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Department
for Education

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Our single departmental plan sets out our objectives and how we will achieve them.

Secretary of State

[The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP](#)

Permanent Secretary

[Jonathan Slater](#)

The Department for Education is responsible for children's services and education, including early years,

schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England. We work to provide children's services and education that ensures opportunity is equal for all, no matter what their background, family circumstances or needs.

The department is also home to the Government Equalities Office (GEO). The GEO is responsible for the equality framework and for promoting equality for women and LGBT individuals. We take action on the government's commitment to remove barriers to equality and help to build a fairer society, leading on issues relating to women, sexual orientation and transgender equality.

Our objectives

Our purpose is to help create a country where there is social mobility and equality of opportunity by providing excellent education, training and care, and to help everyone reach their potential, regardless of background.

We will achieve our purpose by working tirelessly to deliver our ambitions.

One overarching ambition will focus on places and communities across the country that feel they have been 'left behind', because they have not yet seen the improvement that other parts of the country have already benefited from. A further four ambitions will cover the key life stages of people's education:

1. Closing the word gap. Boosting access to high quality early language and literacy both in the classroom and at home ensuring more disadvantaged children leave school having mastered the basics of literacy that many take for granted
2. Closing the attainment gap. Raising standards for every pupil, supporting teachers early in their career as well as getting more great teachers in areas where there remain significant challenges
3. Real choice at post-16. Creating world-class technical education, backed by a half a billion pounds in investment, and increasing the options for all young people regardless of their background
4. Rewarding careers for all. Boosting skills and confidence to make the leap from education into work, raising career aspirations. Building a new type of partnership with businesses to improve advice, information and experiences for young people

These ambitions build on other vital work to tackle key challenges throughout the life stages: investing in support for looked after children e.g. through the pupil premium plus, virtual school heads, and designated teachers; delivering sustainable improvements to the children's social care system e.g. supporting the social work profession through establishing a What Works centre to disseminate best practice; taking forward the biggest changes to SEND provision in a generation, providing tailored support from 0-25; and delivering bold new proposals on children's mental health to ensure all children can develop into confident adults.

You can [read the department's plan for improving social mobility through education called *Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential* here](#).

Overarching ambition: No community left behind

Lead ministers:

[The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP](#), Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities (Opportunity Areas)

[The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP](#), Minister of State for School Standards and Equalities (Schools Standards)

[Lord Theodore Agnew](#), Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System (School Improvement)

Lead officials:

[Indra Morris](#), Director General, Social Care, Mobility and Equalities (Opportunity Areas)

[Andrew McCully](#) Director General, Infrastructure and Funding (School Improvement)

How we will achieve this

Focusing the department around place by targeting support (such as school improvement) in challenging areas and prioritising new investment in areas at risk of being 'left behind'.

Providing intensive, system-wide support for the areas with the most complex and entrenched barriers (through the Opportunity Areas programme).

Our performance

6

Opportunity Area Delivery Plans published, a further 6 scheduled for publication in early 2018

Source: [Social mobility and opportunity areas](#)

Ambition 1: Close the word gap in the early years

Lead Ministers:

[Robert Goodwill MP](#), Minister of State for Children and Families

Lead Officials:

[Paul Kett](#) Director General, Education Standards (Early Years)

[Indra Morris](#), Director General, Social Care, Mobility and Equalities (Children's Social Care)

How we will achieve this

Improving the quality of early years provision (particularly in challenging areas), with a renewed focus on early language and literacy, including ensuring more disadvantaged children are able to experience a language-rich early environment.

Improving the take-up of quality early years provision, including by ensuring that all eligible parents can access 30 hours of free childcare per week.

Delivering reforms to children's social care and social work to improve the quality of services, including targeted support and challenge to any local authorities that have been graded inadequate or those 'at risk' of being so.

Our performance

Pupils achieving a 'good level of development' at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage

71%

2016/17

Source: [Early years foundation stage profile results in England, 2017](#) /Release schedule: annual

Pupils achieving at least the expected level across all the early learning goals in the Communication and Language area of learning

82%

2016/17

Source: [Early years foundation stage profile results in England, 2017](#) /Release schedule: annual

Pupils achieving at least the expected level across all the early learning goals that make up the literacy area of learning

73%

2016/17

Source: [Early years foundation stage profile results in England, 2017](#) /Release schedule: annual

Local authorities children's services, inspected under the single inspection framework, have been rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted

36%

2016/17

Source: [Early years foundation stage profile results in England, 2017](#) / Release schedule: annual

Ambition 2: Close the attainment gap in school while raising standards for all

Lead Ministers:

[The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP](#), Minister of State for School Standards and Equalities (Schools Standards)

[Lord Theodore Agnew](#), Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System (School Improvement)

Lead Officials:

[Paul Kett](#) Director General, Education Standards (Teaching Profession and School Efficiency)

[Andrew McCully](#) Director General, Infrastructure and Funding (School Improvement)

How we will achieve this

Improving the quality of teaching, especially in challenging areas and schools, by recruiting and retraining high-quality teachers, and addressing shortages in subject specialisms, places and stages.

Continuing to raise the status of the teaching profession, including through the Chartered College of Teaching.

Supporting improvements in the quality of schools, including to increase the number of schools and academies providing good and outstanding places through the academies and free school programme.

Improving the school improvement offer, including by delivering the Strategic School Improvement Fund.

Ensuring that school leaders spend their funding efficiently so that teachers can focus on teaching, including through the implementation of the National Funding Formula (NFF).

Supporting all pupils to fulfil their potential, including by reforming alternative provision.

Our performance

Pupils in good or outstanding schools

1.9 million

more pupils in good or outstanding schools than in 2010, that's 87% of children in good or outstanding schools compared to 66% in 2010

Source: Ofsted inspection data

Pupils achieving the 'expected standard' in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2

Year	Percentage of pupils
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2017	61
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2016	53
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Source: [National curriculum assessments: key stage 2](#) /Release schedule: annual

Average Attainment 8 score of all state funded schools

46

at Key Stage 4 - 2016/17

Source: [GCSE and equivalent results: 2016 to 2017](#) /Release schedule: annual

Attainment disadvantage gap index (a measure of the difference in attainment between disadvantaged and not-disadvantaged pupils on a scale of 0 to 10) at Key Stage 2

3.09

2016

Attainment disadvantage gap index at Key Stage 4

3.78

2016

Source: [GCSE and equivalent results: 2016 to 2017](#) /Release schedule: annual

Ambition 3: High quality post-16 education choices for all young people

Lead Ministers:

[The Rt Hon Anne Milton MP](#), Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills and Minister for Women (Further Education quality, financial stability and T-Levels)

[Jo Johnson MP](#), Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (Higher Education reform)

Lead Officials:

[Philippa Lloyd](#), Director General, Higher and Further Education (Further Education and Higher Education)

3.1 Creating high quality technical education options to improve the choice for young people at age 16

How we will achieve this

Delivering employer-designed and high quality 'T-Levels' and reviewing higher technical education at Levels 4 and 5.

Delivering high quality apprenticeships and focusing on improving the quality of apprenticeship qualifications through the delivery of standards and a focus on higher level (L4+) qualifications.

3.2 Investing in the further education sector

How we will achieve this

Supporting the further education sector to improve quality of provision and ensure ongoing financial security.

Introducing a transition year for 16 year olds and investing in FE Colleges to support them to be centres of excellence in maths and English.

Establishing new Institutes of Technology.

3.3 Ensuring high quality Higher Education

How we will achieve this

Establishing the Office for Students, and improving access to the highest quality courses and institutions.

Taking forward the tertiary funding review to ensure that higher education offers good value for money for students from all backgrounds.

Delivering the Teaching Excellence Framework to ensure high quality provision of HE across the sector.

Our performance

Average point score per entry

The average point score per entry expressed as a grade was C+ for A levels, Distinction for applied general qualifications, and Distinction - for tech level qualifications, for students at the end of 16-18 study.

Source: [A level and other 16 to 18 results: 2016 to 2017](#)/Release schedule: annual

Apprenticeships starts

1,119,600
May 2015 to July 2017

Source: [FE data library - apprenticeships](#)/Release schedule: quarterly

Ambition 4. Everyone achieving their full potential in rewarding careers

Lead Ministers:

[The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP](#), Minister of State for School Standards and Equalities (LDGT Policy)

[The Rt Hon Anne Milton MP](#), Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills and Minister for Women (Gender policy, women's equality and lifelong learning)

Lead Officials:

[Philippa Lloyd](#), Director General, Higher and Further Education (Lifelong Learning)

[Indra Morris](#), Director General, Social Care, Mobility and Equalities (Government Equalities Office)

4.1 Ensuring people of all ages have the opportunities to build a rewarding career, or the opportunity to retrain and change career

How we will achieve this

Delivering our careers strategy to improve the quality of careers advice, guidance and experiences, supported by the Careers and Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service.

Improving our adult education provision, including through developing a National Retraining Scheme and supporting adult basic skills.

Collaborating with businesses to widen opportunity through the Skills Partner Statement of Action.

4.2 Work toward an inclusive society and an end to discrimination

How we will achieve this

Working to reduce the gender pay gap and tackling gender inequality in society.

Working with the Hampton-Alexander Review to increase the proportion of women in senior leadership positions (with BEIS).

Improving outcomes for LGBT people, including reviewing the Gender Recognition Act.

Maintain strong, well-enforced equalities legislation and regulation in a changing world.

Our performance

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) (16 - 24 years)

11.3%

in Oct-Dec 2016, down from 16.0% in the same quarter of 2011

Source: [NEET and participation statistics](#) /Release schedule: quarterly

Difference between the average earnings of men and women

18.4%

Source: [ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings](#)/Release schedule: annual

FTSE 350 board positions being held by women

24.5%

as of October 2017

Source: [Hampton-Alexander Review](#)/Release schedule: annual

Our finances

Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) - £70 billion

Resource DEL (including depreciation) - £64.9 billion

Capital DEL – £5.1 billion

Annually Managed Expenditure – £14.6 billion

Control totals included in this document are in line with the latest voted by Parliament in the Main Supply Estimates 2017/18

Source: [Main Supply Estimates](#) 2017-2018

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