to end the bureaucratic requirements for local authorities to establish an admissions forum and provide annual reports to a central schools adjudicator. Instead, local authorities' role will be to make the process as fair and simple as possible for parents and pupils, setting up local arrangements which work for that area. The schools adjudicator will review specific complaints about admissions arrangements for all schools, including Academies and Free Schools, ensuring that every child has access to the same mechanisms where there are specific concerns.
- 5.35 All state schools including Academies and Free Schools are bound by the Admissions Code and participate in fair access protocols. We will simplify the Code so that it is easier for schools and parents to understand and act upon, while maintaining fairness as the Code's guiding principle. We will retain the principles and priorities of the current Code, and Looked After Children and pupils with a statement of Special Education Needs which names a particular school (including Academies and Free Schools) will continue to be guaranteed a place at the school of their first choice. In order to promote fair access to high-performing schools, we will also consult on whether we should allow Academies and Free Schools to

choose to prioritise children from disadvantaged backgrounds in their oversubscription criteria if they wish. We will consult on a simplified and less prescriptive Admissions Code early in the New Year so that a revised Code is in place by July 2011.

- 5.36 Local authorities will also retain responsibility for school transport arrangements which promote fair access.

### **Local authorities will stand up for the interests of parents and children, and promote high standards**

- 5.37 We want local authorities to continue to play a key role as champions for pupils and parents. The transparent publication of a great deal more school-level data for every school will enable local people to ring the alarm bell where concerns appear. Local authorities will continue both to challenge schools which are causing concern and to focus on issues needing attention which cut across more than one school. Alongside the key role of the Lead Member for Children and the Director of Children's Services, other councillors may be engaged through the scrutiny function, for example, focusing on a particular issue of concern or inviting the head teacher and/or governors to attend a scrutiny committee to listen to concerns and to respond.
- 5.38 As champions for excellence, local authorities will be expected to take action if there are concerns about the performance of any school in the area, and use their intervention powers to act early and effectively to secure improvement in maintained schools. While local authorities have no direct intervention powers in Academies and Free Schools, where they have concerns, their role would be to raise them directly with the school for informal resolution. However, where a local authority has significant concerns about an Academy or Free School and feels that these are not being adequately addressed by local action, it will be able to ask Ofsted to inspect the school. Ofsted would then make a judgement about whether or not an inspection was necessary. As a last resort, local authorities will, as now, be able to escalate concerns to the Secretary of State, so that appropriate action can be taken to address issues.
- 5.39 Local authorities will, over time, also play a role in commissioning new provision and overseeing the transition of failing schools to new management. We will consult with local authorities and Academy sponsors on what role local authorities should play as strategic commissioners when all schools in an area have become Academies.

### **Local authorities will act as the champion for vulnerable pupils in their area**

- 5.40 The local authority role as a convenor of local services also means that they are best placed to act as the champion for vulnerable pupils in their area. In particular, they will continue to ensure that disabled children and those with Special Educational Needs can access high-quality provision that meets their needs, and they will continue to be responsible for funding provision for pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs. We will give local authorities more freedom to develop their own plans to support vulnerable children in their

education. They will be free to develop new and innovative approaches to providing services and deploying resources.

- 5.41 Their role in relation to broader children's services will continue. They will continue to act as the corporate parent for Looked After Children – with a key role in improving their educational attainment. They will similarly continue to secure the provision of education for young people in custody. Their broad responsibilities for safeguarding children will, of course, continue – developing in the light of the findings of the review being undertaken by Professor Eileen Munro.

### **Local authorities will move over time to a strategic commissioning role, championing educational excellence**

- 5.42 For the immediate future, the majority of schools will remain as local authority maintained schools and their funding will be routed through local authorities. But we anticipate that, as Academy status becomes the norm, local authorities will increasingly move to a strategic commissioning and oversight role. We will support this changing role by decentralising powers from the Secretary of State, removing statutory requirements on local authorities to provide a school improvement partner for every maintained school and to set local authority-level targets.
- 5.43 Local authorities will have the freedom to define what role they will play in supporting school improvement for local schools. We anticipate and will welcome a more diverse approach to the provision of school improvement services. This could include continuing to provide support and challenge to schools that want it, running improvement conferences, bringing people together to tackle local problems and brokering support from excellent schools to support other schools. We anticipate that school-to-school support will be at the heart of very many local authority strategies. Many will want to make more use of National Leaders of Education, and to encourage schools to join federations to support improvement.
- 5.44 Local authorities might choose to offer school improvement as a traded service. Diversity of provision may also mean that some local authorities may choose to offer school improvement support beyond their own geographical borders.

# 6. Accountability

- 6.1 We believe that public services will improve most when professionals feel free to do what they believe is right, and are properly accountable for the results. Schools should evidently be accountable for achieving a minimum level of performance because tax-payers have a right to expect that their money will be used effectively to educate pupils and equip them to take their place in society. But in recent years schools have suffered from a compliance regime which drove them to meet a bewildering array of centrally-imposed government targets. Schools should, instead, be accountable to parents, pupils and communities for how well they perform.
- 6.2 In creating a more autonomous school system, we will reduce duties, requirements and guidance on all schools, and make sure that every school can, over time, enjoy the freedoms that Academies currently have. We will dismantle the apparatus of central control and bureaucratic compliance. We will instead make direct accountability more meaningful, making much more information about schools available in standardised formats to enable parents and others to assess and compare their performance. And, through freeing up the system, we will increase parents' ability to make meaningful choices about where to send their children to school.
- 6.3 In future:
- Parents, governors and the public will have access to much more information about every school and how it performs.
  - Performance tables will set out our high expectations – every pupil should have a broad education and a firm grip of the basics.
  - We will use attainment and progress measures to create a more sophisticated minimum expectation for all schools.
  - Ofsted will refocus inspection on schools' core educational purpose, and will release outstanding schools from all routine inspection.
  - We will help governing bodies to benefit from the skills of their local community in holding schools to account.

## **Parents, governors and the public will have access to much more information about every school and how it performs**

- 6.4 Central to our approach is the need to make it easier for parents and the public to hold schools to account. In the past, too much information has been unavailable to parents, too difficult to find or not presented comprehensibly. So, as we take away the centralising compliance system – the centrally-driven process of target setting, the requirement for every school to have a school improvement partner

- (SIP) and the requirement for every school to complete a self evaluation form – we will make sure that there is comprehensive information available to parents about every school.
- 6.5 We will make publicly available all the information which underpins government statistical publications. For example, we will make publicly available data about attainment in specific subjects, trends over time, class sizes, attendance levels, the composition of the pupil body and financial information. The data will be published in a standardised format which allows anyone to access and analyse it.
- 6.6 We will publish this school-level data in an easily accessible online format. Parents will be able to choose the aspects of a school in which they are most interested, and search for or rank local schools against these priorities. For example, a parent could look for a local school where pupils with Special Educational Needs make good progress or which has strengths in music. A governor might look at how a particularly effective school is using its budget in order to learn efficiency lessons. We will also publish ‘families of schools’ documents, which group similar schools in a region and provide detailed performance information which can be used by schools to identify other schools from which they can learn.
- 6.7 We will simplify and modernise statutory requirements about the information which schools must make available for parents. We will require schools to publish comprehensive information online. This should include for example (and as appropriate): admissions information and oversubscription criteria, the school’s curriculum, the school’s phonics and reading schemes, arrangements for setting pupils, the behaviour policy and home school agreement, the special needs policy, information about how the school uses the Pupil Premium, and clear signposting for parents who would like more detailed information on any policies and strategies.
- 6.8 Schools are best placed to address parents’ concerns – and in almost every case, teachers and head teachers can resolve concerns and issues quickly and easily. Sometimes parents and schools have issues that cannot be resolved locally, and so we will make sure that parents have a route to complain in the most cost effective way, repealing recent legislation which introduced a role for the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 6.9 We are committed to establishing common performance measures for 16–19 education and training. We will work with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to look at ways of publishing data in a more transparent way to allow parents and students to compare school sixth forms with all other post-16 providers.

## **We will reform and sharpen the performance tables**

- 6.10 As we significantly increase the transparency of the system, we will also reform the performance tables. There is strong evidence that using formal external assessment as the basis of accountability for performance has significant benefits: the OECD shows that this form of accountability has a major positive impact on how well children do, and it has particular benefits for the disadvantaged and for

minority groups, whose performance is systematically under-rated by internal assessment<sup>91</sup>. These are extremely important benefits which we should retain.

- 6.11 However, there is a risk focusing on particular narrow measures can distort behaviour. Recently, secondary schools have narrowed their focus and steered pupils away from GCSE courses towards less suitable qualifications which are deemed to be worth more than a GCSE, take no more time to teach and are seen as easier to pass<sup>92</sup>. It is important that we should recognise good quality vocational qualifications, but we must avoid perverse incentives for schools to offer lower quality qualifications. We have asked Professor Alison Wolf to consider how best to recognise vocational qualifications in the performance tables and to make recommendations.
- 6.12 We will put an end to the current 'contextual value added' (CVA) measure. This measure attempts to quantify how well a school does with its pupil population compared to pupils with similar characteristics nationally. However, the measure is difficult for the public to understand, and recent research shows it to be a less strong predictor of success than raw attainment measures. It also has the effect of expecting different levels of progress from different groups of pupils on the basis of their ethnic background, or family circumstances, which we think is wrong in principle.
- 6.13 It is morally wrong to have an attainment measure which entrenches low aspirations for children because of their background. For example, we do not think it right to expect pupils eligible for free school meals to make less progress from the same starting point as pupils who are not eligible for free school meals (particularly once the introduction of the Pupil Premium ensures that schools receive extra resources for pupils from poorer backgrounds). We should expect every child to succeed and measure schools on how much value they add for all pupils, not rank them on the make-up of their intake.

For both primary and secondary schools, we will put greater emphasis on the progress of every child – setting out more prominently in performance tables how well pupils progress. It is clearly important that schools aim to raise absolute attainment – children who reach level four at primary school are much more likely to achieve well at GCSE<sup>93</sup>, and young people who achieve well at GCSE are much more likely to stay in learning, go to university<sup>94</sup> and get a good job<sup>95</sup>. However, schools should take particular responsibility for how much each child learns while a pupil, and we should expect schools to make as much effort with a lower achieving or higher achieving pupil as with one whose achievement means that they are close to a threshold. So, performance tables will show more clearly how well all pupils progress.

- 6.14 At the same time, we will seek to focus more firmly on how well disadvantaged pupils do, and make sure that schools are held fully to account for using the Pupil Premium to raise the achievement of eligible children. So, we will report specifically in the performance tables on how well those eligible for the Pupil Premium do in the basics at primary and secondary school. We will review performance measures for those special schools whose intake performs in the main below the levels of National Curriculum tests or GCSEs.

- 6.15 We are particularly concerned about the progress that the lowest-attaining 20 per cent of pupils make at school. Many of these pupils have additional learning needs, and we will consider how we could report their progress in the performance tables as part of the forthcoming Green Paper on Special Educational Needs and Disability.

## **Ofsted will return to inspecting schools' core educational purpose, and focus inspection where it is most needed**

- 6.16 Along with making information and data about schools publicly available, the publication of inspection reports is an important part of making schools accountable to parents. Ofsted remains a highly respected part of the education system. The robust independent challenge of inspection can confirm school self evaluation, boost staff morale and stimulate further improvement<sup>96</sup>.
- 6.17 However, in recent years, Ofsted has been required to focus too much on inspecting schools against government policies, at the expense of a proper focus on the core function of schools: teaching and learning. We will ask Ofsted to return to focusing its attention on the core of teaching and learning, observing more lessons and taking a more proportionate approach – devoting more time and attention to weaker schools and less to stronger.

## **Ofsted will consult on revised inspection arrangements**

- 6.18 The current Ofsted framework inspects schools against 27 headings – many reflecting previous government initiatives. In place of this framework, Ofsted will consult on a new framework with a clear focus on just four things – pupil achievement, the quality of teaching, leadership and management, and the behaviour and safety of pupils. The new inspection framework will help to make sure that there is a better focus on the needs of all pupils, including the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities.
- 6.19 This new framework will come into force in Autumn 2011, subject to legislation. It will allow inspectors to get back to spending more of their time observing lessons, giving a more reliable assessment of the quality of education children are receiving. The new framework will not require schools to have completed a self evaluation form, allowing governing bodies and head teachers to choose for themselves how to evaluate their work.
- 6.20 Ofsted and the Department will work together to make sure that we are setting the same expectations of schools. These will reflect the starting point of pupils at the school and expected levels of progress during schooling.

## **Ofsted will focus inspection where it is most needed**

- 6.21 Ofsted will adopt a highly proportionate approach to inspection. Since outstanding schools generally have robust systems in place to support their continued excellent performance, Ofsted will cease routine inspection of schools and sixth form colleges previously judged to be outstanding. Subject to legislation, we will exempt primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form

colleges which have been judged to be outstanding from routine inspection from Autumn 2011 and re-inspect only if there is evidence of decline or widening attainment gaps. We plan to extend the same principle to outstanding special schools and PRUs. As risk assessment of these schools will be more complex, we will work with Ofsted to identify suitable triggers which might indicate a need for re-inspection.

- 6.22 The weaker the school, the more frequent the monitoring: schools judged to be inadequate will receive termly monitoring visits to assess improvement. In order to help with this proportional approach, Ofsted will differentiate within the broad 'satisfactory' category, between schools which are improving and have good capacity to improve further, and schools which are stuck. Schools which are satisfactory but making little progress will be more likely to receive a monitoring visit from Ofsted within the next year, and may be judged inadequate if they have not improved.

### **Schools will be able to request an Ofsted inspection**

- 6.23 A 'good' or 'outstanding' judgement is a source of pride for everyone associated with a school. Where a school feels that its last Ofsted judgement is out of date and does not reflect the improvement it has made since its last inspection, it should be able to request an inspection. Therefore, subject to legislation, all schools will be able to request an Ofsted inspection from Autumn 2011. Ofsted will be able to charge schools for this service, and will decide when and how many 'requested' inspections it carries out each year, and how it will prioritise requests.

### **We will set a higher but fairer minimum standard for every school**

- 6.24 We want schools to be accountable first and foremost to parents and the community: increased transparency and better inspection will make this a reality. But government action will be necessary in some cases. Where children are not being well-served by their school and there is not yet an alternative choice for parents, there is an urgent need to take action to improve the school. This will be the case where a school is placed in an Ofsted category, and also where it is very low attaining. In each case, we will expect appropriate intervention and support for improvement.
- 6.25 We will define a new minimum, or 'floor' standard, which we will expect all schools to meet. This standard will be higher than in the past, because we think it is right that minimum expectations should continue to rise. But it will also be more carefully calibrated: some schools take in children who have very low levels of prior attainment and do a very good job of helping these children to progress. So, the new floor standard will include an expected standard of both attainment and progression.
- 6.26 For secondary schools, a school will be below the floor if fewer than 35 per cent of pupils achieve the 'basics' standard of 5 A\*-C grade GCSEs including English and mathematics, and fewer pupils make good progress between key stage two and key stage four than the national average. For primary schools, a school will be below the floor if fewer than 60 per cent of pupils achieve the 'basics' standard of

level four in both English and mathematics and fewer pupils than average make the expected levels of progress between key stage one and key stage two. In future, we plan to make the floor at secondary level more demanding by including science; and because we expect the system to improve year on year, we plan to continue to raise the floor standard over time.

- 6.27 Even with this fairer approach to a floor standard, schools below the floor will be in very different situations. Some may have suffered a recent decline, others may be improving strongly. Some may be struggling to recruit teachers in a key department, others may have much more serious problems. We will make sure that there is an appropriately differentiated approach to supporting schools below the floor to improve.

## **We will help governing bodies to benefit from the skills of their local community in holding schools to account**

- 6.28 School governors are the unsung heroes of our education system. They are one of the biggest volunteer forces in the country, working in their spare time to promote school improvement and to support head teachers and teachers in their work. To date, governors have not received the recognition, support or attention that they deserve. We will put that right.
- 6.29 The time and expertise of governors needs to be better respected and deployed. Sometimes governing bodies lack the information or training to challenge effectively and support the head teacher and senior leadership of a school to improve. We will work with the National Governors Association and others to clarify governing body accountabilities and responsibilities to focus more strongly on strategic direction, and encourage schools to appoint trained clerks who can offer expert advice and guidance to support them. We will make it easier for governors to set high expectations and ask challenging questions, by giving governors easier access to data about how their school compares to others, and the National College will offer high-quality training for chairs of governors. Governing bodies benefit from having people with business or management experience as members, and employers find that their staff benefit from and enjoy serving as school governors. We will work with the Education Employer Taskforce, Business in the Community, the Institute for Education Business Excellence, the School Governor's One Stop Shop, and others to encourage business people and professionals to volunteer as governors.
- 6.30 Many of the most successful schools have smaller governing bodies with individuals drawn from a wide range of people rooted in the community, such as parents, businesses, local government and the voluntary sector<sup>97</sup>. Smaller governing bodies with the right skills are able to be more decisive, supporting the head teacher and championing high standards. We will legislate in the forthcoming Education Bill so that all schools can establish smaller governing bodies with appointments primarily focused on skills. From early 2012 we will allow all schools to adopt this more flexible model of school governance if they choose to, while ensuring a minimum of two parent governors. Schools which currently have a majority of governors appointed by a foundation (often faith voluntary aided schools) will continue to do so.

### **10 key questions for governors to ask**

1. What are the school's values? Are they reflected in our long term development plans?
2. How are we going to raise standards for all children, including the most and least able, those with Special Educational Needs, boys and girls, and any who are currently underachieving?
3. Have we got the right staff and the right development and reward arrangements?
4. Do we have a sound financial strategy, get good value for money and have robust procurement and financial systems?
5. Do we keep our buildings and other assets in good condition and are they well used?
6. How well does the curriculum provide for and stretch all pupils?
7. How well do we keep parents informed and take account of their views?
8. Do we keep children safe and meet the statutory health and safety requirements?
9. How is pupil behaviour? Do we tackle the root causes of poor behaviour?
10. Do we offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities which engage all pupils?

# 7. School Improvement

- 7.1 Improving the recruitment, selection and training of school teachers and leaders, giving them increased authority and giving schools greater autonomy will give the school system greater capacity to improve. Alongside that, setting high standards through the curriculum and qualifications and holding schools accountable for the results they achieve will create a powerful driver of improvement. It is also important that schools have the right support to enable them to improve.
- 7.2 Over recent years, government has tended to use highly centralised approaches to improving schools. It has tried to lead, organise and systematise improvement activity, seeking to ensure compliance with its priorities. It has led target setting, introduced improvement initiatives focused on particular issues, used ring-fenced or targeted grants extensively and employed large numbers of field forces.
- 7.3 We think that this is the wrong approach. Government should certainly put in place the structures and processes which will challenge and support schools to improve. Where schools are seriously failing, or where known best practice is not being adopted appropriately, it is right to step in to secure for children the quality of education that they deserve. But it should be clear that the primary responsibility for improvement rests with schools. Government cannot determine the priorities of every school, and the attempt to secure compliance with its priorities reduces the capacity of the system to improve itself.
- 7.4 Instead our aim should be to create a school system which is more effectively self-improving. The introduction of new providers to the system, and the ability of parents, teachers and others to establish new schools is an important part of this, in bringing innovation and galvanising others to improve, especially in areas where parents are significantly dissatisfied. It is also important that we design the system in a way which allows the most effective practice to spread more quickly and the best schools and leaders to take greater responsibility and extend their reach.
- 7.5 We will:
- Make clear that schools have responsibility for improvement. We will end the approach of trying to control improvement from the centre and make it easier for schools to learn from one another.
  - Make sure that every school has access to the support it needs through National and Local Leaders of Education, Teaching Schools and leading teachers, or by working in partnership with a strong school.

- Encourage local authorities and schools to bring forward applications to the new Education Endowment Fund – funding for innovative projects to drive school improvement and to raise the attainment of deprived children in underperforming schools – and create a new collaboration incentive.
- Make sure that schools have access to evidence on best practice, high-quality materials and improvement services which they can choose to use.
- Support underperforming schools such as those below the new floor standards, and ensure that those which are seriously failing, or unable to improve their results, are transformed through conversion to Academy status.

## **We will make sure that schools are in control of their own improvement and make it easier for them to learn from one another**

- 7.6 We will expect schools to set their own improvement priorities. As long as schools provide a good education, we will not mandate specific approaches. Schools will determine what targets to set for themselves, choose what forms of external support they want and determine how to evaluate themselves. We will make sure that they have access to appropriate data and information so that they can identify other schools from which they might wish to learn, that there is a strong network of highly effective schools they can draw on for more intensive support, and that schools can identify other useful forms of external support as necessary.

**'For the first time in my 37 years in education, head teachers and principals are being given the responsibility, accountability – but most of all authority – to lead the educational agenda.** A report published in 2007 by McKinsey's stated that 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers'. This Government is offering all schools the opportunity to deliver a world-class education system and I hope head teachers and principals across England will embrace the trust that is being given to them.'

*David Triggs, CEO of the Academies Enterprise Trust*

## **We will increase the number of National and Local Leaders of Education**

- 7.7 National and Local Leaders of Education are among the best head teachers in this country and have a proven ability to work alongside other schools to support their improvement<sup>98</sup>. Primary schools supported by NLEs during 2006–9 improved the average percentage of pupils gaining level four in English and mathematics at key stage two by ten percentage points. Secondary schools which received NLE support during 2007–8 improved pupils' success at GCSE twice as far as the national average<sup>99</sup>. We will increase the number of National and Local Leaders of Education from 1,154<sup>100</sup> to approximately 3,000 over the next four years, so that schools wanting this form of support can find it easily.

**The Cabot Learning Foundation is made of up three Academies in Bristol,** and currently supports improvement in four additional partner schools and six local primary schools.

David Carter (executive principal) believes that head teachers have a responsibility to work in collaboration and, as with the best teaching hospitals, should share the ideas that work with their students as widely as possible. David's role as a National Leader of Education varies from school to school. Sometimes he identifies the support a school needs and provides access to expertise from others in his federation. At other times he will work closely with the head teacher and leadership team, mentoring, coaching and evaluating the quality of education in a school. David and his staff can also facilitate visits, exchanges and mentoring for teachers and leadership teams.

In David's view, one of the benefits of being a National Leader of Education is the positive impact it has on the Cabot Learning Foundation's own performance. As he has reflected on how best to support his partners, so they have also reflected on what works well in the Federation. In 2010, the results for all three of Cabot's Academies were the best ever.

### **The network of Teaching Schools will support improvement**

- 7.8 The network of Teaching Schools will include the very best schools, with outstanding and innovative practice in teaching and learning and significant experience in developing teachers' professional practice. These schools are best placed to lead system-wide improvement in an area. Over time, we will expect these schools to help to deploy National and Local Leaders of Education and leading teachers in support of other schools locally. We will look to these schools to brigade together and broker as necessary the different forms of support that other schools might need.

**Ravens Wood School currently supports seven other schools and has supported over 30 other schools in the past.** Dr. George Berwick, a National Leader of Education, has been head teacher of Ravens Wood since 1993. Ravens Wood offers a range of school support including executive headship, coaching for leadership teams and infrastructure development. Dr. Berwick and his team have also developed an international reputation for school improvement. They have researched, implemented and advised on a range of projects at home and abroad, including on the development of the concept of Teaching Schools.

Dr. Berwick says that 'In every school we have worked in there is always someone who is providing the quality of education those students deserve. Identifying them and giving them the opportunity and the skills to share this knowledge with their colleagues is at the heart of our approach.' He believes that his experience clearly shows that 'those who coach learn as much about their own practice as those they coach. Without this work Ravens Wood would not have continued to be so successful for so many years.'

- 7.9 In the forthcoming Green Paper on Special Educational Needs and Disability, we will consider how to support the identification of excellence in teaching for pupils with Special Educational Needs (whether in special or mainstream schools) so that the strongest practice can be shared, including through Teaching Schools.

### **We will publish ‘families of schools’ data for every part of the country**

- 7.10 Often schools find it more helpful to learn from schools which are contextually similar to them, and it is often easier to learn from a school in a different authority area, not too far away. We will publish regional ‘families of schools’ data which help schools to identify similar schools in their region which are performing differently and from which they can learn. This is based on an approach already taken in some parts of the country: primary and secondary schools are grouped into ‘families’ of 10 to 15 schools with similar intakes on the basis of prior attainment and socio-economic factors. Teachers and head teachers can use the data to compare their performance with similar schools in the region and identify schools from whom they can learn. We will publish families of schools data for all regions from next year.

Talking about his school’s involvement in one of the families of schools, a highly respected secondary head commented, **‘this is the most powerful strategy for school improvement I have experienced’**.

*Greater Manchester*

- 7.11 Local authorities, Academy chains, professional associations, subject associations and others will also bring together teachers and head teachers in formal and informal ways. Schools will be able to take advantage of opportunities provided by these organisations to work with other schools. For example, the Prince’s Teaching Institute brings together academics, head teachers and teachers to promote subject knowledge, inspire teachers and support schools in forging links with other schools and academic institutions.

### **We will incentivise schools to work together to raise standards, especially for disadvantaged pupils**

- 7.12 We also believe that it is often effective to incentivise improvement and innovative ideas, rather than to mandate a uniform approach. We have already announced our plans to establish a new Education Endowment Fund to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in underperforming schools. We will put £110m into the fund, which will run throughout the course of the next spending period and beyond. The fund aims to encourage bold and innovative approaches, inviting applications from schools, local authorities, and others. All funded ideas will be evaluated rigorously and shared widely.
- 7.13 We will also establish a new collaboration incentive worth £35m each year. This will financially reward schools which support weaker schools to demonstrably improve their performance while also improving their own. The fund will incentivise improvements in attainment overall, improvements in progression and narrowing of the attainment gap between deprived pupils and others.

## **We will make sure that schools can find suitable improvement support**

- 7.14 In a much more autonomous system, schools will be responsible for setting their own priorities and deciding how best to meet them. As the National Strategies and other field forces come to an end, we will support a new market of school improvement services with a much wider range of providers and services available for schools to choose from. We will work with a growing number of providers to make it easier for head teachers and teachers to find out about improvement services on offer as well as making high quality research, good practice and free resources easily available.
- 7.15 Local authorities will be free to define how they will support school improvement and will no longer be required to set local authority level targets. Local authorities might choose to offer school improvement as a traded service. This could include continuing to provide support and challenge to schools that want it, running improvement conferences, bringing people together to tackle local problems and brokering support from excellent schools to support other schools.

## **We will support underperforming schools and ensure that those which are seriously failing, or are unable to improve their results, are transformed through conversion to Academy status**

- 7.16 Where schools are failing or seriously underperforming, it is vital that there is rapid intervention to address the problems as quickly as possible, so that children's education is affected as little as possible. Where a primary or secondary school is below the new floor standards, or if Ofsted judges a special school to require a notice to improve or special measures, we will make sure that there is focused intervention and support as necessary.
- 7.17 We will work directly with the schools and local authorities concerned, to make sure that there is a comprehensive plan for turning problems around. We will work with and fund local authorities to identify an experienced and effective education professional – typically a serving or recent head teacher – to act as lead adviser. That individual will provide support and challenge, and make recommendations about the level of support a school will need in order to implement its improvement plan. We anticipate that much of this support will be provided by other schools, through NLEs, LLEs and other models.
- 7.18 In the most serious cases, where schools are below the floor standards and not progressing, or else judged inadequate by Ofsted, we will expect there to be further intervention. Where there has been long-term underperformance, little sign of improvement and serious Ofsted concern, we will convert schools into Academies, partnering them with a strong sponsor or outstanding school.

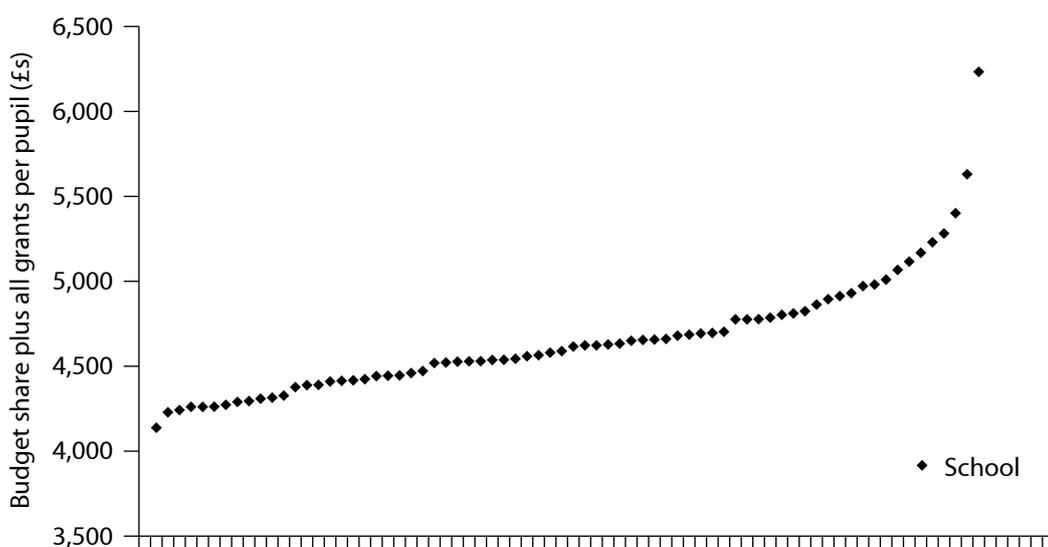
## 78 The Importance of Teaching

- 7.19 This will apply to all schools – if Academies or Free Schools fail to meet floor standards then we will take a similar approach – providing support, intervening as required and if necessary, taking action to replace the sponsor. If school sixth form provision falls below the minimum levels of performance agreed across all post-16 provision, it will be subject to improvement action, which could result in the provision no longer being funded.

# 8. School funding

- 8.1 The funding of schools should be fairer and more transparent, enabling schools to meet the needs of their pupils. Extra resources should clearly follow those pupils who might need extra help and support, such as pupils from poorer backgrounds. Our current system falls well short of this. Over recent years, more money has gone into schools' budgets overall, but its distribution has not been fair. At present, as demonstrated by the graph below, inequalities in the funding system lead to huge variation in the money similar schools receive. We compared 72 secondary schools outside London, with similar size and intakes and found a variation in funding per pupil from just below £4,000 to well over £5,500<sup>101</sup>.

## Variation in budget share plus grants per pupil in 72 secondary schools without sixth forms, with 1,000-1,250 pupils of which between 9–13 per cent are eligible for free school meals, outside of London



72 secondary schools ranked by variation in per pupil funding

- 8.2 At the same time, only around 70 per cent of the money that is intended for the most deprived pupils is actually allocated to schools on that basis<sup>102</sup>. And the funding system has become increasingly opaque and unresponsive, with the money that schools receive depending more on what they received in the past than the characteristics and needs of pupils in the school now. Post-16 funding, although distributed on a more transparent basis, is also inherently unfair, with school sixth forms being funded on average £280 more per student than general FE colleges and sixth form colleges<sup>103</sup>.
- 8.3 The protection of the schools budget in the recent Spending Review, which sees real terms growth in school funding at a time when cutting the budget deficit is an urgent national priority, does not mean that there is no need for efficiencies to be made, and is a major investment in the future of the country. Our aim is that money is distributed more fairly so that it is the schools most able to make efficiencies which are asked to so do.

8.4 At the same time, we need to secure better value for money from capital expenditure. With more limited capital resources, we must make sure that money is spent wisely, allocated more efficiently and in a much less bureaucratic way. By doing so we can make sure that our existing school buildings are fit for purpose and meet the growing need for new school places.

8.5 If we are to help the most disadvantaged and encourage new providers into the state school system, we need to reform the way in which schools are funded, ensuring resources go straight to the front line and making funding overall more equitable, transparent and geared towards the most disadvantaged. We will:

- Target more resources on deprived pupils over the next four years, through a new 'Pupil Premium': extra money for each deprived pupil. We will be spending £2.5 billion per year on the Pupil Premium by the end of the Spending Review period.
- Consult on developing and introducing a clear, transparent and fairer national funding formula based on the needs of pupils, to work alongside the Pupil Premium.
- In the meantime, increase the transparency of the current funding system by showing both how much money schools receive on a school-by-school basis and how they spend their funds.
- End the disparity in funding for 16–18 year-olds, so that schools and colleges are funded at the same levels as one another, and at the levels of the most efficient.
- Devolve the maximum amount of funding to schools, making information and tools available to governors and head teachers which will support them in making good spending decisions.
- Take forward the conclusions of the review of capital spending, cutting bureaucracy from the process of allocating capital and securing significantly better value for money.

**For Alex Green, head teacher at Abington High School, every decision starts with asking what will have the biggest impact on the outcomes for the students.** At Abington, the improvement planning cycle matches the budget planning cycle. This ensures that funding is targeted on priorities, and enables leaders across the school to be in control of their own budgets. Everyone works towards enhancing value for money.

The school has established partnerships with local schools, FE and HE institutions and local businesses, buying goods and services together and sharing staff, facilities and funding. This saves money and allows Abington to provide more for its pupils, including specific vocational qualifications, extra challenge to stretch gifted children and additional courses to help pupils at risk. Strong financial management is having a direct impact on standards and outcomes for young people in south Leicestershire.

## We will target resources on the education of the deprived pupils through the introduction of the Pupil Premium

- 8.6 We want to see more resources being spent on the education of deprived children. We will make sure this happens by implementing a new Pupil Premium, which will provide additional money for each deprived pupil in the country. This money will go with eligible pupils to the school they attend, and will be distributed in addition to the underlying schools budget from 2011–12. In total, £2.5 billion a year on top of existing schools spending will be spent on the Pupil Premium by 2014–15. This will mean that head teachers have more money to spend on offering an excellent education to these children: it will also make it more likely that schools will want to admit less affluent children; and it will make it more attractive to open new Free Schools in the most deprived parts of the country.

**Addressing the disparity between rich and poor pupils is a top priority of the Coalition Government.** Poor pupils continue to underachieve compared with their peers; young children who are in the bottom 20 per cent of attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile are six times more likely to be in the bottom 20 per cent at key stage one than their peers<sup>104</sup>. The attainment gap between rich and poor opens up before children start school, is visible during the infant years<sup>105</sup> and increases over time, with pupils entitled to free school meals only half as likely to achieve five good GCSEs as their peers<sup>106</sup>.

It is for this reason that *The Coalition: our programme for government* sets out our intention to fund ‘a significant premium for disadvantaged children from outside the schools budget’. The Pupil Premium for disadvantaged pupils will provide additional funding specifically linked to disadvantaged pupils, with the primary objective of boosting their attainment. This money will not be ring-fenced at school level as we believe that schools are in the best position to decide how the premium should be used to support their pupils. The funding for the premium will be in addition to the schools budget which has been protected until the end of the Spending Review period. We will expect schools to account to parents for how it is used.

- 8.7 We will make available the evidence that we have about interventions which are effective in supporting the achievement of disadvantaged children including, for example, intensive support in reading, writing and mathematics. It is head teachers and teachers who are best placed to decide how best to support their pupils and we will make sure that the reformed performance tables include information on how well children eligible for the premium achieve.

## **We will consult on developing and introducing a clear, transparent and fairer national funding formula based on the needs of pupils and end the disparity in funding for 16–18 year-olds**

- 8.8 We are already simplifying schools funding by getting rid of ring-fences and giving schools a single funding stream – the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- 8.9 While the majority of schools are local authority maintained schools, funding will continue to pass to them through the local authority. But as more schools become Academies, with funding being given directly rather than through the local authority, so the requirement for a greater degree of transparency and consistency in allocating school funding becomes more pressing.
- 8.10 We want all schools to be funded transparently, logically and equitably, in contrast to the opaque, anomalous and unfair school funding system which reflects the historic circumstances of local authorities rather than the specific needs of individual schools and pupils; and leads to similar schools, facing similar challenges, receiving very different levels of funding. We also wish to see schools funded in such a way that every parent knows how much is being spent on their child, and every parent can see what proportion of education spending is not going direct to schools. Funding reform will be introduced in such a way as to minimise disruption and ensure schools' resources are not subject to sudden and dramatic change.
- 8.11 Because we plan, over time, to make Academy status the norm and wish to ensure more resources go direct to the frontline in a fairer way, our long term aspiration is to move to a national funding formula to ensure that resources going to schools are transparent, logical and equitable. In the short term, we will ensure that the amount available for the education of every child at school level is published and more money is passed directly to more schools as they become Academies.
- 8.12 In order to ensure any move to a new national funding formula is fair, transparent and managed carefully, we will invite views on: the merits of moving to such a formula, the right time to begin the transition to a formula, the transitional arrangements necessary to ensure that schools and local authorities do not suffer undue turbulence, and the factors to take into account in order to assess the needs of pupils for funding purposes. We will also invite views on how to ensure that the transparency of the Pupil Premium as additional resources for schools is maintained as the funding system is reformed. We will publish a consultation in the Spring of 2011, following discussion with partners including local authorities, school leaders and teachers' associations.
- 8.13 Subject to legislation, we intend to replace the existing Young People's Learning Agency and set up a new Education Funding Agency (EFA) as an executive agency of the Department with responsibility for the direct funding of the growing number of Academies and Free Schools and all 16–19 provision. This will include the funding of 16–19 provision in FE colleges, sixth form colleges and independent provision. As Academy status increasingly becomes the norm, the EFA will distribute more funding directly to schools. The EFA will also distribute

resources to local authorities for them to pass on, as now, to those schools which are not yet Academies.

- 8.14 Academies and Free Schools will continue to receive funding for the services which maintained schools receive from their local authority but which Academies and Free Schools are expected to pay for, given their independence from local authorities – for example behaviour support. We are reviewing the calculation of this additional funding to ensure it is fair both for local authorities and for Academies and Free Schools.
- 8.15 Local authorities are ultimately responsible for making sure the needs of some of our most vulnerable pupils, who attract significant additional funding, are met – such as those with highly complex Special Educational Needs and those being educated outside mainstream education. We will ensure that considerations of possible reforms to the school funding system take into account the needs of this group of vulnerable pupils.
- 8.16 The forthcoming Green Paper on Special Educational Needs and Disability will explore proposals for funding high cost provision – including exploring questions of how to increase transparency in how decisions about funding and support are made and increasing collaboration between local authorities. In relation to the funding of alternative provision, subject to the success of trials of our proposed new approach, we would anticipate that in the longer term, money for alternative provision will go directly to schools.
- 8.17 We are also committed to all young people staying on in education and training to age 18 by 2015 and a simple post-16 funding system which is fair and transparent will underpin this commitment. Historically, sixth form colleges and general FE colleges have been funded at a much lower level than school sixth forms delivering post-16 education: on average a full time student in a maintained school is funded at £280 more than a student in an FE college<sup>107</sup>. We will bring to an end the disparity by bringing the funding levels for school sixth forms into line with colleges so that there is equity in funding and increased value for money for the tax payer. The transition towards fairer post-16 funding will begin in 2011–12 and will be completed by 2015. We will provide the necessary transitional protection for schools facing significant changes.

## **We will devolve the maximum amount of funding to schools and make information and tools available so head teachers can drive improvement and realise efficiencies**

- 8.18 We want the maximum amount of funding possible to go straight into schools' budgets where it can make the most difference and so we will reduce all the Department for Education's other activities, programmes and initiatives by more than half over the next four years. In order for head teachers and governors to drive school improvement through realising efficiencies, we will make available information and tools they can use to realise value for money.

## 84 The Importance of Teaching

- 8.19 As part of our drive for transparency, we will publish easy to understand data about how much each school spends and on what, alongside data about how well their pupils achieve. This will enable schools to compare for themselves the extent to which they deliver value for money, as well as equip parents with the information they need to ask questions of the school.
- 8.20 All schools should be working to make savings and should be spending their funds prudently with a proper regard for value for money. At the moment, local authorities are encouraged to claw back monies from schools where they have built up surpluses. There will continue to be some situations where claw-back is appropriate – for example where a school has built up an excessive balance or where some level of redistribution would support improved provision across a local area. However, consistent with our view that all schools should be moving to greater autonomy, we will remove the requirement for local authorities to have a claw-back mechanism from 2011–12, and review guidance on claw-back arrangements including on the level of balances deemed to be excessive and we will consult on making changes to the current arrangements from 2012–13.
- 8.21 It is vital that schools have good financial management and adopt rigorous financial standards to provide assurance on the spending of public money. But head teachers, school business managers and teachers have been telling government for a long time now that the current ‘Financial Management Standard in Schools’ (FMSiS), which all schools are required to have, is far too complex, burdensome and bureaucratic to be effective. We will replace it with a much simpler standard during the 2011/12 academic year, drawn up in association with schools themselves, which will give governors and head teachers real assurance that they are achieving value for money. Schools which have not yet achieved FMSiS will not be required to do so, but will be expected to be among the first schools to achieve the new standard.
- 8.22 School business managers make a significant contribution to the effective financial management of a school, saving on average 20–33 per cent of a head teacher’s time and covering their own salary in savings<sup>108</sup>. Obtaining the services (shared or full time) of a high quality business manager should be a priority for all governors and head teachers, unless there is someone in the management team with the relevant skills to undertake the role.
- 8.23 It is important that schools should be able to make savings on procurement and back office spend in order to invest resources in teaching and learning. The Spending Review announcement said that schools should be able to save at least £1 billion in these areas by 2014–15. This is practicable, but schools will need access to the best deals and will need to improve the way they buy goods and services. The contribution central government can make is to provide easy-to-access financial and procurement information and tools for schools to use if they wish. We will make sure that the best deals currently on offer are made available to schools, and look for improved deals where necessary, drawing these deals to schools’ attention. We will also work with schools and other partners to improve procurement practice in schools, and we will expect schools to seek ways to achieve financial and associated carbon savings by using energy as efficiently as possible.

**As the School Business Manager for a cluster of five primary schools in North Warwickshire, Peter James has brought clear benefits to all of the schools with which he works.** A qualified accountant, Peter had spent most of his career in the private sector. The expertise and skills Peter brings have enabled the cluster to realise financial benefits including £80,000 in savings so far. In addition he has saved all five head teachers substantial time, allowing two to provide support to other schools beyond the cluster.

The schools are now sharing ICT services, procuring jointly and sharing contracts. Having identified the initial savings, Peter is now working with the schools on more strategic plans to save them money by, for example, employing an additional teacher to work across all five schools to cover absent staff.

## **We will secure significantly better value for money on schools capital spending, through the independent review of capital**

- 8.24 Schools need buildings that are high quality and fit for purpose, with new ones built for the best possible price. Huge sums have been spent on school buildings over the last decade but the benefits have been undermined by the vast sums wasted on bureaucracy in the Building Schools for the Future programme – which is why we ended that programme.
- 8.25 Over the next four years there will be a 60 per cent real terms reduction in education capital spending. Nonetheless, we will spend £15.8 billion between 2011–12 and 2014–15, which is more per year than the average annual capital budget in the 1997–98 to 2004–05 period. Our priorities are to use that money to ensure that we address the poor condition of the existing school estate and ensure there are enough places for the predicted increase in the number of school age children, particularly at primary level. The independent review of education capital currently underway and due to report by the end of the year, will set out how the Department for Education’s capital budget should be allocated in future in the most cost effective way and targeted where there is most need.

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