



**Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP**  
Secretary of State

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Dear Directors of Children's Services,

### **Educational Excellence Everywhere**

I am writing about our [Schools White Paper, \*Educational Excellence Everywhere\*](#), which has been published today.

The White Paper sets out our vision of educational excellence *everywhere* and a future facing education system, based on learning from the best systems around the world. We want to extend and embed the last Parliament's reforms to provide a world class education for all children, wherever they live and whatever their circumstances. It is about taking pride in the huge steps that schools, teachers and children have made over the last five years, but also setting our sights on the future. Through the reforms in the White Paper, we will give the best generation of teachers ever the same freedom as other professions like law and medicine. We will give every school the freedoms that come with being an academy, and give weaker schools the support they need to make the most of those freedoms. At the same time, we will equip parents with the information they need to play an active role in their child's education.

This White Paper is not about another big idea to be imposed on schools. Instead, it sets out how we will give schools, school leaders, and the education profession the power, incentives and accountability to give every child an excellent education. It outlines the underpinning infrastructure of a school-led system, which rewards innovation, spreads excellence and is intolerant of failure.

We believe that the fastest and most sustainable way for schools to improve is for government to trust this country's most effective education leaders, giving them freedom and power, and holding them to account for unapologetically high standards for every child. The system we envisage will respond to performance: extending the reach of the most successful leaders and acting promptly by intervening where performance is not good enough. It will also do more to set up school leaders for success, ensuring they have the necessary tools to seize the opportunities provided by greater autonomy and ensuring that support is available for them to draw on when needed. This model

underpins every one of the reforms set out in the White Paper.

This approach seeks to take our self-improving school-led system to the next level: building capacity and setting up schools to use their freedoms effectively. We are providing not just autonomy, but supported autonomy, as the best approach to improve education everywhere.

The key elements of our approach are:

- an education system that ensures teachers get the respect they deserve and that we have consistently excellent teaching in our classrooms, including replacing the current 'Qualified Teacher Status' (QTS) with a stronger, more challenging accreditation based on a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom, as judged by great schools;
- support for existing leaders and help to develop the outstanding leaders of the future through improved infrastructure and leadership training, world-class qualifications and attracting the best leaders to challenging areas, including through the new National Teaching Service;
- a dynamic school-led system where every school is an academy and where pupils, parents and communities are empowered to have a more significant voice in schools, with a clearly defined role for local government;
- preventing underperformance through improvement, scaffolding and support where it is needed, including transferring responsibility for school improvement from local authorities to school and system leaders. There will also be a new focus on achieving excellence in areas where too few children have access to a good school and there are not yet enough high quality teachers, school and system leaders, governors and sponsors;
- high expectations and a world-leading curriculum for all, so that all children receive an education that equips them with the knowledge and character traits necessary to succeed in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain;
- fair, stretching accountability that focusses on tackling underperformance; rewarding schools on the basis of the progress their pupils make and incentivising strong leaders to take over underperforming schools; and
- the right resources in the right hands: investing every penny where it can do the most good – through new, fair, national funding formulae for schools, improved effectiveness of the pupil premium and making the best possible use of resources.

Our ambitious approach represents our best chance of achieving the educational excellence that every child and young person deserves.

Fundamental to that is our ambition that, by the end of 2020, all schools will be academies or in the process of becoming academies; and that by the end of 2022, local authorities will no longer maintain schools.

We are implementing measures in the new Education and Adoption Act so that all inadequate schools become sponsored academies and coasting schools are tackled for the first time. The Act received Royal Assent yesterday and we will be issuing, statutory Schools Causing Concern guidance to provide clarity on local authorities' immediate powers and duties in respect of these schools. We also want all other schools to put forward applications to become academies. We expect most schools will form or join MATs so proven educational models can be scaled and the best leaders can extend their influence by running multiple schools.

Local authorities have a key role in supporting this vision and sharing it with maintained schools in their area. We will expect local authorities to facilitate the conversion of maintained schools into academies, and play an active part with schools and diocese, where relevant, in developing and shaping the system. Regional Schools Commissioners, supported by their head teacher boards, will consider and agree these arrangements on behalf of the Secretary of State. The department will publish 'design principles' to set out what we know about successful MATs, including the range of size/pupil numbers in different MATs. This will explain the basis on which RSCs will expect to approve MATs, and single academy trusts where schools can demonstrate they will be successful and sustainable standing alone.

We will also be taking new powers to direct schools to become academies in local authority areas which are underperforming or where the local authority no longer has capacity to maintain its schools; or where schools have not started the process of becoming an academy by April 2020. This process will be complete by the end of 2022, by which point local authorities will no longer maintain any schools.

The move to a system where all schools are academies clearly means that the role of local authorities will change. As responsibilities related to maintaining schools will fall away, local authorities will retain very important functions in support of the school system – in ensuring every child has a school place, ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils are met and acting as champions for all parents and families. Local authorities' core functions around social care, economic development, housing and planning will also mean they have a continuing interest in the success of local schools.

In the light of these changes, we will also be reviewing the responsibilities of local authorities in relation to children, including the implications for the roles of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children.

This Government is committed to securing educational excellence everywhere for all children and I look forward to working with you to achieve that most important goal.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicky Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

RT HON NICKY MORGAN MP