



HM Government

Higher Standards, Better Schools For All

More choice for parents and pupils

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department for

education and skills

creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence



HM Government

Higher Standards, Better Schools For All

More choice for parents and pupils

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

October 2005

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Foreword by the Prime Minister

Meeting the challenge of education reform....

We are at an historic turning point: we now have an education system that is largely good, after eight years of investment and reform, which has overcome many of the chronic inherited problems of the past. Now, with the best teaching force and the best school leadership ever, we are poised to become world class if we have the courage and vision to reform and invest further and put the parent and pupil at the centre of the system.



Our reforms must build on the freedoms that schools have increasingly received, but extend them radically. We must put parents in the driving seat for change in all-ability schools that retain the comprehensive principle of non-selection, but operate very differently from the traditional comprehensive. And to underpin this change, the local authority must move from being a provider of education to being its local commissioner and the champion of parent choice.

The history since 1944...

Since the introduction of universal, free secondary education in the 1944 Education Act, education in England has experienced several important waves of reform. That Act created a system of grammar, secondary modern and technical schools, which gave everyone access to a free secondary education for the first time.

But the system had two main weaknesses: grammar schools catered for the brightest students, but 80% of children had to go to secondary moderns which failed to challenge them and where many achieved few if any qualifications. Moreover, technical schools never really played a major part in the new system, denying opportunities for a vocational education.

Pressure, initially from middle class parents angry with standards in secondary moderns, led to comprehensive schools and the conversion of grammars and secondary moderns in the 1960s and 1970s. But, their introduction was often accompanied by all-ability classes, which made setting by subject ability too rare. Many retained their old secondary modern intake, and failed to improve. There were simply not enough pressures in the system to raise standards.

Lord Callaghan recognised this as Prime Minister in 1976 when he urged a National Curriculum. When it was introduced in the late eighties, it was accompanied by greater accountability through national testing and regular independent inspection. Schools

were also encouraged to apply for grant-maintained status, where they had more freedom over their assets and staffing, though critics complained that they were unfairly funded compared with other schools, and that their admissions were unfair.

...a process of reform that has accelerated since 1997

After 1997, this government extended such accountability, with literacy and numeracy reforms in primary schools, and targets to encourage improvements in all schools. Failing schools were expected to improve quickly. Under-performing schools were challenged.

Grant-maintained schools kept their key freedoms as Foundation schools, but all schools were given the chance to have greater financial independence with greater financial delegation and new dedicated building grants sent direct to schools. All schools were expected to operate a fair admissions policy.

The government sought to re-energise comprehensive education, by encouraging every secondary school to aim for specialist status, a process that has meant their setting challenging targets for improvement and developing a clear mission. Academies were introduced in the areas of greatest challenge. More flexibility was introduced in the curriculum, allowing tens of thousands of pupils to go on vocational courses or gain practical work experience.

These reforms have been supported by an unprecedented level of investment in better teachers' pay; more support staff; new computers; new facilities; and new buildings. Teachers' pay is 20% higher in real terms, and schools employ an extra 32,000 teachers and 130,000 support staff. Schools have access to twice as many computers, as well as new interactive whiteboards and broadband technology, enabling ICT to become an increasingly integral part of the teaching and learning process. Investment in school buildings has risen seven-fold.

...with real progress made in schools...

Real improvements have followed. The quality of teaching has been transformed, through the literacy and numeracy programmes in the government's first term and the Key Stage 3 strategy for 11-14 year-olds in its second term. Ofsted reports the proportion of good or excellent teaching in primary schools rising from 45% in 1997 to 74% in 2004/05, and from 59% to 78% in secondary schools. The proportion of badly-taught lessons has been halved.

As a result of these reforms, 96,000 more children start secondary school able to do basic maths well and 84,000 have done well in English. Since the Key Stage 3 strategies were introduced in 2001, 50,000 more 14 year olds reach the expected standards in English and in Maths.

There have been big improvements at GCSE, with 50% more young people gaining five good grades in inner London, and faster than average improvements in specialist schools and areas benefiting from Excellence in Cities and London Challenge. School workforces have been radically changed to help teachers deliver more effective lessons

and teaching assistants to offer more individual support. Minimum standards have been set and achieved by most schools and education authorities. There are now 131 secondary schools where fewer than a quarter of pupils gain five good GCSEs. In 1997, there were 616. By contrast, there are more than 400 non-selective schools where 70% or more pupils gain five good GCSEs; in 1997, there were only 83.

... progress that has been driven by new freedoms and flexibilities...

What have we learnt from the reform process? We have seen how specialist schools – with external sponsors, strong leadership and a clear sense of mission, driven by their acquisition and retention of specialist status – have improved faster than other comprehensives. We have seen that Academies – still relatively new independent state schools – improving this year at more than three times the national average in areas of the greatest challenge and disadvantage.

What is important to these schools is their ethos, their sense of purpose, the strength of their leaders, teachers and support staff, the motivation of their parents and pupils. And much of that comes from the can-do attitude of their principals and staff, and the drive that their business and educational sponsors bring to their development – backed by their willingness to innovate and use their freedoms imaginatively.

The best state schools – and there are five times as many as in 1997 – share these characteristics. But many would also like to go further: to develop new freedoms and strong relationships with sponsors.

We have already made it easy to become a Foundation school: a simple vote of the governing body is all that is required. All schools that meet the standard will be able to acquire specialist status by 2007 – the best acquiring additional specialisms, and all sharing their expertise with the wider community. There are now 27 Academies, with plans for at least 200 by 2010. Our 14-19 reforms will ensure a high-standard vocational system through new specialised diplomas.

...but there is still too little choice and standards are not yet high enough....

We have made good progress. But our reform programme needs to go further if it is to be sustained within schools. We want to create a spectrum along which schools have the freedom to develop further: if they want to control their assets and staffing, they will be free to do so by acquiring a Trust; if they want to build strong links with external partners, they should be able to do so; for others, Academies will be the best option.

Parent choice can be a powerful driver of improved standards. Performance tables and inspections have given many parents the information that has enabled them to make objective judgements about a school's performance and effectiveness. This has been an important pressure on weaker schools to improve.

Many other countries have successful experience with school choice. There is increasing international evidence that school choice systems can maintain high levels of equity and improve standards. Swedish parents can choose an alternative school to their local one, including a diverse range of state-funded independent schools. Studies have found that schools in areas where there is more choice have improved most rapidly. In Florida, parents can choose an alternative school if their school has 'failed' in two of the last four years. Again, studies showed test scores improved fastest where schools knew children were free to go elsewhere.

International experiences with school choice suggest that fair funding which follows the pupil, good information and support for parents, fair admissions, and rapid intervention where schools are failing are all important in delivering choice. In designing our reforms we have learnt from these experiences.

While parents can express a choice of school, there are not yet enough good schools in urban areas; such restrictions are greatest for poor and middle class families who cannot afford to opt for private education or to live next to a good school, if they are dissatisfied with what the state offers.

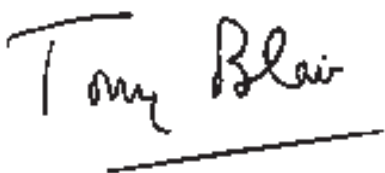
We believe parents should have greater power to drive the new system: it should be easier for them to replace the leadership or set up new schools where they are dissatisfied with existing schools.

...which is why the reforms in this paper are so important....

These are the principles which underpin the reforms set out in this White Paper. In the new system, we are determined to ensure that improvements become self-sustaining within individual schools, with changes owned and driven by schools and parents.

Our aim is the creation of a system of independent non-fee paying state schools. It will be for schools to decide whether they wish to acquire a Trust – similar to those that support Academies – or become a self-governing foundation school. But it will be easy for them to do so, without unnecessary bureaucratic interference. And they will do so in a system of fair admissions, fair funding and clear accountability.

Taken together these proposals are not only the next vital stage in one of the most radical and successful school reform programmes in the developed world; they will also ensure irreversible change for the better in schools.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Blair". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a solid black horizontal line.

Tony Blair
Prime Minister

Foreword by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills

There is nothing more important than educating our children. Doing the best for their child is what every parent strives to do. And we must make sure that our school system is one that helps them to do that. So this White Paper sets out our vision for the future of the education system.



We have achieved a great deal already in our schools, creating a firm base from which to go forward. But there is more to do. Building on the platform of higher standards and fewer failing schools we have established since 1997, we must now take another major step forward in the transformation of our education system. Central to these reforms are three great challenges. We must:

- tailor education around the needs of each individual child – so that no child falls behind and no child is held back from achieving their potential;
- put parents at the centre of our thinking – giving them greater choice and active engagement in their child’s learning and how schools are run; and
- empower schools and teachers to respond to local and parental demands, injecting dynamism and innovation into our schools.

In all of these areas we must deliver for all children, but particularly for those whose family background is most challenging. Education is one of the keys to social mobility, and so we must make sure that a good education is available to every child in every community.

This White Paper sets out how we will meet these challenges and build the school system we all want for our children. More than anything it is a White Paper about aspiration. We must have the highest aspirations for every child whatever their talents and ability. And we must have a schools system that can respond to those aspirations. Working together with our many partners in schools and communities, we can achieve our aim of a world class education system, with every school a good school, and every pupil achieving.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Ruth Kelly MP

Secretary of State for Education and Skills

Executive Summary

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Our aim is to transform our school system so that every child receives an excellent education – whatever their background and wherever they live. Because of the progress we have made since 1997 we can now take the next, vital steps.

In 1997, a third of children left primary schools without having mastered the basics in English and maths. Now three-quarters achieve in maths and even more in English. Our secondary schools have substantially improved too. There are dramatically fewer failing secondary schools. And there have been sustained and substantial improvements in achievement at 14, 16 and 18. There are more resources and more teachers in our schools.

These achievements are important. But they are not yet good enough. Standards must keep rising in the globalised world in which we now live. High standards must be universal to every child in every school in every community. The attainment gap between high and low achieving schools is too great. And a child's educational achievements are still too strongly linked to their parents' social and economic background – a key barrier to social mobility.

This White Paper sets out our plans radically to improve the system by putting parents and the needs of their children at the heart of our school system, freeing up schools to innovate and succeed, bringing in new dynamism and new providers, ensuring that coasting – let alone failure – is not an option for any school. In this way we will ensure that every school delivers an excellent education, that every child achieves to their potential and that the system as a whole is increasingly driven by parents and by choice. To make that happen we need an education system that is designed around the needs

of the individual – with education tailored to the needs of each child and parents having a real say in how schools are run. And to achieve that, we need to reform schools so that they have the freedoms and flexibilities to deliver that tailored, choice-driven education.

...so we are developing a radical new school system...

In this new system, improvements will become embedded and self-sustaining within schools, because the changes will be owned and driven by schools and parents:

- every school will be able to acquire a self-governing Trust similar to those supporting Academies, which will give them the freedom to work with new partners to help develop their ethos and raise standards;
- Academies will remain at the heart of the programme, with continued and new opportunities to develop them in schools and areas of real and historical underperformance and underachievement;
- independent schools will find it easier to enter the new system; and
- a national Schools Commissioner will drive change, matching schools and new partners, promoting the benefits of choice, access and diversity, and taking action where parental choices are being frustrated.

This will create a system of independent non-fee paying state schools, where schools can decide whether they wish to acquire a self-governing Trust or become a self-governing Foundation school. They will do so without unnecessary bureaucratic interference, in a system of fair admissions, fair funding and clear accountability.

...supported by improved choice and access for all...

School improvement has been helped not only by the reforms introduced since 1997, but also by published data and inspection reports, and the ability of many parents to vote with their feet by finding a better state school. There are those who argue that there is no demand for choice; but this ignores the reality that the vast majority of parents want a real choice of excellent schools.

The affluent can buy choice. We will ensure that choice is more widely available to all within an increasingly specialist system, not just to those who can pay for it. Key to choice is the provision of more good places and more good schools. This will be supported by:

- introducing better information for all parents when their child enters primary and secondary school, and dedicated choice advisers to help the least well-off parents to exercise their choices;

- extending the rights to free school transport to children from poorer families to their three nearest secondary schools within a six mile radius (when they are outside walking distance) and piloting transport to support such choices for all parents, which will help the environment as well as school choice; and
- making it easier for schools to introduce banding into their admissions policies, so that they can keep a proportion of places for students who live outside traditional school catchment areas within a genuinely comprehensive intake. Some specialist schools and Academies already successfully use this approach.

...with parents and pupils fully engaged in improving standards...

But parental engagement should not stop just with the choice of school. It should continue throughout a child's education. The education system has benefited enormously from the greater availability of pupil-level data, enabling teachers to see how much their pupils have improved and assessing their potential for further improvement in partnership with parents. Every parent should be able to access that information, so that they can work with teachers to enable their child to achieve their full potential.

We will ensure that:

- parents receive regular, meaningful reports during the school year about how their child is doing, with opportunities to discuss their child's progress with their teachers;
- parents have the chance to form Parent Councils to influence school decisions on issues such as school meals, uniform and discipline (such Councils will be required in Trust schools);
- parents have better local complaints procedures and access to a new national complaints service from Ofsted where local procedures have been exhausted;
- parents have access to more and clearer information about local schools, how to get involved and how to lever change; and
- parents are able to set up new schools supported by a dedicated capital pot.

...and education tailored to the individual...

We have dramatically expanded our knowledge about how different young people acquire knowledge and skills. Coupled with increased resources in our schools, a reformed school workforce and the greater availability of ICT, this gives teachers the opportunity to tailor lessons and support in schools to the individual needs of each pupil. So there will be:

- targeted one-to-one tuition in English and maths in the schools with the most underperforming pupils, to help those falling behind to catch up with their peers;

- more stretching lessons and opportunities for gifted and talented pupils;
- extended schools, offering many new opportunities to learn and develop beyond the formal school day;
- more grouping and setting by subject ability; and
- a national training programme to enable each school to have one leading professional to help develop tailored lessons.

We need strong measures to tackle failure and underperformance...

We have also learnt, from the action we have taken on failing and underperforming schools, that some schools need extra help to improve. So, we will introduce much tougher rules for failing schools:

- schools in Special Measures will be more quickly turned around; and where no progress is made after a year, a competition for new providers will be held. Schools that receive a notice to improve from Ofsted will enter Special Measures within a year, if progress is not made;
- competitions will be required for new schools and the replacement of failing schools, for the first time providing a straightforward route to bring new providers into the system. All new schools will be self-governing Foundation, voluntary aided, Trust schools or Academies; and
- parents will be able to urge Ofsted action or request new providers, and where there is strong demand or dissatisfaction with existing choices, local authorities will have to respond to their concerns.

...with a lighter touch for good schools...

We have also recognised that good schools should have greater freedoms, and that includes a lighter touch from inspectors and other agencies. Our New Relationship with Schools has already seen shorter, sharper Ofsted inspections; School Improvement Partners, usually other headteachers rather than local authority officers, offering external challenge; dedicated schools budgets; and teachers freed from bureaucracy to focus on teaching.

In the new system, we want:

- good schools to be able to expand or federate more easily with other schools to increase the supply of good places, improving choices for parents;
- the best specialist schools able to acquire extra specialisms and be funded for new responsibilities such as teacher training; and

- Ofsted to consult on an even lighter touch inspection system for high-performing schools.

...and better discipline to enable teachers to teach and pupils to learn...

Schools have increased access to learning mentors and on-site units to help them deal with disruptive pupils. There are more places, for longer hours, in off-site Pupil Referral Units. But many schools still face real discipline challenges because there is too little consistency in dealing with poor behaviour, particularly the low-level disruption to lessons that makes teaching and learning more difficult.

Moreover, some parents do not take their responsibilities seriously enough; and even question the teacher's right to discipline their child. Although attendance overall has improved, truancy still remains too high.

The Steer Group on School Behaviour and Discipline – a group of experienced headteachers and senior teachers – have examined these issues in detail. And we will implement their recommendations by:

- introducing a clear and unambiguous legal right for teachers to discipline pupils, backed by an expectation that every school has a clear set of rules and sanctions;
- extending parenting contracts and orders, so that schools can use them to force parents to take responsibility for their children's bad behaviour in school;
- requiring parents to take responsibility for excluded pupils in their first five days of a suspension (by ensuring they are properly supervised doing schoolwork at home) with fines for parents if excluded pupils are found unsupervised during school hours; and
- expecting headteachers to use their newly-devolved powers and funding collectively to develop on or off-site provision for suspensions longer than five days (instead of fifteen days at present) and insisting that all exclusions are properly recorded.

...and underpinned by a new role for local authorities.

To support all these reforms, the role of the local authority will change from provider to commissioner:

- as a part of their wider responsibilities for children and young people, local authorities will be expected to become the champions of pupils and parents, commissioning rather than providing education. They will have a new duty to promote choice, diversity and fair access to school places and school transport and new powers to act decisively where schools are failing and underperforming;

- it will be easier for new schools to be established, where there is parental demand;
- the School Organisation Committee will be abolished and decisions made by local authorities; disputes will continue to be resolved by the Schools Adjudicator;
- local authorities will work with the newly-created Schools Commissioner to ensure more choice, greater diversity and better access for disadvantaged groups to good schools in every area; and
- local authorities and local Learning and Skills Councils will work more closely together to ensure real choice and higher standards in the provision of education for 14-19 year-olds in schools and colleges.

And capital investment, through Building Schools for the Future and the Targeted Capital Funds, will have a crucial role in supporting reform.

These reforms will create and sustain irreversible change for the better in schools...

We have pushed higher standards from the centre: for those standards to be maintained and built-upon, they must now become self-sustaining within schools, driven by teachers and parents.

No longer will it be possible for any school to hide its low or mediocre standards; or to argue that parents should not play a fundamental role in their child's education, having both rights and responsibilities to do so.

No longer will it be acceptable for young people to be denied the opportunity to achieve their full potential, whatever their abilities and talents; or for artificial barriers to prevent choice and diversity from playing its full part in delivering a good education for every child.

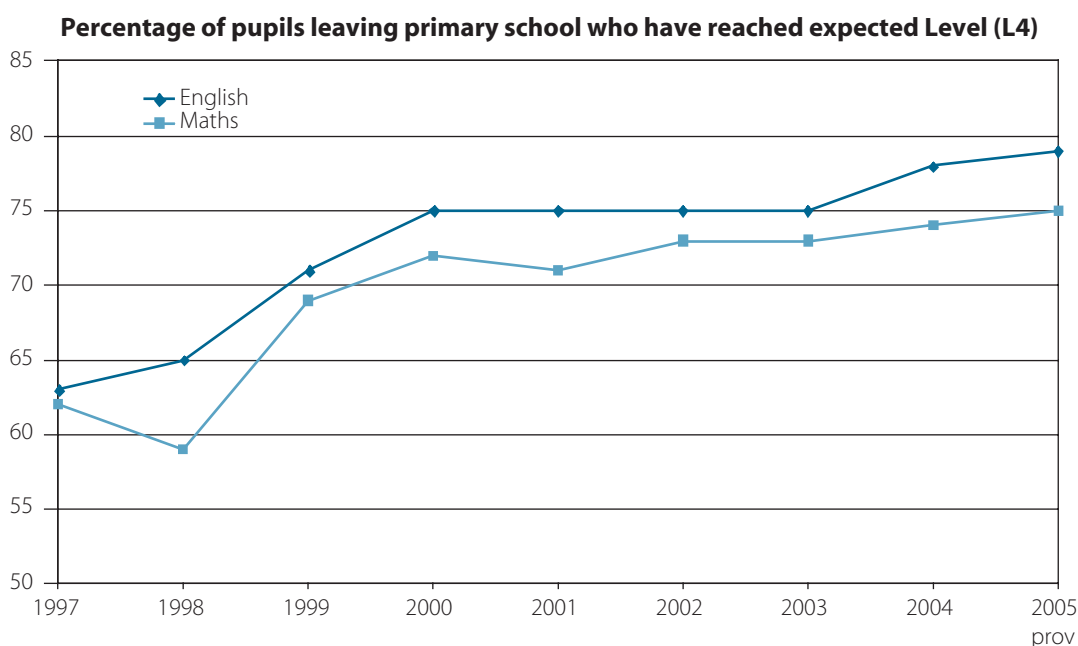
The Challenge to Reform

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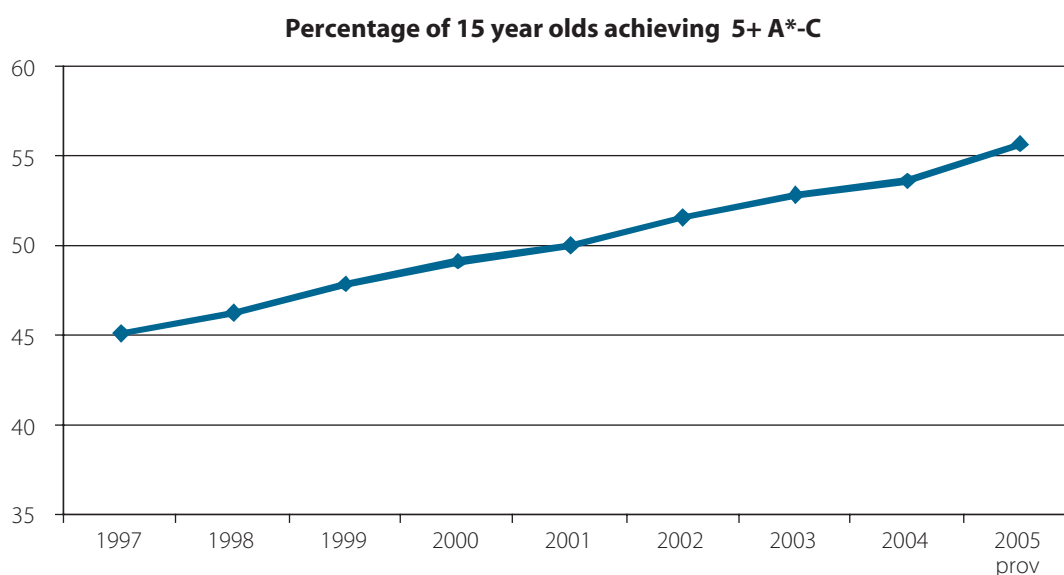
- 1.1** The education system in England is now widely recognised as a success. The first phase of reform launched in 1997 addressed the acute problems of the educational system that we inherited. It focused on getting the basics right and restoring the morale and pride of teachers. The literacy hours and daily maths lessons were designed to ensure that the basics were being properly taught in every primary school in the country. We took tough measures to tackle the appalling numbers of weak and failing schools. Improved pay and incentives halted the teacher recruitment crisis and stemmed the flow of teachers out of the profession.
- 1.2** With these improvements in place, the second phase of reform focussed on building a system of strong and self-confident schools able to sustain the improvement in standards that was underway and choosing to work with others to meet the needs of their pupils. Schools increasingly developed a powerful sense of their own ethos and mission as the vast majority of secondary schools achieved specialist status.
- 1.3** The Key Stage 3 Strategy improved the teaching and learning of 11-14 year-olds, so that the improvements in the basics in primary schools could be built upon in secondary education. And new resources and the benefits of school collaboration were brought to the most deprived areas of the country through programmes like Excellence in Cities and in London through the London Challenge.
- 1.4** Substantial and sustained investment has underpinned all these reforms. Spending on education in England has risen from £35 billion in 1997/98 to

£51 billion in 2004/05, allowing a real-terms increase in funding of 29% per pupil and significant investment in the workforce, in books and technology and in the fabric of the school estate. By 2007/08, at the end of the current spending review period, this figure will have risen to £60 billion in today's prices.

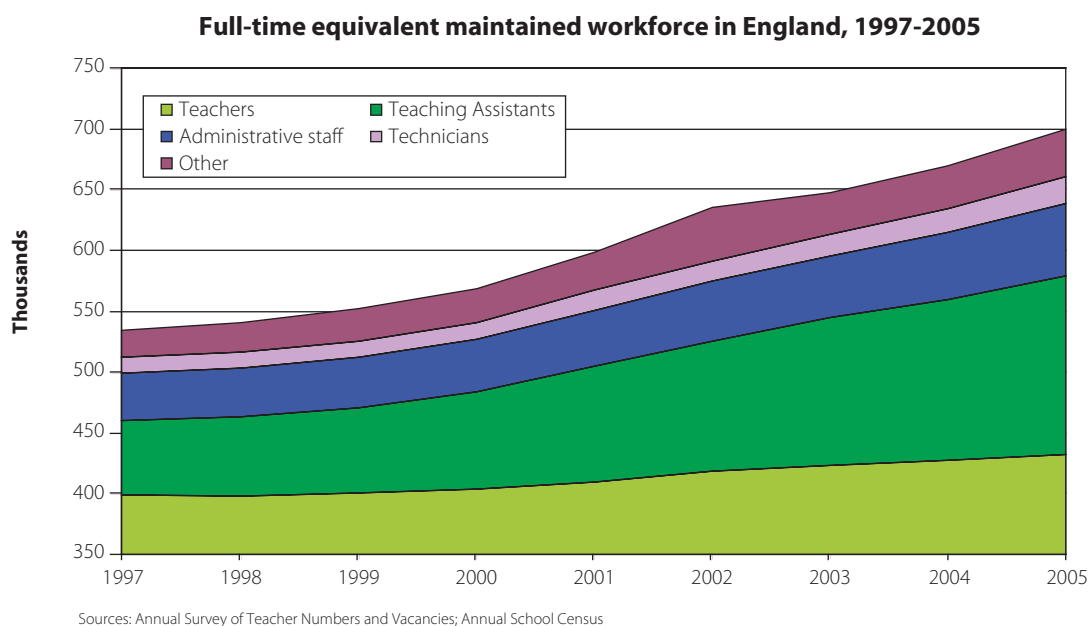
1.5 While change in a school system always takes time to feed through into outcomes, our reforms quickly began to have real impact, especially in the primary area. While in 1997 a third of children left primary school without the skills to make proper progress in the secondary curriculum, now 79% achieve these basic standards in English and 75% in maths. Teaching standards have been transformed by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and our primary schools offer a broad and rich curriculum.



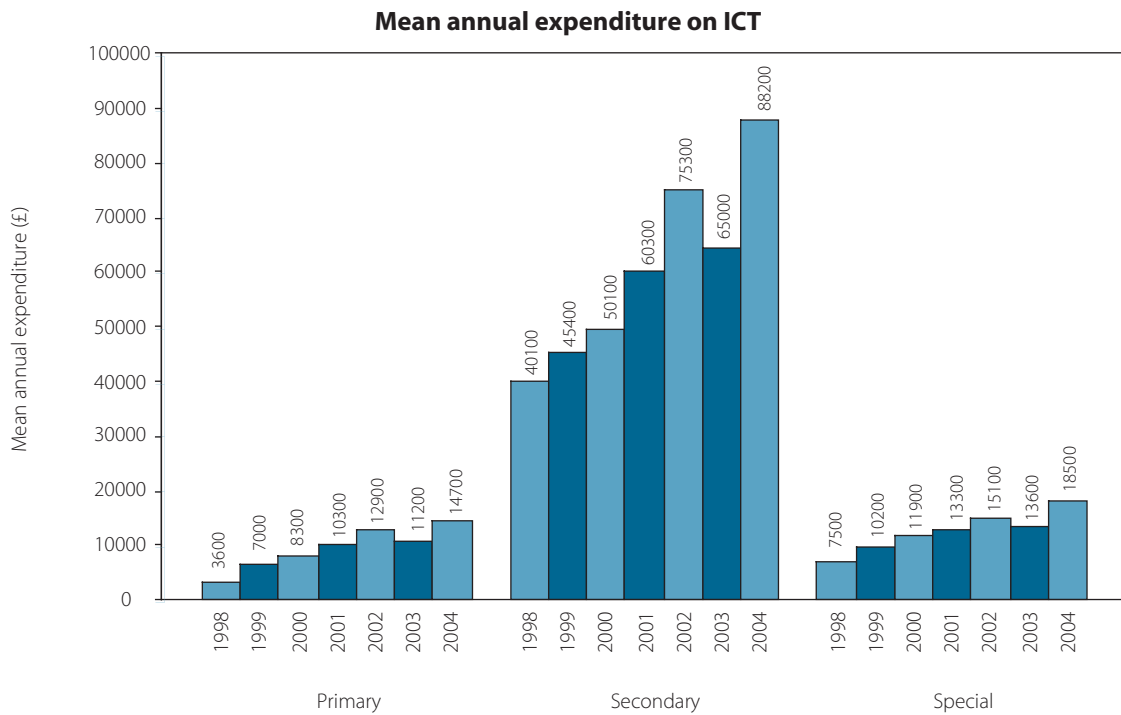
1.6 In secondary schools substantial progress has also been made, significantly accelerated by the spread of specialist schools, with more than 2,300 specialist schools now offering a distinctive curriculum and higher standards. Within two years, virtually every secondary school will have a specialism. 2005 saw the highest ever levels of achievement for 14 year-olds in the core subjects of English, maths, science and ICT. Also in 2005 schools secured a record rate of improvement in GCSE with some 56% of sixteen year-olds achieving 5 or more good GCSEs, up from 45% in 1997. This means that there are now 63,000 more young people each year well-placed to progress to further and higher education and to rewarding employment, than in 1997.



- 1.7** There have been very substantial reductions in the numbers of failing schools, the total falling from 515 in the summer of 1998 to 242 at the start of this term. Performance in inner cities and in our more deprived communities has improved more quickly than the national average partly due to targeted programmes of support such as Excellence in Cities. Over 50% of pupils in Inner London now get 5 or more good GCSEs, compared with a third in 1997 and 55% do so in Birmingham, compared with 35% in 1997.
- 1.8** Academies are now addressing entrenched school failure in our most deprived areas and are starting to transform educational opportunity for thousands of our young people who need it most. The first 27 Academies are up and running and we are already seeing significant improvements in results in these communities, with results in Academies rising more than three times as fast as the national average between 2004 and 2005.
- 1.9** Much of the improvement is a result of the hard work of our teachers, headteachers and support staff. Investment and reform of the workforce has resulted in a dramatic expansion of support staff and a dynamic generation of school leaders and there are now more teachers than at any time since 1981. We have done all this through a powerful and lasting partnership with headteacher, teacher and support staff unions and employers.
- 1.10** Teacher numbers have risen from 399,200 in January 1997 to 431,900 in January 2005, with much higher numbers of well-qualified graduates joining the profession through programmes such as Teach First. School support staff numbers have doubled since 1997, to 269,000, with more trained and qualified staff than ever before playing leading roles in the classroom.



- 1.11** The results of these striking improvements in teaching, leadership and investment are clear. Ofsted reports 75% of leadership and management as good or better, compared with 56% in 1997. The proportion of good or excellent teaching in primary schools has, according to Ofsted, risen from 45% in 1997 to 74% last year, and from 59% to 78% in secondary schools. Ofsted is clear we have the best generation of teachers ever.
- 1.12** Nationally, school attendance is at a record high with an average of 51,000 more pupils in school each day in 2004/05 compared with 1996/97. And the scourge of bullying is being vigorously tackled. But there remains more to do in tackling truancy effectively, particularly in those schools where this has been a longstanding problem.
- 1.13** Hundreds of school buildings around the country are either being completely replaced or completely modernised. Thousands of temporary classrooms have already been replaced. New roofs have been constructed and modern efficient boilers and lighting systems installed. New CCTV and security fencing have made schools safer.
- 1.14** Schools are increasingly throwing off their neglected image to become places of pride to communities, children and parents. Our Building Schools for the Future programme will rebuild and renew the entire secondary school estate and half of primary schools over the next 15 years.
- 1.15** And, as a result of our substantial investment in educational technology, England has become a world leader in ICT in this area. Schools have access to twice as many computers, as well as new interactive whiteboards and broadband technology, enabling ICT to become an increasingly integral part of teaching and learning. Spending on ICT has more than doubled since 1998.



The case for further reform

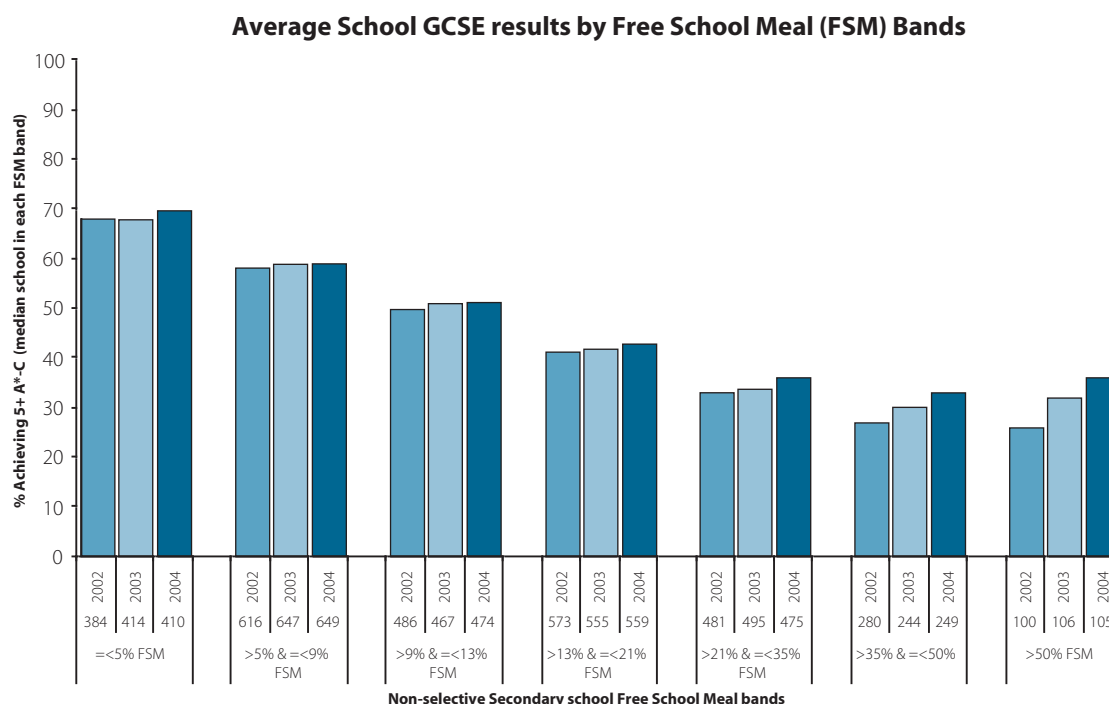
- 1.16** Our earlier phases of reform have achieved an enormous amount and we can all be proud of what headteachers, teachers, governors and support staff, working in partnership with government, have been able to achieve. But they also lay the basis for the next phase of reform which this White Paper heralds: our goal is no less than to transform our schools system by turning it from one focused on the success of institutions into one which is shaped and driven by the success, needs and aspirations of parents and pupils.
- 1.17** We must ensure that the needs of every pupil are catered for, that everywhere we are trying to give parents what they want for their children, and that we strive to get the most out of each and every child in each and every one of our communities.
- 1.18** To realise this, we need to change the system to ensure we have schools that parents are pleased to choose between; to raise standards for all – especially amongst the least advantaged; to help all parents engage with the education of their children and to create programmes of learning appropriate to the needs of each and every child.
- 1.19** We believe this requires schools to have the freedom to tailor the way they manage themselves, and the teaching and support they offer, to the needs and talents of individual pupils and their parents. Working within the principles of fair funding and fair admissions, schools will benefit from new energy in the system through a more diverse set of providers that allows more parents to choose the school that suits their child.

1.20 Despite the sharp improvement in the number of good schools, there are too many children being let down by schools that are coasting, rather than striving for excellence. There remain too many schools where poor behaviour by a small minority of children holds back their learning and that of others. So right across the country – in inner cities and rural areas, in both deprived and more affluent parts– we need to ensure that all schools are pushing themselves to improve throughout the school. And that parents can put pressure on to make that happen.

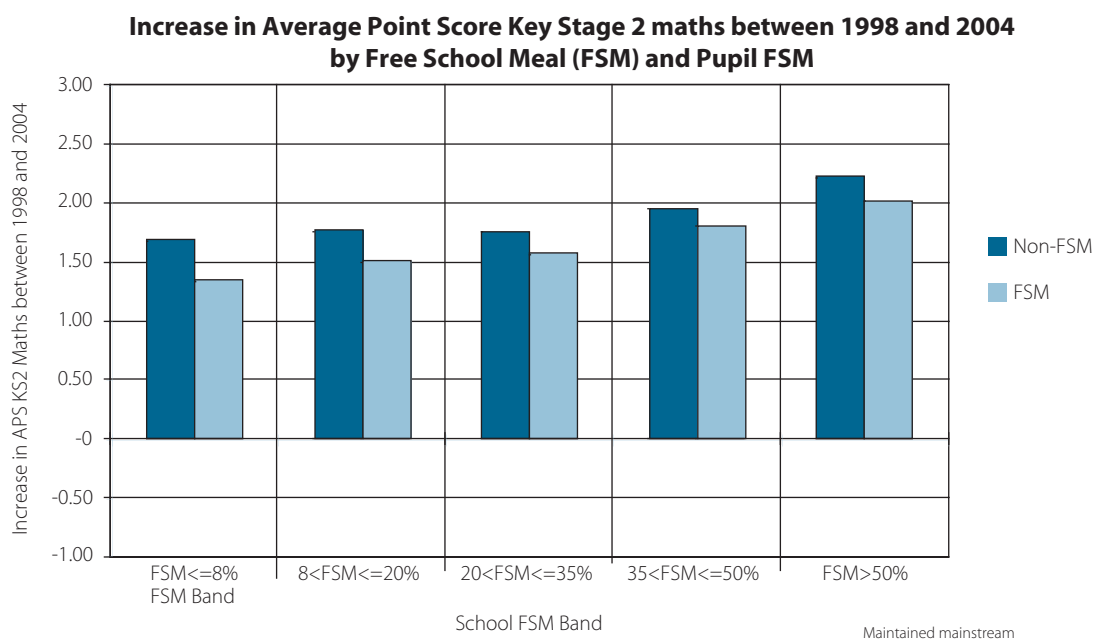
1.21 While many schools already work closely and successfully with their parents, too many parents presently feel disenfranchised by the schooling system. Many parents are not happy with the choices of schools for their child that is available to them. They have insufficient opportunity to engage with their child’s learning. They feel they have no influence when things go wrong.

1.22 While parents with confidence and resources can usually make the system work to their advantage, they shouldn’t have to struggle to achieve this, nor be faced with having to use their wealth or move house to benefit from real choice. And we must do much better for those from less well-off families, who do not have such confidence, resources or options. If we are to close the achievement gap, we need to involve these parents in schools and in their child’s learning and development. We need to break the link between poverty and low aspiration once and for all.

1.23 Some progress has been made in narrowing the gap at school level:



- 1.24** But, despite the progress that has been made, at every stage of our education system, parental background still plays too important a role in determining attainment and life chances: those from better-off families do better than those from less well-off families. Although our reforms to date have meant striking improvements for children from all backgrounds, the evidence suggests that those from more deprived backgrounds have not improved as much as others – the attainment gap for pupils has not yet narrowed.



- 1.25** These gaps matter because those who do not perform well in their early schooling tend to fall further behind, and the chances of breaking out of this cycle of under-achievement reduce with age.
- 1.26** Despite all the progress we have made in improving the basics, it is still the case that almost a quarter of children leave primary school without the necessary skills in literacy and numeracy to make a success of the secondary curriculum. Over 85% of those children who enter secondary school below this expected level, will then fail to get five or more good GCSEs at 16. It is in these underachieving groups that problems with attendance and behaviour are most pronounced.
- 1.27** Our participation rate for 17 year-olds in continued education and training is ranked 27th out of 30 industrialised countries. And these overall patterns mask the deeper challenges faced by particular groups. Children from particular black and minority ethnic groups, as well as many white working-class boys, those in public care and those with complex family lives – blighted by drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and criminal activity – all experience poorer outcomes throughout their educational careers.

1.28 Breaking cycles of underachievement, low aspiration and educational underperformance is vital for our economic future. We must ensure that all children have the same chance in life – with success based on hard work and merit, not wealth or family background. And we must make sure that every pupil – gifted and talented, struggling or just average – reaches the limits of their capability.

Our vision

1.29 The scale of progress since 1997 means we can now be very ambitious. And, given the scale of the global economic challenge we face, there is no other choice. We cannot content ourselves with a schools system which, while much improved, is not universally good; or a system that succeeds for most pupils, but not for all pupils. We need to create a schools system shaped by parents which delivers excellence and equity – developing the talents and potential of every child, regardless of their background. A system that can rapidly open to good new providers who can help make this happen. One that will empower parents and give schools the freedoms and incentives to focus on the individual needs of every child. To respond to parental demand, we need to expand choice, create real diversity of provision, and to ensure that the benefits of choice are available to all.

1.30 This can only be achieved in a system that is dynamic, with weak schools replaced quickly by new ones, coasting schools pushed to improve and opportunities for the best schools to expand and spread their ethos and success throughout the system. Obstacles to innovation must be removed and the system geared to encouraging change rather than shielding poor performance. We need a diversity of school providers and this in turn requires us to harness all the energy and talent that can benefit our school system, bringing in educational charities, faith groups, parents and community groups and other not-for-profit providers to run schools.

1.31 Specialist schools – with external sponsors, strong leadership and a clear sense of mission backed by challenging targets and ready to work with other schools – have consistently outperformed other comprehensives.

1.32 Academies are making real improvements in the outcomes for children in areas of the greatest challenge and disadvantage where underperformance and low expectations have been endemic.

1.33 High performance state schools – and there are five times as many as in 1997 – share these characteristics. But many would also like to go further: this means opening up the system as a whole to the opportunities presented by such innovation and dynamism.

- 1.34** A system designed around the needs of children will require us to deliver the radical vision we have set out for integrated services for children, families and young people that is already starting to benefit children in communities up and down the country. It needs the local authority which has an important insight into local knowledge – to play a role analogous to the one it now plays in early years provision: commissioning and championing the needs of parents and pupils, pushing for improvement rather than interfering in the day to day running of good schools which are empowered with light-touch inspection.
- 1.35** This will be a system driven by parents doing their best for their children. Where schools and professionals feel themselves accountable as much to parents as to some distant centre. It will mean responding to and encouraging high parental expectations. If local parents demand better performance from their local school, improvement there should be. If local choice is inadequate and parents want more options, then a wider range of good quality alternatives must be made available. If parents want a school to expand to meet demand, it should be allowed to do so quickly and easily. If parents want a new provider to give their school clearer direction and ethos, that should be simple too. And if parents want to open a school, then it should be the job of the local authority to help them make this happen.
- 1.36** We are also determined to ensure the system is shaped round the needs and aptitudes of the pupil. Local authorities are already forming Children’s Trusts, bringing greater coherence to the provision of children’s services. Children’s Trusts will be able to respond more quickly to the needs of parents and children. Beyond schools they are delivering on an ambitious agenda to improve access to child care and youth facilities. But Children’s Trusts, working alongside the police, health services and the voluntary agencies, will also be able to work better with schools.
- 1.37** Schools will be able to draw on improved, more co-ordinated and increasingly tailored services to meet the needs of individual pupils. Many schools are already realising the benefits of this. This is because many schools realise that effective support to respond to children’s individual needs outside the classroom will help unlock potential and aspiration inside it.
- 1.38** A more personalised system is not just about wider support. At the heart of a system designed around the needs of children must be tailored learning in schools. We are determined to make rapid progress on our plans for the far-reaching reform of the education of young people aged 14-19. We must offer them a radical extension in curriculum choice and in doing so boost attainment and staying-on rates.
- 1.39** But we must go further. This means that children who have fallen behind should receive catch-up classes. Those with special talents should be stretched. Those wanting to take a specialist course at another school or college should be

allowed to do so. Those with particular interests should be encouraged to develop them not least through after-school clubs. And all pupils should benefit from a flexible and engaging curriculum and be able to take exams when they are ready rather than at a fixed age.

1.40 These reforms are ambitious but they are the crucial next step in transforming our education system into one that can serve us well in the 21st century.

The challenges are great:

- to put in place a system designed around the needs of parents in which every school has the freedoms and flexibilities it needs to be responsive;
- to create the conditions where every parent has the choice of an excellent school;
- to ensure that there are more good schools and make coasting and underperforming schools a thing of the past;
- to personalise education for every child so that all those who fall behind get extra support to help them catch-up, those with a real talent are stretched and all children are encouraged to develop their aptitudes and interests;
- to ensure that every parent is fully engaged with their child's learning and is treated as a full partner in the education service;
- to ensure that no child has their education disrupted as a result of the poor behaviour of others; and
- to ensure we have a diverse and high-quality school workforce, which is well-led and able to support the learning needs and well-being of every child.

1.41 We are confident that the school system will rise to these challenges.

A School System Shaped by Parents

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Summary:

To create a school system shaped by parents we will:

- enable every school to become a self-governing Trust school, with the benefit of external drive and new freedoms, mirroring the successful experience of Academies;
- continue to promote Academies as a key part of our system, with at least 200 established or in the pipeline by 2010, tackling the acute challenges in areas of real and historical underperformance;
- create a new Office of the Schools Commissioner to promote the development of Trusts and Trust schools;
- enable parents to demand new schools and new provision, backed by a dedicated stream of capital funding;
- encourage existing schools to expand and federate to meet demand; and make it easier for independent schools to enter the state system;
- create new vocational provision for 14-19 year olds;
- give the weakest schools a year to improve or face closure, with a stronger role for local authorities in tackling failure and underperformance; and
- boost the autonomy and performance of all schools with less bureaucracy and lighter touch inspection for high performing schools.

2.1 We are determined to transform our school system into one that responds better to the needs and aspirations of parents. Every parent should be confident that the system is delivering for their child. Every community should be confident that all parents can choose an excellent school. And the nation needs to ensure that areas of underperformance which undermine our efforts to improve social mobility are tackled vigorously.

2.2 To create real choice and diversity for parents, we need:

- all schools to have the freedom to shape their own destiny in the interest of parents and children;
- good schools to be able to expand or take over other schools to spread their influence and benefit more parents;
- all schools to be good schools – and constantly striving to be better;
- an easy route through which parents can generate change; and
- new providers rooted in their community.

Context

2.3 Much has changed in our education system over recent years:

- Specialist schools have drawn enormous energy, drive and expertise from the contribution of their sponsors in developing their individual character and ethos. The benefits have been clear in the results they have achieved and in their popularity with parents.
- We have learnt from Academies that in areas of entrenched underperformance, the combination of real freedoms, fresh buildings, focused governance, external drive, technology and independence can bring fast results. Over the next few years Academies will make an increasingly important contribution to the reformed and more flexible school system that we want to create.
- Our reforms of early years provision and Sure Start are showing the importance of involving parents fully in services that support their child's development. Children's Trusts are showing how local integration of services led by a strong commissioner can increase diversity and drive up standards.

2.4 The challenge we now face is to spread these lessons through the whole school system in a way that works for parents and children in all communities across the country.

2.5 At the heart of this new vision are Trust schools. Trusts will harness the external support and a success culture, bringing innovative and stronger leadership to the

school, improving standards and extending choice. We will encourage all primary and secondary schools to be self-governing and to acquire a Trust.

- 2.6** We need to establish dynamic and responsive local leadership for the new school system. Therefore, we will clarify the role of local authorities as the champions of parents and as the commissioners of school places (see Chapter 9). We will strengthen the role of parents to shape the local school system. This approach will ensure a seamless connection between schools and local services for children and young people.

Self-governing Trust schools

- 2.7** To provide a genuinely personalised education, every school needs to be free to develop a distinctive ethos and to shape its curriculum, organisation and use of resources. These decisions cannot be prescribed uniformly. We need schools working with parents, children and local communities to drive reform, not central or local Government.
- 2.8** Headteachers and governing bodies are currently responsible for the conduct of their school, and are free to enter into federations with other schools. There are also freedoms to innovate in the National Curriculum, as well as flexibilities within the national system of determining teachers' pay.
- 2.9** Self-governing (Foundation) schools also control their assets, employ their own staff and set their own admissions criteria, within the law and taking full account of the Admissions Code of Practice. We believe all schools should be able to have these freedoms. We have already created a fast-track so that the governing body of a secondary school, after consulting its parents, can become a self-governing (Foundation) school by a simple majority vote. We will now extend this fast-track to primary schools.
- 2.10** To spread innovation and diversity across the whole school system, we will promote the establishment of self-governing Trust schools.
- 2.11** Trusts will be not-for-profit organisations, able to appoint governors to the school, including – where the Trust wishes – the majority of the governing body, as in existing voluntary aided schools. The governing body, which can be as small as 11 members, will also include elected parents, staff governors and representatives from the local authority and the local community. Where a Trust appoints the majority of the governors, it will be required to establish a Parents' Council to ensure that parents have a strong voice in decisions about the way the school is run (see Chapter 5).
- 2.12** The governing body of any existing primary or secondary school will be able to create its own Trust, or link its school with an existing Trust. Trust status for special schools raises a number of complex issues and we will continue to work with schools to decide the best way forward.

- 2.13** Acquiring a Trust will be a straightforward process. The governing body would first consult with parents to ensure support for the idea and for the particular Trust it proposes to acquire. They would then publish formal proposals. Schools that acquire faith-based Trusts would not automatically become faith schools – that would require a separate statutory process.
- 2.14** We are confident that parents will welcome proposals for schools to acquire Trusts which are focused on driving up standards and creating new opportunities for children. However, the local authority can refer the governing body's decision to the Schools Adjudicator for determination, if it is clear that the decision has failed to take proper account of the views of the majority of parents, or if there are serious concerns about the impact of the acquisition of the Trust on school standards.
- 2.15** We have already passed legislation to require all new or replacement secondary schools – to be subject to local authority competitions – whether arising as a result of reorganisations, school failure, or demographic change (see Chapter 9). We will now extend this legislation to primary schools. All new or replacement schools will be self-governing (Foundation), Trust, voluntary aided or – where appropriate – Academies.
- 2.16** As well as the drive and direction brought to the school by Trust-appointed governors, Trust schools will have the freedoms and flexibilities that self-governing (Foundation) schools currently enjoy. They will employ their own staff, control their own assets and set their own admissions arrangements. Trusts will also be able to apply to the Secretary of State for additional flexibilities – any granted in this way will apply across all of the schools supported by the Trust. This could include additional curriculum flexibilities and freedoms over pay and conditions, where the Trust can demonstrate that these will raise standards.
- 2.17** Trusts will enable groups of schools to operate with a common ethos and a shared identity. Trusts associated with more than one school will be able to drive innovation and best practice rapidly across a number of schools, for example by developing a distinctive approach to the curriculum and teaching. This will lead to a wider range of approaches, more innovation and greater choice for parents.

The Mercers' Company – sharing expertise across schools

In 2005 every student achieved at least 10 GCSEs at grades A*-C at Thomas Telford School, where the two major sponsors (the Mercers' Company and Tarmac plc) form the majority of the governing body. The Mercers' Company and Thomas Telford have in turn sponsored two Academies in the West Midlands and apply a common educational philosophy to them, including parents' 'Advisory Councils'. These provide advice and raise issues with the headteacher, help with the development of school policies on matters such as behaviour and health and sex education, and encourage parents to make use of the school's systems.

Outreach and support work is undertaken with other local schools in the area, both through partnership agreements and a range of projects.

A group of sixteen schools and colleges (independent, maintained, Academies and sixth form colleges) are closely associated with the Mercers' Company. At some of the schools the Company appoints the whole governing body, and at others it has a right to representation, or is invited to appoint governors.

Governors are able to draw on a wide range of expertise and experience of those in different education sectors; they shape the ethos and promote the success of the schools they support and bring ideas, energy and commitment to them.

- 2.18** Trusts will also secure efficiencies, for example in administration, and enable successful approaches to school management to be adopted easily elsewhere. They will be an engine for real collaboration between schools, including between secondary schools and their feeder primaries. Where Trusts are linked to larger organisations, they could also give schools access to facilities and management expertise that might not be available within the local community.
- 2.19** There are a wide range of organisations who may wish to act to establish Trusts in partnership with schools. Trusts may be formed by neighbourhood groups or by local parents with a keen interest in the success of the school – such as the parents' group working to establish a new school in Lambeth. Educational and other charities will also wish to be involved, as in the Academies programme. We would like to see universities and independent schools setting up Trusts. Some schools may wish to form their own bespoke Trusts. We will work with potential Trusts and interested schools over the next year to develop pathfinder projects.
- 2.20** We will encourage voluntary controlled schools – most of which are Church of England primary schools – to become Trust schools. This will, for the first time, enable their existing Trusts to appoint the majority of the governing body – an advantage currently enjoyed by voluntary aided schools. We will also explore

with existing voluntary aided schools whether they would also like to move to Trust status.

The Schools Commissioner

- 2.21** We will establish a new Office of the Schools Commissioner to act as a national champion for the development of Trust schools and to work with potential Trusts. The Schools Commissioner will also support and secure the significant changes in the way local authorities commission schools for their communities.
- 2.22** The Commissioner will work with both national organisations and local community and parent organisations, particularly those in disadvantaged areas, spreading knowledge of what works and stimulating innovation. The Commissioner will provide a troubleshooting service and model documentation to enable potential Trusts to put forward proposals quickly and with minimum bureaucracy.
- 2.23** The Schools Commissioner will link local authorities to Trusts, identifying opportunities for existing successful Trusts to form partnerships with more schools, and supporting independent schools wishing to join the maintained sector. In order to do this, the Commissioner will hold details of organisations willing and able to establish Trusts for schools.
- 2.24** The Commissioner will also be able to challenge local authorities that fail to exercise their new duties adequately, including in relation to school expansion and sixth form provision. The Commissioner will advise the Secretary of State on local authorities' plans for major capital investment, challenge local authorities to work together to maximise choice, diversity and fair access, and will liaise with local authorities to identify potential Academy projects.
- 2.25** The Commissioner will also monitor key local indicators of parental satisfaction and rising school standards, and publish an Annual Report. Where progress is proving unsatisfactory or where a local authority fails in its extended duty to promote choice, diversity and fair access and to respond to parents, the Schools Commissioner will advise the Secretary of State on the exercise of her powers of intervention.

Safeguards

- 2.26** Trust schools will be, in effect, independent state schools, but will remain part of the local authority family of schools. The National Curriculum, the assessment regime and the usual provisions on teachers' pay will apply, except where the Trust has agreed flexibilities (as above). Trust schools will be funded in exactly the same way as other local schools. They will be subject to the Code of Practice on admissions and to all of the accountability mechanisms that apply to state schools.

- 2.27** We expect Trust schools to raise standards and to create more diversity. However, should a Trust school be judged inadequate by Ofsted, the local authority will have the same range of intervention powers as with any other failing or underperforming school. In the case of severe failure, the local authority will – as with any other school – be able to propose its closure and to hold a competition for a new school to be established. In such circumstances, the assets of the school would revert to the local authority, except where they were originally provided by the Trust.
- 2.28** All Trusts which hold land and appoint Governors to schools must be charities and will be regulated by the Charity Commission. They will be required to use any income that they receive or generate for their charitable purposes. Trusts cannot receive any income from the schools' budget. Trusts will also be under a duty to promote community cohesion and good race relations. We are considering what role the Schools Commissioner could play here and whether further safeguards are needed to prevent the entry of inappropriate Trusts.

Academies

- 2.29** The advent of Trust schools marks a decisive step in enabling all schools to access the freedoms and flexibilities that have underpinned our Academies programme.
- 2.30** Academies will continue to play a vital role in the system. 27 Academies are now open: by 2010, at least 200 will be open or in the pipeline in areas of traditionally low standards – each a new school with dedicated capital and sponsorship. Academies can also be established through Building Schools for the Future capital investment proposals and school competitions. This could result from population growth, school reorganisations or the replacement of a failing school. The Secretary of State will consider all such proposals, with priority given to projects with radical and innovative approaches to tackling educational disadvantage. Independent schools joining the maintained sector may also be eligible for Academy status (see below). The new Schools Commissioner will liaise with local authorities to identify potential Academy projects.

Parental demand for new schools

- 2.31** The development of Trust schools will drive improvement and diversity throughout the system. But, in some places, parents may feel that what is needed is an entirely new school or new provision within an existing school. We want to make it easier for them to express their views and to trigger action.
- 2.32** We will give parents the right to ask for a new primary or secondary school. They may do so in order to improve standards of local education, to meet a lack of faith provision, to tackle entrenched inequalities or to promote innovative teaching methods. Local authorities will be under a duty to be responsive to

parental interests. Where these demands have support, they will be expected to provide dedicated consultancy support to help parents develop a concrete proposal. The Schools Commissioner will also be able to provide information on the approaches taken in other localities.

Elmcourt School

In September 2007 a new secondary school set up by a group of 105 parents will open in West Norwood.

The proposals were agreed in July 2005, and the parents are now ready to start recruiting a Head and senior staff. They are working closely with the local authority and the DfES.

The Elmcourt parents came together when Lambeth conducted a public consultation inviting parents to come forward as parent promoters to open a new school in West Norwood. Motivated by the need for a school that would serve their children and the local community, the parents developed their own proposals and drove them forward through consultation and committees, engaging local residents and representatives as well as national politicians. They are now beginning work with Lambeth to design and build the new school buildings at the five acre site. Their spokesman said:

“Among the parents at 13 feeder primary schools, you’re going to find enough parents with the right skills to organise and manage such a big project, but actually what is most important is the energy, the freshness and the commitment that we’ve brought.”

- 2.33** The local authority will decide whether the proposal to establish a new school should be taken forward, or whether the demands can be better met in other ways. Parents will have the right of appeal to the Schools Adjudicator if their proposals are rejected.
- 2.34** Any capital funding needed for new schools will usually be provided by existing capital programmes such as Building Schools for the Future, the Targeted Capital Fund and the formula funding that local authorities receive. To reduce costs, we would also expect local authorities to consider whether a new school could be housed on an existing site, possibly shared with an existing school or using, in the short term, high quality temporary buildings. We expect technology requirements to be defined and met in parallel with school design and build.
- 2.35** However, there will be cases where capital is not available. We will establish a dedicated capital fund that will support strong and innovative proposals that come from parents. Local authorities will normally be expected to provide a site for successful proposals.

- 2.36** Where a new school is established as a result of parental demand, or an existing school chooses to expand, the result may be that there are more surplus places. Local authorities will need to move quickly to close schools that are failing to attract sufficient pupils and to consider whether the capital assets released could be used to inject new dynamism into the system.

Independent schools joining the state system

- 2.37** In the past, parents' demands for different types of schools have often led to the creation of independent schools. A number of these schools would prefer to be accessible to all parents, not just those who can afford to pay. We will make it easier for such independent schools to enter the maintained sector. This will extend parental choice and increase the number of places available at good state schools. We have already funded the Association of Muslim Schools to provide consultancy support to some independent Muslim schools interested in joining the maintained sector.
- 2.38** Such schools will, of course, not be able to charge fees. They will also have to meet the essential requirements of the maintained system, including the teaching of a full curriculum, the assessment and accountability regimes, and a fair admissions policy.

14 – 19 Opportunities

- 2.39** Delivering the plans set out in our White Paper *14-19 Education and Skills* requires more vocational provision – available to young people through both schools and colleges. This will be provided by schools taking on an additional specialism in a vocational area, as well as by Centres of Vocational Excellence, the wider College sector and work-based learning providers.
- 2.40** We will make it easier for secondary schools to open a sixth form. There will be a presumption that proposals from high performing specialist schools to add a sixth form will be approved. We are making funds available through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to enable such schools to add the buildings they need, with priority given to those which are making a significant contribution to the delivery of the new 14-19 curriculum and qualifications opportunities.
- 2.41** Where local authorities run competitions, we will expect them to specify, having considered the gaps in quality as well as quantity of provision available, what contribution the new school should make to the delivery of the 14-19 reforms. We will also introduce competitions for new 16-19 provision, to encourage high quality, innovative proposals. As with school competitions, these will include a clear specification of the contribution that new provision will be expected to make to the 14-19 reforms. This may include a role in the vocational education of 14-16 year-olds in local schools. We will expect new vocational providers to offer the new specialised Diplomas, including to 14-16 year-olds at other local schools.

Expansion and federation

- 2.42** Often parents are less interested in a brand new school for their child than in having the opportunity to get their child into an existing good school.
- 2.43** Schools that are popular with local parents, but are oversubscribed, should have an easy route to expansion. There is already a strong presumption that proposals for expansion will be approved; and schools have a right of appeal to the Schools Adjudicator if they are turned down. We also provide capital funding to popular and successful non-selective secondary schools that wish to expand, and we will consider whether to extend this to primary schools as part of the new primary capital programme (see Chapter 9). We will actively encourage schools to take up these incentives, subject to available resources.
- 2.44** We will also encourage schools and admissions authorities to consider smaller scale expansions. Foundation and voluntary aided schools already have the right to do this through the admissions process, provided that in primary schools the expansion would not contravene the infant class size pledge. Trust schools will also have this right.

The expansion of Parrenthorn High School

Parrenthorn High School is so popular with parents that they are creating 135 more places over the next five years.

For several years now, the school has been heavily oversubscribed, and each year the school has had to turn away pupils wanting to come to the school. In 2003, the school's governing body discussed the possibility of expansion with their local authority, and in September 2005 they added their first extra intake of 27 new places in year 7.

Extra funding has helped provide three new classrooms, equipped with a full range of ICT including interactive whiteboards and wireless internet facilities. The school predicts that greater economies of scale will enable them to spend more money on staffing and expanding the curriculum. The headteacher says, "We're responding to local demand, and the school is going to keep on succeeding."

- 2.45** Expansion will not be the answer for every good school. The size of the school and the nature of the site may prevent expansion. Parents at the school may feel that expansion could undermine its ethos. In these cases, we want schools to form joint ventures or merge with another school – so that good management practice and approaches can be spread across the system.

2.46 Schools may come together to share best practice, pool resources and offer a wider range of opportunities to both children and staff. Groups of schools which share the same Trust will wish to share good practice. In addition, formal federations where schools share a single governing body can involve all types of schools, across all age ranges. For example:

- a federation of a secondary school with its feeder primary schools would allow specialist staff for science and music to work in the primary schools, and use primary expertise to strengthen catch-up programmes in the secondary school;
- special schools could similarly strengthen their role at the heart of the system by working closely with one or more mainstream schools, offering pupils a pattern of provision tailored to their needs and breaking down unhelpful barriers between special and mainstream education; and
- a group of primary schools might federate to extend the best practice of the most successful schools, to deliver specialist or extended services and to improve efficiency.

2.47 Federations and other forms of collaboration will be particularly important in the delivery of our 14-19 and extended school reforms. We expect schools increasingly to choose to work together with other schools, including independent schools, colleges and services to deliver the full range of opportunities which children and young people should be able to access. In the primary phase, increased collaboration will be essential if schools are to meet the challenge of falling rolls. At secondary level, we have set a clear expectation that by 2007 all secondary schools will form or join a partnership to improve the management of bad behaviour and persistent truancy and will have admissions protocols for 'hard to place' pupils.

The West Sussex Federation

Attendance and pupil performance has risen at both Littlegreen and St. Anthony's special schools since they formed a federation with a joint governing body.

Littlegreen has improved particularly. In 2002/03, 7% of lessons were regarded as unsatisfactory, in 2005, none of them were. Chichester High School for Boys, an associate member of the federation, has already benefited from membership of the federation. It set very challenging targets to reduce fixed term exclusions and as a result of the support from the other schools in the federation has seen a 10 % reduction in fixed term exclusions.

St. Anthony's caters for children with a wide range of learning difficulties and autism, while Littlegreen caters for 42 boys with severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, the majority of whom have been excluded from other schools. The leadership teams of both the special schools have been restructured. There is one 'executive' headteacher, an 'operational' head and a head of teaching and learning in both schools. Already the level and depth of the collaboration and partnership between the schools has exceeded anything the schools have experienced before.

The support from all three schools has allowed staff to share skills, and they have been involved in practical activities such as moderating pupil's work across the curriculum, sharing in training sessions and jointly supporting very difficult to place pupils across all three schools. They have also invested in an ICT infrastructure to allow the effective communication and sharing of information, and teaching materials.

2.48 We will support greater collaboration through:

- The development of Education Improvement Partnerships which provide a framework for schools and others to work together. We expect established school partnerships, for example those in Excellence in Cities and Leadership Incentive Grant areas, to take full advantage of these new arrangements.
- The use of our capital investment programmes, including the new primary programme, all of which will be geared to supporting greater joint working between schools.
- The expectation that all secondary schools will form or join partnerships with other schools to improve behaviour, reduce persistent truancy and provide alternative education for excluded pupils (see Chapter 7).

- The Specialist Schools programme, which requires schools to demonstrate how they will use their expertise for the benefit of other schools and the wider community. We will offer at least 500 of our most successful specialist schools the opportunity to take on a more significant role leading the local system.
- The development of Primary Strategy Learning Networks, where a group of primary schools come together to improve teaching and learning, especially in English and maths.
- Local partnership arrangements set up to deliver 14-19 reform and provide information, advice and guidance to young people.

Tackling school failure

- 2.49** The greatest denial of parental choice is when the schools that are on offer are simply not good enough. We want every school to be a good school: parents should expect no less.
- 2.50** There has been a steady increase in the number of good and excellent schools. But there are some communities – often in our most disadvantaged areas – where school standards are poor.
- 2.51** That is why we must not tolerate school failure. Underperformance must be remedied swiftly and decisively. This is already happening where local authorities have effective systems for monitoring school performance and take quick action to address concerns. However, there are still too many areas where vulnerable schools are not identified early enough, and the process of agreeing and putting into effect a recovery plan for the school is stalled by indecision and lack of agreement.
- 2.52** The new Ofsted inspection regime will bring greater rigour to the system, with schools taking more responsibility for their own self-evaluation. Inspections will be more frequent, shorter and sharper, with minimal advance notice. Schools will be inspected once every three years (rather than every six) and will be graded as ‘outstanding’, ‘good’, ‘satisfactory’ or ‘inadequate’. The criteria that will underpin these judgements will raise the bar on underperformance. ‘Satisfactory’ will be a demanding standard, and will not be awarded where there are any aspects of unsatisfactory performance at a school.
- 2.53** Inadequate schools will receive an Improvement Notice or, in cases of severe problems, be placed in Special Measures. We therefore propose to ensure that local authorities, as the champions of local parents and pupils, tackle these situations urgently and swiftly. We propose to extend the range of intervention powers available to local authorities to tackle these situations. We will:

- place a duty on local authorities to consider the full range of their powers immediately on receipt of an adverse Ofsted report; and
- remove the outdated Code of Practice on local authority and school relations to enable more decisive intervention, and to take account of the introduction of School Improvement Partners (SIPs) through the New Relationship with Schools (see below).

2.54 The actions we expect local authorities to consider, and which must be reflected in their action plan, are:

- the immediate change of head teacher and/or members of the school management team;
- suspension of the delegation of the school's budget to enable the local authority to put the necessary improvement measures in place;
- appointing additional governors;
- replacing the governing body with an Interim Executive Board;
- appointing a partner to help the weak school (see below). This may involve the voluntary collaboration of a successful school, or a formal federation; and
- in certain cases, immediate closure of the school followed by a school competition.

2.55 Where a school is placed in Special Measures, action must be fast and decisive. A school in Special Measures will have one year only to demonstrate real progress. If it fails, the presumption will be that the school will be closed if necessary using the Secretary of State's reserve powers, with a replacement school or Academy normally opened on the same site. Similarly, a school issued with an Improvement Notice will have one year to demonstrate progress. If it has not done so, it will be placed in Special Measures.

2.56 There are a disproportionate number of special schools catering for children with behavioural, emotional and social disorders (BESD) which are failing. This is clearly unacceptable. Local authorities will have the same powers of intervention in these schools as they do for all others. However, they should ensure that there are sufficient places for children with BESD before closing such schools.

2.57 We will give the local authority a new power – where a school is failing or at risk of failure – to require the school to join a federation or enter other collaborative arrangements. We will also revise the process whereby local authorities can issue warning notices to schools where there are real concerns about performance or management. At present, this process is bureaucratic and time-consuming. We will make it quicker and simpler, and extend its application to coasting schools, as well as those with outright poor standards.

The School Improvement Partnership Board at George Salter High School and Shireland Language College

George Salter High School in Sandwell was in serious decline, with only 16% of pupils leaving with 5 A*-C grade GCSEs. The school has made considerable progress since federating with a nearby school and reports that over two years its performance has almost trebled to 55%.

In 2003, a School Improvement Partnership Board was set up to help tackle the school's decline through a tailored package of support and close collaboration with Shireland, a successful neighbouring school. Mark Grundy, the headteacher of Shireland, took over the strategic running of both schools and devised the recovery plan for George Salter.

- 2.58** Warning notices will help authorities and schools address weaknesses at an earlier stage and, in some cases, prevent formal school failure. Every school will be expected to tackle significant underperformance, even if it affects only a minority of its pupils. If it does not, it may find it receives a more formal challenge, which would, if unheeded, trigger the range of local authority interventions for such schools.
- 2.59** When a school is judged as inadequate by Ofsted, parents must be actively involved in shaping the way forward. The local authority will be under a new duty to ensure effective communication with parents. They may appoint a suitably experienced person to act as a 'Parents' Champion' – to help parents understand the nature of the problems at their school and the options available to address them – and then to represent their interests and help them contribute to planning the future of their children's education.

Tackling coasting schools and coasting departments

- 2.60** For the great majority of schools, the challenge is to secure continuous improvement – moving from satisfactory to good, and then from good to excellent. No parent should feel that their child is at a school that is content merely to remain satisfactory.
- 2.61** We are introducing a new system of support, challenge and accountability – known as the New Relationship with Schools. It emphasises each school's responsibility to manage its own improvement; it is designed to reduce bureaucracy and streamline working arrangements, releasing more energy to focus on local priorities. The New Relationship will highlight schools, and departments within schools, which should be doing much better given the prior attainment of their intake. It will bear down on those schools that do not recognise their weaknesses.

2.62 Schools will be held to account locally and supported by a single School Improvement Partner (SIP) – a nationally accredited expert, usually a headteacher, working for the local authority. All secondary schools will have a SIP by Autumn 2006. The New Relationship involves:

- stronger self-evaluation, drawing on the excellent electronic tools and data now available to all schools on individual pupil performance; and
- peer challenge to the school through the SIP, who will report to the governing body each year on the school's performance and contribute to the performance assessment of the headteacher. The SIP will also assist the school in identifying appropriate sources of support – for example, expertise in a vocational subject, extra training for catch-up and stretch or specialised tuition in music.

2.63 School Improvement Partners will be equipped with new data that will pinpoint pupils or groups of pupils (for example those from a particular minority ethnic group or middle ability boys) who are making less than expected progress, either across the board or in particular subject areas. They will then work with their schools, assisting them to put in place plans for improvement.

2.64 These policies have already been trialled successfully and welcomed by schools. All primary and secondary schools will be allocated a School Improvement Partner, phased in nationally from this year. We want to see continuous improvement in special schools too. For this reason, we expect special schools to participate fully in the New Relationship with Schools. We are currently trialling how they might best benefit from the support of a School Improvement Partner.

2.65 Ofsted will also consult on moving to a more proportionate inspection system from September 2006. High-performing schools might receive minimal inspection, while under-performing schools could be inspected more frequently, with a focus on those issues of concern in the school.

Raising attainment at Key Stage 3

West Sussex local authority involved ten secondary schools in the New Relationship with Schools trials and the schools have already started to reap the benefits.

- At **Davison High School**, the School Improvement Partner and headteacher analysed a range of data closely, and identified significant underachievement in science. A package of support was agreed with the school that involved a specific role for the Local Authority Science Adviser. Paired lesson observations, advice and very close monitoring led to results in science improving by 8% at Level 5 and 6% at Level 6. Results in English and maths also rose by 5% and 3% respectively.
- At **Bourne Community College**, discussions between the School Improvement Partner and headteacher identified good practice in the English department in the use of data and target setting. These strategies have been shared with departments across the College and the science department has benefited particularly, with Key Stage 3 results improving by 7% at 5+, 7% at 6+ and 9% at 7+.

Less bureaucracy

- 2.66** A key element of the New Relationship with Schools is freeing up schools and reducing bureaucracy. We have made important progress. From 2006/07 multi-year budgets will be introduced to give even greater stability to schools' planning.
- 2.67** It is important that schools make the best use of the very substantial financial resources that we are making available. We will look to all schools to improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which they use their resources, so that they can free up resources to invest in better outcomes for children, and drive up standards for all pupils. We will provide guidance and assistance to schools, and will expect local authorities to do the same. Areas in which we believe better value for money is attainable include the procurement of goods and services, procurement and use of ICT, management of resources within the school, and deployment of staff through the continuation of workforce reform.
- 2.68** We are also committed to setting schools free from excessive bureaucracy. We believe that schools should only be doing those things that are essential to raising pupil standards and realising every child's potential. Schools will be held to account more intelligently. In the past they have had to bid for small sums of money and account separately for each funding stream. In the future, schools will only be required to produce a single school plan containing sensible, yet

challenging, outcome measures. Technology is providing more efficient and effective solutions, creating a step-change in the way that data is collected, analysed and used to drive improvement.

2.69 We set up the Implementation Review Unit (IRU), an independent group of heads and others. It is chaired by Dr. Chris Nicholls, the headteacher of a successful secondary school, to provide scrutiny of the plans of Government, agencies and local authorities in the interests of minimising burdens on schools. For example, with the IRU's help, we are making good progress in reducing the bureaucracy associated with Special Educational Needs, and will continue to work with local authorities to deliver further improvements. We believe that the IRU is doing valuable work and propose to continue its work to at least 2008.

A system to deliver for parents and pupils

2.70 The system we are putting in place through these proposals aligns incentives, accountability and funding in order to promote our goals of excellence and equity. Throughout the system there will be strong pressures for school improvement:

- at a national level, we set expectations, provide support and intervene to tackle failure and underperformance in deprived areas. Ofsted's sharper inspection regime will hold schools to account for how every child performs;
- local authorities will have a clear focus on driving improvement and championing the interests of pupils and parents. More school competitions and clusters of schools working together through shared Trusts and federations will spur innovation;
- in every school, headteachers, teachers and support staff will have the support and freedoms they need to ensure personalised learning for every child. More focused governance will strengthen the leadership of our schools; and,
- we will increase the bottom-up pressure for improvement through greater parental choice, and a stronger parental voice within the school.

Choice and Access for All

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Summary:

We will improve choice and make the admissions system fairer at secondary level by:

- providing accessible, face-to-face advice on choosing the right school, including choice advisers for those parents needing most help;
- extending the rights of free school transport to give more choice to disadvantaged children; and
- promoting fair admissions in order to give parents access to a wider range of schools. **There will be no return to the divisive 11-plus.**

3.1 School improvement has been helped not only by the reforms since 1997, but also by published data and inspection reports, and the ability of parents to express a preference for the school they want their child to attend. There are those who argue that there is no demand for choice, but this ignores the reality. YouGov found that 76% of parents with children in state schools wanted a genuine choice over which school their child attends.

3.2 The affluent can buy choice either by moving house or by going outside the state system. We want to ensure that choice is more widely available to all and is not restricted to those who can pay for it. This chapter sets out our plans to make sure that the admissions system works for all parents. There are two keys to success:

- First, we must ensure that there are more good places and more good schools. We are making good progress: we have five times more high-achieving non-selective comprehensives – those where 70% of pupils gain at least five good GCSEs – than in 1997. Some of the once weaker inner London boroughs have doubled the proportion of high achieving schools in the same period. And we set out in Chapter 2 our proposals to ensure that this improvement continues and that it is easier to create new schools and to expand existing good schools.
- Second, we must ensure that all parents have a decent chance of securing places for their children at the school they want. Some schools will inevitably be oversubscribed and will not be able to offer places to everyone who would like one. We must be sure that the process for deciding who secures a place is open and fair – and that the less affluent are not disadvantaged. We will continue to ensure that priority is also given for the most vulnerable groups such as children in care (Looked After Children) and those with Special Educational Needs.

3.3 We have a good deal to build on. In 2004, for the first time, local authorities were required to co-ordinate the secondary school admissions process for their areas. From this year, local authorities will also co-ordinate primary admissions.

3.4 Co-ordination has made it easier for parents to exercise the choice already available to them by cutting down on the number of forms they have to complete and by introducing a common timetable for each area. It has put an end to a system where different schools made offers on different dates; where some parents received several offers of places and others received none. In the first year of operation, a greater number of children received an early offer of a school place than in previous years. Co-ordination has also made it easier for local authorities to identify and follow up cases where no application has been made for a child.

3.5 We know that the system has improved. Fewer parents are now appealing for places at schools: in 2003/04 there were 46,480 appeals out of a total of 688,020 admissions to secondary schools, compared with 49,980 in the previous year. Most parents are able to secure a place at a local primary school of their choice. We believe that appeals can be further reduced with the opportunities to improve admissions arrangements set out below.

Choice in a specialist system

- 3.6** There are already more than 2,300 specialist schools. Within two years, we will have a fully specialist school system, where every secondary school that wishes to and meets the required standards will have at least one curriculum specialism. Particularly in urban areas, this will offer greater choice so that parents can choose a school that suits their child's strengths and interests.
- 3.7** However, for this to happen we must ensure that we have the right mechanisms in place to give everybody an opportunity to access choice. That requires us to:
- improve the quality of information;
 - extend rights to free school transport; and
 - allow schools to offer places to children over a wider area, within a fair admissions system.

Better information for parents

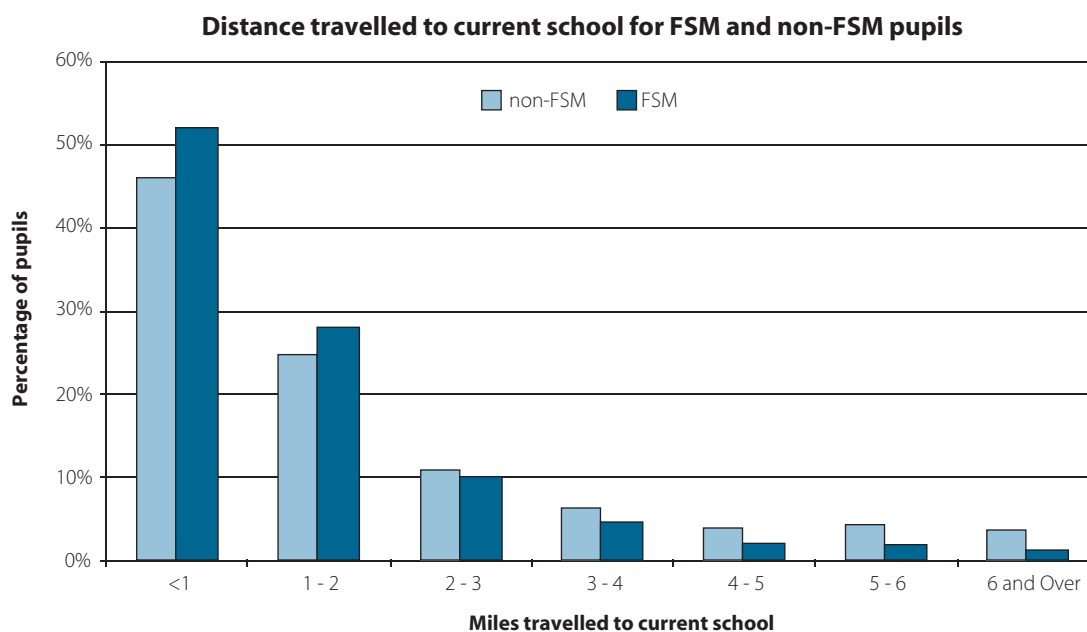
- 3.8** Parents need clear, accessible information when they are choosing a primary or secondary school. Achievement and Attainment Tables and published inspection reports have greatly opened up the system, with internet access making it relatively easy to find independent information about every school in the country. We have now added extra performance information, making it easier for parents to see the value a school adds to children's attainment, given their starting point. From February 2006, we are introducing a new school Profile, for primary and secondary schools, which will present the key information that parents need to know. The new three-yearly Ofsted inspections will ensure that their reports are more up to date. School Improvement Partners will pinpoint areas of strength and weakness within schools, highlighting the performance of specific subject areas or groups of children.
- 3.9** For all this information to be of most use to parents, they need to be able to compare school with school on a number of dimensions (academic performance, ethos, curriculum), as well as understand the admission arrangements. We already have a national website (www.parentscentre.gov.uk) which allows parents to run a simple postcode search to identify all the primary and secondary schools near to their home and gives them access to key information about the school. We will develop this website further so that it provides links to more information, such as the school Profile, admissions arrangements, transport information and the extended services on offer.
- 3.10** However, many families, particularly in the least well-off communities, have no internet access at home and rely on written and word of mouth information. Local authorities are also required to provide information to parents about school

choice. Some produce excellent material; others rely on the basic information required by law, written by the schools themselves. We want all local authorities to look again at how to improve the independent information they provide, to ensure they enable all parents to make well-informed choices, including through the parents' information booklet (the composite area prospectus).

- 3.11** Armed with information about the schools in their area, many parents can navigate the system successfully. But – even with the best paper and web-based information – some will continue to find the system difficult to understand. These parents and their children have just as much right as others to say which school they would prefer. We will work with local authorities to provide independent advice on how to compare secondary schools and decide which one is best for a child. This choice advice and support needs to be differentiated and targeted so that it benefits those who are currently least well-equipped to make effective choices.
- 3.12** We envisage a system that combines public sessions where parents can come and ask any questions that they have with targeted one-to-one sessions for parents who need more support. We want to see a network of choice advisers – people based within the community who can offer independent, unbiased advice and raise the interest, expectations and aspirations of those who may not previously have felt they had any real choice. By 2008, every local authority will have a network of choice advisers in place. We will provide £12 million over the next two years to support this; and we will work with local authorities to ensure that choice advisers target disadvantaged areas and parents.

Extending rights to school transport

- 3.13** For some, choice of school is hindered by concerns about the cost of transport. Since 1944 parents have had a right to free transport for their child only to their nearest suitable secondary school, where this is more than three miles from their home (for children over 8 years old) or more than two miles from their home (for children under 8 years old).
- 3.14** The graph overleaf shows that a greater proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) travel less than two miles to school, while a greater proportion of pupils not eligible for free school meals travel three miles or more. For them, distance is less of an obstacle to getting a place in the right school.



- 3.15** We will introduce legislation to entitle disadvantaged pupils (eligible for free school meals or in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit) to free transport to any of the three suitable secondary schools closest to their home, where these schools are between two and six miles away. This will not affect the existing transport rights of parents who are eligible for free transport to their nearest school. And, of course, those aged under 16 already enjoy free bus travel in London. This will be extended up to the age of 18 from September 2006.
- 3.16** Improved school transport could also help to deal with other issues, including reducing environmental pollution and accidents. Greater access to subsidised school transport will help to reduce car use on the 'school run' and make an important contribution to safety and the environment.
- 3.17** In this context, we will work, with local authorities, to develop pilot projects to test the impact of an extended transport offer for all pupils and explore the links between better transport and fair admissions. These pilots may include a charging regime for better-off families.
- 3.18** We will also expect local authorities to consider all home-to-school and other travel as part of their new duty to support choice, diversity and fair access (see Chapter 9). This could include innovative schemes such as the development of safe walking routes and the use of customised yellow buses'. Local authorities may also consider the additional journeys – between schools and other providers, both within and beyond the school day – that will arise from more out-of-hours activities in extended schools and a broader range of 14-19 provision.

The 14-19 pathfinder in Hampshire

Hampshire schools have worked together to provide integrated transport between schools in the New Forest, to give all young people access to a full range of 14-19 options.

The ten secondary schools and two Further Education colleges in the New Forest wanted to make sure that young people could make full use of the new vocational training opportunities available. They developed a joint timetable to make sure that vocational training runs at the same times in different schools and set up a central database of pupils and transport routes. Local coach companies and taxi firms agreed to use their 'empty runs' in the mornings and afternoons to provide extra, shared transport between schools and colleges.

As a result of this innovative approach, they now have more environmentally friendly transport arrangements, and young people have a much wider range of educational opportunities.

Fair admissions

- 3.19** Our new system will be underpinned by fair admissions in order to extend choice and open up access for more parents. At present, non-selective schools that have more applicants than places usually offer available places to pupils living nearest, or to those with brothers and sisters already at the school.
- 3.20** In a system of specialist schools, it is particularly important that parents' choice of secondary school is not restricted to their immediate neighbourhood. We want schools to be able to offer some of their places to pupils living beyond their traditional catchment area; and we will encourage schools to work together to help make such choices meaningful for parents. We will continue to allow schools that wish to do so to give priority for up to 10% of their total places to pupils with particular aptitudes for some subjects – sport, modern foreign languages, performing and visual arts. We believe that this option should be available to schools as part of their approach to developing a specialist ethos.
- 3.21** We are clear that this is entirely different from an 11-plus system that divides children into different schools on the basis of academic ability. There will be no return to the 11-plus.
- 3.22** No one approach towards admissions will work in all circumstances. This is why we want to ensure that all self-governing schools (Foundation, voluntary aided and Trust) are free to use the approach to fair admissions that they think will best meet their local circumstances, as long as it is compatible with the Admissions

Code. We want them to be able to do so without having to go through a complex and bureaucratic process.

- 3.23** There are a number of alternative approaches that could be used to extend choice and access. One approach already used by some schools is banding, which means that schools offer places based either on the range of abilities of applicants, or on the local or national ability range, to achieve an all-ability intake. Some schools have long used locally-based banding systems and, since 2000, thirteen maintained schools and eight Academies have adopted banding.
- 3.24** While we recognise that for many schools traditional catchment areas will be the most appropriate option, we will make it easier for schools that wish to do so to introduce banding. Schools can combine banding with the use of inner and outer catchment areas. This approach would give priority for some places to those living further away from the school.

Fair banding at Mossbourne Academy

Mossbourne Academy operates a system of fair banding to ensure the intake is representative of the full range of abilities of those that apply.

If there are fewer applications than there are places available, then all applicants will be admitted. In the event of over-subscription, fair banding will be applied for the 180 places available. Each applicant will be required to take verbal and non-verbal reasoning tests to place them in one of four ability bands.

After children with Statements of Special Educational Needs are admitted, the Academy will normally offer 60% of the places in each band to local pupils who live inside the local catchment area and 40% of the places to pupils living outside the catchment area. If there are too few local applicants in any band, all pupils will be offered a place and the remaining places filled by children from outside the catchment area.

- 3.25** We recognise that no form of admissions arrangements can increase the number of places at an oversubscribed school. This is why we are continuing to increase the number of good schools – and the number of places in good schools. Of course it will still be the case that, where schools are oversubscribed, some parents will be disappointed.
- 3.26** We set out in Chapter 9 our plans to ensure that all new schools should be subject to a competitive process, judged by the local authority in their role as the commissioner of provision, and with the opportunity for local parents and others to have a say about who should provide the new school. Parents want to know about admissions arrangements just as much as they want to know about the school's ethos and character.

- 3.27** All proposals for new schools will need to set out their proposed admissions arrangements and indicate how these will promote community and social integration and choice. As part of the competition process, local authorities will be able to specify the community that a new school should serve, and will have the power to make modifications to proposed admissions arrangements to bring them into line with the Admissions Code of Practice. We will issue best practice guidance that will assist promoters of new schools in designing admission policies that are consistent with the Code.
- 3.28** In addition, every popular and successful school that expands will be required to prove to the local authority that their admissions arrangements are in line with the Code. No new or expanded school will be able to vary its admissions arrangements for the first three years of operation.
- 3.29** All these measures underpin our determination that parents should be able to choose schools rather than schools choosing parents. We are confident that these changes will allow more access to a greater variety of schools for all parents, including those from more deprived backgrounds. We will review progress in 2008 to consider whether any adjustments to transport, advice or admissions are needed to ensure that this is the case.

Personalised Learning

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Summary:

We will transform the support available to every child by:

- ensuring that children who fall behind in English or maths receive intensive support to help them catch up; and those that have a particular gift or talent receive extra challenge;
- using extended schools to give all children access to extra support or tuition in particular subject areas and other activities where they have a particular interest or aptitude;
- providing every school with support and guidance on tailoring their teaching, including using trained, leading teachers;
- ensuring that schools have expert advice on how to support pupils facing particular challenges – including those from black and minority groups, disabled children, Looked After Children, and children with Special Educational Needs; and
- widening curriculum choice in secondary education, so that more young people are motivated by study that stretches and interests them.

4.1 To drive up standards while also improving social mobility, we are determined to provide more personalised services for children and their families. Personalisation is the key to tackling the persistent achievement gaps between different social and ethnic groups. It means a tailored education for every child and young person, that gives them strength in the basics, stretches their aspirations, and builds their life chances. It will create opportunity for every child, regardless of their background.

4.2 Personalisation is not new. Our best schools provide a tailored education which combines:

- extra small group or one-to-one tuition for those that need it – not as a substitute for excellent whole class teaching, but as an integrated part of the child’s learning;
- opportunities for all children to get extra support and tuition in subjects and activities they are interested in, as well as access to a range of opportunities beyond the school day, including weekend and holiday courses and online learning;
- exciting whole-class teaching, which gets the best from every child;
- setting or grouping children of similar ability and attainment;
- a rich, flexible and accessible curriculum and, for older pupils, one that allows them to mix academic and vocational learning; and
- innovative use of ICT, both in the classroom and linking the classroom and home.

4.3 To overcome economic and social disadvantage and make equality of opportunity a reality, we need to give every child a good command of English and maths. Without a firm grasp of the basics, children will struggle to succeed. This has been a touchstone of our education reforms since 1997, from the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in 1998 and 1999, to our proposals in the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* to focus on young people’s mastery of functional English and maths in GCSE examinations, and in the Achievement and Attainment tables. This year, children at 11, 14 and 16 achieved the best ever results in English and maths – but we remain ambitious to move forward and achieve excellence and equity.

4.4 Alongside this sharp focus on improving English and maths across all schools, since 1997 we have achieved much:

- the Primary and Secondary National Strategies have ensured that all schools focus on the fundamentals of good teaching, particularly in English and maths; and have increasingly turned the spotlight onto the extra support some children need in these areas if they are to succeed;

- our 'Aiming High' programme, focused on stretching the aspirations and achievement of black and minority ethnic groups, has begun to tackle deep seated underachievement and introduced a range of support for teachers working with bilingual learners;
 - since 1999, we have focused attention on support for gifted and talented pupils in deprived areas through Excellence in Cities, and nationwide through the creation of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth;
 - primary schools are delivering a broad and rich curriculum, with literacy and numeracy at its heart. Since the launch of our National Literacy Strategy in 1998, phonics now plays a central role in the teaching of early reading, but we have set up the independent Rose Review to advise us on how we can ensure that even more children progress with reading, including reviewing the use of synthetic phonics. We will use this to help renew the Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks and clarify expectations around progression in English and maths for children from the early years through to age 11;
 - more than three-quarters of secondary schools are now specialist – working together, and with local primary schools, to raise the quality of subject teaching across the curriculum; and
 - 98% of secondary schools offer study support outside school hours, so that pupils can take part in activities that interest and motivate them, with direct benefits to their attainment in the classroom. To help both primary and secondary schools to develop a comprehensive range of such extended services, we have already spent £160 million, and we will be spending a further £680 million by 2008.
- 4.5** The results have been the extensive improvements in standards we have seen since 1997 – testimony to the efforts of schools, teachers and pupils.
- 4.6** Now we must go much further and create an education system that focuses on the needs of the individual child. This means intensive small-group tuition in literacy and numeracy for those falling behind, including one-to-one support where appropriate, and extra stretch for the gifted and talented. It means every pupil being able to extend their learning and develop their interests and aptitudes through extra support and tuition beyond the school day. And, most important of all, it means excellent, tailored whole-class teaching with all the resources available – from extra support staff to improved ICT – being used to ensure that every pupil gets the education they need.
- 4.7** A change on this scale will require significant investment. We are determined to make a start now and to continue to prioritise personalisation within overall

schools' funding to ensure that every child benefits from a personalised, tailored approach.

Every child mastering the basics

- 4.8** Mastering literacy and numeracy must be the first priority for every child and every school. This year primary schools achieved their highest ever results in English and maths – the proportion reaching the expected level has increased by 16 percentage points in English since 1997, and by 13 percentage points in maths. The fact that 70% of children now achieve Level 4 in both subjects, compared with only 52% in 1997, is further proof of the huge improvement in standards.
- 4.9** But we know that those who fail to reach the expected levels at age 11 are far less likely to go on to get five or more good GCSEs – and that children from low income families – entitled to free school meals (FSM) – are far more likely to fall behind in these core subjects. This is why we have already placed such a strong emphasis on the basics, and will renew our emphasis on functional English and maths.

Achieving level 4+ in English at age 11

FSM pupils – 58%
non-FSM pupils – 81%

Achieving level 4+ in maths at age 11

FSM pupils – 55%
non-FSM pupils – 78%

Proportions of those behind at age 11 catching up by age 14

English – 24%
Maths – 29%

- 4.10** We expect every school to devote intensive support for those who have fallen behind in literacy and numeracy. There is no substitute for high quality whole-class teaching but it needs to be allied with small group – or where necessary one-to-one tuition – to provide effective support for catch-up. Small group tuition can offer low-attaining pupils coaching and support sessions with an expert teacher or mentor to consolidate their learning from lessons; to agree personal learning targets; and to gain confidence and motivation through working with a small number of their peers. In the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, we are piloting new approaches to intensive support with reading based on the experience of the successful Reading Recovery programme. We welcome the support of KPMG and other sponsors on the Every Child a Reader project.

Children who fall behind

Leighton Primary School's Ofsted inspection in 1999 emphasised issues with reading, writing, and low national curriculum test results in English. Five years later, the school has helped all pupils reach their potential in English – and was praised by Ofsted in 2004 for their “excellent innovative approaches to overcoming difficulties in learning”.

The school invested in specific training for teachers in literacy and reading. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator plays a core role. She now provides small-group and individual tuition in literacy for selected children in years 1 and 2, complementing the teaching they receive during the literacy hour. She also trains parents and staff in accredited reading courses; and has developed opportunities for community and family learning in partnership with the local FE college.

Over time this rigorous focus has reaped dividends. In 2000, only half the children achieved Level 4 or above in English in their Key Stage 2 tests; in 2005 every child did so.

- 4.11** Our priority now is children aged between 11 and 14 – in Key Stage 3 – where we know there is a real danger that children’s motivation and confidence can drop and their learning stall. Before the introduction of our Key Stage 3 National Strategy, the early years of secondary education had long suffered from a lack of attention: pupils had been allowed to drift, with inadequate investment and inadequate ambition. In recent years, we have made substantial progress: but now we must go further. We want to ensure every child has the best possible chance of reaching aged 14 secure in the basics and fully able to take advantage of the radical new plans set out in our *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper*.
- 4.12** However, we know that secondary schools can find it difficult to organise and deliver effective small group tuition. We will therefore invest £335 million by 2007-08, specifically earmarked within our Dedicated Schools Grant, to provide the resources secondary schools need to start delivering this vision. Schools will be urged to use this money to give priority to literacy and numeracy, as well as gifted and talented work and other personalised support.
- 4.13** To ensure that this investment reaches the schools that need it most, we will target it particularly towards local authorities with the largest numbers of underachieving and deprived children; and will expect them in turn to review their local funding formulae to ensure that they properly recognise the greater needs of their most challenging schools. We will announce further details of this funding later this autumn, as part of the wider schools funding settlement for 2006-08.

4.14 This investment will only be effective if the staff involved are expert in how to help pupils who have fallen behind. So we will, for all schools, both primary and secondary:

- provide best practice guidance on the most effective teaching and learning strategies, including the use of ICT, for those who have fallen behind, and on how to best engage and support their parents; and
- ensure that they have access to trained, expert, leading teachers to consolidate and continuously improve the support available to pupils and to make best use of the new resources available.

4.15 For those schools with the highest numbers of pupils who have fallen behind, we will provide a further targeted £60 million, shared across the primary and secondary sectors in each of 2006-07 and 2007-08. This additional funding will allow these schools to ensure that they have a well trained workforce able to provide more effective one-to-one or small group tuition for their lowest attaining pupils.

4.16 We will not dictate from the centre what additional support should be provided to pupils. Teachers and parents should decide together what will best meet a child's needs and potential. But we will hold schools to account: School Improvement Partners and the new Ofsted inspection regime will challenge every primary and secondary school to demonstrate that they are planning and delivering catch-up support where it is needed, with the most intensive support for those children facing the greatest disadvantages, and effective tailored teaching and learning for every child, including the gifted and talented. And the Achievement and Attainment Tables for 2006 will show schools' success in ensuring pupils achieve not only five good GCSEs including English and maths.

Children who have Special Educational Needs (SEN)

4.17 Some children who have fallen behind have SEN: 65% of pupils at age 11 who do not attain the expected level in English, and 55% of those not attaining the expected level in maths, are identified as having SEN. By no means all children with special educational needs are falling behind – many are meeting and exceeding expectations. Some are gifted and talented. What is vital is for all children to receive the right tailored support.

4.18 Children and young people with SEN already benefit from the personalisation inherent in the SEN framework, which provides an individualised assessment of need and tailored provision. In addition, statements ensure, where appropriate, access to the school and to other services which can best meet the needs of the pupil.

- 4.18** But there is more to be done. This White Paper builds on the Government's SEN strategy, *Removing Barriers to Achievement*, in promoting a more effectively tailored education for all children with SEN. We will:
- increase the sharing of expertise between special and mainstream schools, and use programmes such as BSF to enable special and mainstream schools to work more closely together, for example through co-location – so that all children and young people with SEN benefit from specialist support, high standards of teaching and effective social inclusion, irrespective of where they are taught;
 - equip the school workforce with appropriate skills, knowledge, awareness and confidence in working with children and young people with SEN; and
 - promote more effective measurement of and accountability for the progress made by pupils with SEN across a wide range of abilities, facilitating early intervention and high expectations.
- 4.19** We believe that the specialist schools model also has the potential to drive up standards in special schools and to promote collaboration with mainstream schools. We will seek to designate 50 new SEN specialism specialist schools within the next two years, building on the 12 trailblazers already established. Special schools which meet the required standard can alternatively choose to join the main specialist school programme and take on a curriculum specialism. We will work with the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and the Youth Sport Trust to encourage more special schools to submit applications for a curriculum specialism, with a view to being able to designate around a further 50 special schools by 2008. We will commission an evaluation which compares the respective strengths of special schools with a curriculum or an SEN specialism to inform the roll-out of programmes beyond 2008.
- 4.20** In addition, this year we announced that high-performing specialist schools would be able to take on additional functions to lead the way in system-wide reform. We believe that an additional SEN role may have a particular attraction to some mainstream schools. We will undertake a consultation with Ofsted and other interested parties.

Gifted and Talented learners

- 4.21** A tailored education means addressing the needs of the most gifted and talented, just as much as those who are struggling. These children will come from every background – children from disadvantaged backgrounds are just as likely to be gifted and talented as those from the middle class, and may need greater support to fulfil their potential. Since 1999, when the first phase of Excellence in Cities began, we have progressively expanded our support for gifted and talented

education. We established our core partner, the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) in 2002; and London Gifted and Talented in 2003.

- 4.22** Despite the progress we have made, we know that some schools and some staff still do not give the needs of these learners sufficient priority. Even where this is a priority schools and teachers can struggle to tailor teaching and learning.
- 4.23** Expanding and improving programmes for gifted and talented pupils in Key Stage 3 must be a priority for all secondary schools. We will work with and through NAGTY, the National Strategies, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, Youth Sport Trust and other partners to provide additional training and guidance on gifted and talented education to all schools, primary and secondary, including access to an expert teacher. This will include – through the Government’s national school sport strategy – support to nurture and develop the talents of our most gifted young athletes.
- 4.24** We will also work with secondary schools to ensure that they are identifying all their gifted and talented pupils. Using schools’ identifications, alongside data on pupils’ performance at the end of Key Stage 2 and other widely-used tests of ability, we will develop a national register of gifted and talented pupils. This will allow us to invite all who fall within the top 5% to join NAGTY, so that they can benefit fully from the opportunities offered through its student academy. We will also use the register to help provide the right local opportunities to extend gifted and talented pupils’ studies, and to support pupils’ progression into higher education.
- 4.25** NAGTY has provided residential summer schools for up to 1,000 gifted and talented pupils each year since 2002. We have now asked NAGTY, working with the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, to develop a national programme of non-residential summer schools, to run alongside the summer schools for gifted and talented pupils that individual local authorities and schools are already providing. We will seek private sponsorship for these new summer schools.

Haybridge High School

Haybridge High School is working to promote a flexible curriculum, and to develop personalised pathways for its students. For example in mathematics, 31 Gifted and Talented students in Year 10 completed higher tier mathematics in June 2005. This enabled these students to complete AS mathematics in Year 11. Of these 31 students; 13 achieved an A* grade, whilst 14 achieved a grade A and 4 reached grade B.

They are making good progress and the approach is certainly challenging them. All of the students who have applied to join the sixth form have opted to complete A level mathematics and two-thirds will also take further mathematics.

With the new flexible curriculum, Key Stage 3 tests will be taken at the end of year 8 in 2006, meaning that gifted scientists and English students will also be offered opportunities to sit GCSEs early and take up an AS level in year 11.

- 4.26** Gifted and talented pupils from some disadvantaged backgrounds face particular challenges. We will target specific support to gifted and talented students from minority ethnic backgrounds and other vulnerable learners, including Looked After Children; and will provide up to £1 million a year to match-fund business and philanthropic contributions to NAGTY's 'Go for Gold' scheme, designed to attract sponsorship to support gifted and talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- 4.27** In our 14-19 White Paper, we set out a series of changes to ensure that young people are stretched appropriately and can gain recognition for exceptional achievement. It will be easier for young people to accelerate through the system – early achievement at Key Stage 3 or AS levels will be recognised in the achievement and attainment tables; there will be the option of taking higher education modules while still at school; and a new extended project at A level will test a wider range of skills and encourage real scholarship.

Black and Minority Ethnic children

- 4.28** Whilst many black and minority ethnic (BME) young people achieve well, a significant number fail to realise their potential. Young Afro-Caribbean people and those from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds are amongst the lowest achieving pupils in our schools. Differences emerge early and widen throughout primary and secondary school: in 2004 only 17% of Black Caribbean boys achieved five or more good GCSEs including English and maths.
- 4.29** In 2003, we launched a national strategy, *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils*; designed to raise the performance of BME pupils. *Aiming*

High focused on supporting schools to become more responsive to the cultural, religious and linguistic needs of parents and pupils. Since 2003 we have seen year on year improvements at each Key Stage for BME pupils. Effective personalisation has been at the heart of this success.

- 4.30** There is a way to go before every child, regardless of their ethnicity, has an equal chance of reaching their potential. We will, therefore, build on *Aiming High* to ensure that every school receives advice and support to meet the aspirations of BME parents and pupils. In particular, we will extend our support for bilingual learners to secondary schools; expand, in both primary and secondary, our programmes to target underachievement of young black people; and focus on driving up the attainment of Muslim pupils. We also recognise the severe underperformance in Gypsy and Traveller communities, and will introduce a targeted programme to address this issue.
- 4.31** Many white working class boys can also fail to fulfil their potential. Those in receipt of free school meals perform less well at GCSE than almost any other group of pupils. Some schools have developed successful approaches to meeting the needs of this group and we will ensure that this best practice is shared more widely.

Access to extra support and tuition

- 4.32** As part of tailored learning, we need to ensure that children and young people have a rich and exciting range of opportunities and activities, beyond the school day, that will allow them to follow their interests, broaden their horizons, remove barriers to learning and motivate them to greater achievements.
- 4.33** As set out in Chapter 6, we expect schools to take the opportunity of becoming an extended school to ensure that support and tuition for those who have fallen behind, and the gifted and talented, can be offered out-of-hours as well as during the school day. And we expect every secondary school, working with their local authority, to ensure that every child can access a wide range of after school activities, tailored to their particular needs.
- 4.34** More broadly, education outside the classroom can add power and relevance to classroom teaching. We are working with partner organisations from many different sectors to draw up a manifesto for education outside the classroom which will highlight how schools can exploit the enormous potential to extend their pupils' learning.

Grouping and setting

- 4.35** Grouping students can help to build motivation, social skills and independence; and most importantly can raise standards because pupils are better engaged in their own learning. We have encouraged schools to use setting since 1997.

Putting children in different ability groups within a class is commonplace in primary schools. Ofsted reports show that the proportion of Key Stage 3 lessons which are set has risen since 1997 to over a third now, with greater rises in English and maths. The significant majority of English, science and modern foreign language lessons in secondary schools, and about nine in ten maths lessons are already organised by setting.

- 4.36** It will continue to be for schools to decide how and when to group and set by ability. But we will encourage more schools to adopt such grouping and help them to learn from the innovative practices that some schools are already employing without lowering expectations for pupils in lower ability groups or limiting choices in the curriculum. We will publish, in the New Year, independent research into current best practice.

Grouping and setting at Bridgemary Community Sports College, Hampshire

From this September pupils aged 11 to 16 at Bridgemary Community Sports College in Gosport, will be mixed according to ability, with the brightest taking exams early. The hope is that brighter children can get ahead, while those of lesser ability are not allowed to become bored and frustrated if they fall behind. They have been set in learning groups according to their ability, rather than their age.

Children will be able to work according to their own needs and will be encouraged to raise their expectations. Pupils will study at one of five levels, depending on their ability rather than their age. These are worked out from teachers' assessments and final primary school test performances. The levels range from basic literacy and numeracy skills to A-level standard. Each pupil will be assessed in each subject every half-term to decide whether they should be moved within a system of personalised learning. So it would be possible for a 13 year old to study maths at the standard of the average 15 year old, while doing 'normal' level English.

Tailored teaching in class

- 4.37** Whether they are in sets or not, all classes contain pupils with a range of abilities and attainments, different interests and motivation, and different home and background circumstances. The best teachers are those who have a real enthusiasm for and detailed understanding of the subjects they teach, and confidence to apply a range of good teaching and learning approaches across the curriculum. It is the passion for a subject, and the pedagogical understanding that underpins this, that is central to providing every child and young person with a tailored education.

4.38 Our National Strategies provide extensive support to schools to help them tailor teaching and learning. We will strengthen that support so that all teachers can:

- plan exciting, interactive lessons which will capture the imagination of every child in the class;
- set clear, individual, learning objectives that every child understands;
- have expert subject knowledge and a broad range of different teaching techniques;
- use trained support staff in the classroom to support particular individuals or groups of pupils; deliver parts of the lesson, and to maintain a good climate for learning;
- draw on new, multi-media ICT resources; and
- provide individual feedback to pupils, so that they understand what they need to do to improve and how to do it.

4.39 We will support teachers to develop their subject expertise and successful teaching and learning approaches by encouraging them to join their relevant subject association and to keep their subject knowledge up to date via continuing professional development. The Science Learning Centres are already providing high quality subject specific professional development for science teachers and technicians and the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics opening next summer will make high quality professional development accessible across the country. As described in Chapter 8, we have asked the Training and Development Agency to reflect the importance we attach to subject specialism across all the professional standards, from Qualified Teacher Status to the Excellent Teacher and Advanced Skills Teacher grades.

ICT

4.40 ICT provides a powerful tool to tailor teaching and learning. Good schools already use ICT to deliver exciting, multi-media lessons; to set and mark work online, providing immediate feedback to children, teachers and parents; and to link the classroom and home, so that the materials children are studying in class are available beyond the school gates.

4.41 In many schools, learners leave the opportunity to save work in a personal online space, which means they can store their work, record assessments and keep information about their achievements. They can access their work from any computer at any time, and are encouraged to make full use of a wide range of multi-media resources. In some cases parents can also access their child's work online, which means they are better able to support their child's learning, extending the range of opportunities outside the classroom.

- 4.42** By 2008 all schools will be able to offer access to e-learning resources both in and out of school. We will encourage all schools, by this date, to make available a personal online space available to every pupil.

Tailoring the curriculum from 5 to 19

- 4.43** Children and young people learn best with a curriculum which enthuses and engages them.
- 4.44** We are already increasing curriculum flexibility and helping schools to make the most of this. Primary schools will increasingly deliver a broad and rich curriculum, with literacy and numeracy at its heart.
- 4.45** For secondary schools, the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* set out proposals for radical reform of post 14 curriculum and qualifications to ensure all pupils benefit from the style and pace of learning that suits them. The Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is reviewing the Key Stage 3 curriculum, to make more time for schools to increase the depth of learning for the gifted and talented and to provide better support for those who have fallen behind. A pilot project is already underway to look at the impact of completing Key Stage 3 in two, rather than three years.
- 4.46** From age 14, all young people will have the opportunity to study traditional curriculum options or any of the specialised Diplomas, wherever they are in the country. The first specialised Diplomas will be available in 2008; all 14 lines of study will be a national entitlement by 2015.

Transfer and transition

- 4.47** Transfer and transition from one phase to another, and from one school to another can be particularly challenging. This is most pronounced when pupils transfer from primary to secondary school and can be particularly difficult for children who join a school outside the normal entry – for example because they have moved house, they are from a Gypsy or Traveller background, or they are Service children. Ofsted has recognised the great strides schools have made in improving the induction and pastoral arrangements for pupils and parents; but more can be done through teaching and learning.
- 4.48** Our focus on tailoring teaching and learning at Key Stage 3 recognises the problems that starting secondary school can bring. However there are other, specific actions that schools and parents can take. Sharing pupil information between schools, continuity in curriculum, teaching and learning, and behaviour policies, and the full engagement of parents are of critical importance. The Primary and Secondary National Strategies will help schools to assess the impact of their efforts to date; and to identify priorities for improvement and the best

sources of further support. We want all schools to learn the lessons from those schools that have made excellent progress in improving transfer.

Transition Learning Mentors at Fairham School, Nottingham

Through de-mystifying secondary school and easing the transition from primary to secondary school, Transition Learning Mentors in Nottingham are able to minimise the risk that a potentially disruptive change of school will create lasting problems for children already experiencing difficulties.

They work with Year 6 children that have been identified for Learning Mentor support and who are likely to be coming to Fairham School from its key feeder primaries participating in the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP). Many of the children have behaviour problems, but a significant number have other difficulties which could make the transition to secondary school more difficult. Some are simply very shy, for example.

The process begins with letters to headteachers, parents and to the Year 6 pupils themselves that have been identified as likely to benefit from transition support. They also hold meetings with parents and makes presentations to Year 6 pupils and to governors. After-school transition sessions are held and the mentors are beginning to work with Year 5 pupils and organising for Year 7 pupils to go back to their primary schools to talk in assemblies about their new school lives.

- 4.49** At the end of compulsory learning, it is crucial that young people have the support they need to make the transition to post-16 learning – especially if we are to achieve our aspiration of raising post-16 participation from 75% to 90% over the next decade. Every summer, a national telephone helpline and support from Connexions advisors are available to help school leavers identify suitable learning opportunities. We will consider what more can be done to make the transition from compulsory to post-16 learning a smooth one, particularly for those who are at risk of dropping out. We firmly believe that all young people are capable of achievement – and supporting them to make the right transition at age 16 is crucial to our vision.

Focusing on the progress of every child

- 4.50** Central to personalised learning is schools' use of data to provide structured feedback to pupils and their parents on progress. The National Strategies have helped over three quarters of secondary schools, last year with assessment for learning, but Ofsted tell us that assessment is still one of the weakest aspects of teaching.

- 4.51** We will, therefore, redouble the support and challenge through the National Strategies, especially where there is danger of teachers underestimating the potential of pupils. We will also use the new School Improvement Partners to scrutinise the progress that different groups of pupils are making, so that success with some groups does not hide failure with others.
- 4.52** We continue to expect as many children as possible to reach the expected levels of attainment for their age in the basics as a springboard for further progress. But, to help schools focus on the progress of all children, we will also provide a new value added measure which takes account of the context of the school and its individual pupils. This “contextual value added” measure is already being used by Ofsted in its school inspections, and all schools now have access to it. From 2006 it will appear in the Achievement and Attainment tables. We will also provide more information to schools which measures the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils. By developing such new, inclusive measures, we will support schools’ focus on the potential of all their pupils, whatever their starting point, by showing them how each pupil’s progress compares with their peers. Schools will be encouraged to discuss this information with parents at termly meetings.
- 4.53** We are taking forward the 14-19 White Paper commitment to measure the progress of the whole school cohort between the ages of 16 and 19, and set targets for improvement. This will encourage all schools to focus on the transition of all their pupils to post 16 learning which will maximise their prospects for improving their levels of attainment, particularly those who have not reached Level 2 age 16. This information will be published in the School Profile, and targets for improvement in progression rates will be set at area level. We aim to introduce the progression measure on a national basis in 2008.

Parents Driving Improvement

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Summary:

We will ensure that all parents can support their child's education and drive improvement across the school system by:

- requiring all schools to give parents timely information on the progress of their child, with regular opportunities for face-to-face discussion;
- expecting schools to use home-school agreements to agree concrete commitments about how schools and parents can work together;
- establishing a new right for parents to complain to Ofsted where they have concerns which the school is failing to address;
- requiring all governing bodies to seek and respond to the views of parents and encouraging them to establish Parent Councils;
- providing tailored information to parents when their child starts primary school and makes the move from primary into secondary; and
- encouraging schools to involve School Councils in decision-making.

- 5.1** Parents (including guardians, foster parents and others in a parenting role) have high aspirations for their children and understandably place high demands on schools. They want the best for their own child and also to have a strong stake in the performance of the school as a whole. The most powerful influence on a child's learning and progress is the support and commitment they receive from their parents.
- 5.2** Parents have been the driving force behind much that we have achieved in early years' policy. We are successfully transforming the lives of children from disadvantaged families through Sure Start Children's Centres. Parents are getting involved, making sure that what is delivered is right for them and their children. In schools, well-informed and engaged parents must also be at the centre of everything we do.
- 5.3** We describe in Chapter 7 the firm steps we propose to take where parents fail to take seriously their responsibilities for ensuring that their child attends school and that their behaviour does not disrupt the learning of other pupils.
- 5.4** Schools achieve most when they draw on real and effective parental engagement. Yet many parents still feel unsure about how to relate to schools, particularly when their child starts at secondary school. And where parents have real concerns about their school's progress, their voices can still be ignored or overlooked. We are determined to redress the balance and to remove any sense that parents' role stops at the school gate. We need to harness the energy and commitment which parents can bring to shape the education their children receive and the progress of their school.

Better information to help parents support their children's learning

- 5.5** Realising the personalised support for every child described in Chapter 4 must include ensuring that parents have the information and tools they need to help their child learn. In particular, we need to ensure that the school system welcomes parents who may find it difficult to be involved, perhaps because they are working, caring for a relative; or parents whose own experience of education was poor and they do not feel confident engaging with schools.
- 5.6** All parents have the right to regular and high quality information about what their child is learning, how well they are progressing and areas for development. Schools now have a much greater range of data about individual pupils and can use this detailed information about the performance and progress of individual pupils to target particular learning needs and provide tailored support.

- 5.7** Making this information available to parents can help them understand how well their child is progressing at school and how they can support them to do better. We will amend the Regulations which set out the expectations for communication with parents so that all schools, primary and secondary, are required to give information on progress to parents at least three times a year and that there is the opportunity for parents to have face-to-face discussion with teachers about what their child needs to do to progress further and how they can support this.
- 5.8** We will also encourage schools to provide a single point of contact for parents. For primary schools this already exists. But in secondaries, it is sometimes less straightforward. Some schools have a designated member of staff for each child – a home-school contact. We see the merit in this approach and will work with partners to explore how the model could be developed.
- 5.9** To ensure we learn from best practice, we plan to launch a national campaign, led by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and including other key partners such as the Secondary Heads Association and parents' organisations, to develop further and share schools' experience of the benefits of parental engagement.
- 5.10** ICT offers real potential for sharing information quickly and easily with parents. Over 80% of secondary schools now have websites. Many schools are using e-mail and text messaging. Some have password-protected sites. Technology allows us to increase the range of information available online, which helps parents make more informed choices about schools in their area and make representations to the local authority about provision.
- 5.11** During the time their children are at school, parents will be able to access wider information about their child, for example whether their child is registered in lessons, and information on behaviour and rewards, as well as how they are performing academically. This will not replace face-to-face meetings, but will mean parents have regular and up-to-date information about their child's progress.

Online information for parents at Kemnal Technology College, Sidcup

Kemnal Technology College is one of the fastest improving schools in the country, with very high value-added performance scores. It is an 11-18 comprehensive boys school, with a mixed sixth form, in the south London borough of Bromley.

They wanted to improve the way they communicate with parents, so they introduced a new ICT system, which means that parents can receive up-to-date information on their child at any time of day. Parents can use computers in the school library every weekday, and they can also ask for printed copies of the information.

Parents can access three reports a year online, as well their child's timetable, attendance records and information about their homework. The school keeps an events log for each child, which means parents can keep up with their child's progress. The system is popular with parents, and also with teachers, who report that it takes them less time than traditional paper-based information.

- 5.12** Information alone is not sufficient. Schools need to consider what tools will help parents support their child's learning. This is particularly the case for more deprived parents. They will often have the same commitment to their child's learning, but not always the same resources to draw on. That is why we will provide materials for parents to use at home to support their child's learning and study skills, with specific activities designed to support the kind of catch-up activities described in more detail in Chapter 4.

Home-school agreements

- 5.13** Home-school agreements can be a powerful tool in making clear to parents what they can expect from their child's school – particularly when they join a new school – and also setting out parents' own responsibilities in supporting the school.

Home-school agreements at Oulton Broad Primary School, Suffolk

In an area historically challenged by low expectations and lack of interest in learning, Oulton Broad views its home-school agreements as a way to promote the value of education within its community.

The home-school agreement is displayed in the school's entrance hall, and sets out clearly the expectation that both the school and the family will play their part in the child's education. The school consults parents about reviewing the agreement every three years, and it is used in day-to-day conversations, where necessary, with parents to clarify responsibilities, and emphasise the role that both sides play.

Chris Harrison, the headteacher, believes that the agreement has helped the school put its policy on involving parents into practice. "Partnership must be successful for all involved if we are to achieve a positive school experience for the child, teacher and family. We also want to ensure that children are confident with the relationship between their family and school".

- 5.14** Home-school agreements have been a requirement since 1999, but many schools have not yet exploited their potential. We therefore plan to update and relaunch guidance on home-school agreements to ensure that all schools are aware of the potential benefits and to provide more information about good practice. We want to learn more about where home-school agreements work best and to enable schools to exploit the energy and commitment of parents. We will set a clear expectation that schools should keep agreements both updated and practical.

Driving school improvement

- 5.15** As well as ensuring that parents are more involved with their own child's learning, we want to open up new ways to ensure that parents' voices are heard. At present, parents can feel frustrated and powerless where they have serious and well-founded concerns about their child's school – for example where there has been a breakdown in school discipline or standards are too low – but the school management is unwilling to hear their concerns or to take action.
- 5.16** To ensure prompt action where parents have legitimate concerns, we propose to give Ofsted a new statutory power to investigate and, where justified, require a school to call a meeting with parents to discuss their complaints. We would expect parents to have exhausted local complaints procedures, including with the local authority, before contacting Ofsted. Ofsted will then determine what action should be taken to respond to the complaint. This could include calling an immediate inspection. If serious failure is found, this would then trigger the decisive action set out in Chapter 2 – including a possible change in school management.

- 5.17** Even where things are going well in a school, more can be done to harness the energy and commitment of parents. Most schools recognise the value of engaging parents but too often their involvement can be token and unsystematic. Individual parent governors play an important role in bringing a parental voice to bear on the leadership of the school, but many parents lack the time and the skills to make this kind of sustained commitment. 72% of parents say they want to be more involved in their child's education but only 48% feel that the school makes it easy to get involved.
- 5.18** The new school inspection arrangements now require all schools to demonstrate the quality of their engagement with parents. Ofsted will inspect a school's links with parents and the extent to which they canvass and act on parents' views.
- 5.19** We now propose to go further and place a new statutory duty on the governing bodies of all schools to have regard to the views of parents. We will leave it to individual schools to decide how to do this most effectively, in the light of their existing arrangements for involving parents. But we are impressed by the experience of those schools which have taken steps to involve a wider group of their parents directly in the running of their school through the establishment of a Parent Council.

The Parent Council at Ladybridge High School, Bolton

Ladybridge High School is a new school opened in 2004 which has already started to benefit from having a Parent Council.

Ladybridge opened on the site of a school which was in Special Measures and which subsequently closed. Parental involvement in the previous school was poor and the new school was determined to improve this. They set up a Parents' Forum in the Autumn term 2004; and it has already begun to have a positive impact on the school. Parents are consulted on key school policies, which helps drive up standards. Parents now have access to their children's homework on-line, and the school has set up a system to respond promptly to parents' enquiries.

Ladybridge takes children from ages 11- 16 from a range of backgrounds. The school was keen to involve parents who had previously been disengaged from school life; as well as establishing the parents' forum, home-school liaison staff visit parents at home, and specialist language and cultural interpreters help reduce language barriers.

The parents on the forum have recognised that it takes time and hard work to get parents involved, but they are committed to its expansion. The plan is now to encourage participation by parents of the incoming Year 7 students, so that these parents expect to be involved right from the beginning.

- 5.20** Parent Councils provide a forum for parents to express their views and influence the running of their school. They tend to be relatively informal and engage people who may not have the confidence or desire to be a parent governor. We believe that they offer an effective way for schools to consult parents on specific issues likely to be of particular concern, such as uniform, school meals or changes to the curriculum.
- 5.21** Parents will continue to make up one-third of the governing bodies of all maintained schools, including the Trust schools described in Chapter 2. Where Trusts appoint a majority of the governing body, this will mean a reduction in the number of *elected* parent governors. We will therefore require Trust schools to establish a Parent Council with an advisory and consultative role to enable parents' views to be taken into account. This will build on the new duty on governing bodies to take account of the views of parents. To support this, we will produce statutory guidance for Trust schools on working with their Parent Councils. We will also encourage other schools to establish Parent Councils and support them with informal guidance on how they can support Parent Councils in practical ways, for example, by providing a place to meet.
- 5.22** We expect that Parent Councils will work in an informal and flexible way. A recent pilot project showed that this was key to getting parents involved. The issues that most concern parents will also vary from school to school. They are likely to include the school's sex and relationships education policy and its home-school agreement, along with behaviour in the school and the quality of school food. More broadly, Parent Councils will also provide a way for parents to take part in any review of the school's vision or in the development of plans for extended services.
- 5.23** We continue to recognise the huge contribution that Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) make to the life of schools in very diverse settings and circumstances. PTAs are getting parents involved in school life, often for the first time. They can be the cornerstone of effective partnerships between parents and teachers whether in village schools or those in our inner cities.

School Councils

- 5.24** The Education Act 2002 and subsequent guidance to local authorities and schools provided for much greater pupil participation, including consulting children and young people on decisions that affected them. As a result, the number of effective school councils has increased substantially. Pupils can have a real say in how they learn and achieve and can be much more involved in how the school is run, for example helping to interview new members of staff or contributing to decisions on school meals.
- 5.25** We are working closely with School Councils UK, an educational charity, on guidance for primary schools, giving our younger pupils a greater chance to

participate in school life. We have asked School Councils UK to establish a network for schools and their councils to talk to each other and share good practice. We will also be updating guidance to secondary schools, including special schools, to give stronger encouragement for school councils to be engaged in decision-making. School Councils have a vital role to play, alongside better parental engagement, in promoting schools as strong community institutions.

Wider support for parents

- 5.26** The vast majority of parents will grasp the opportunity to engage more with their child's education. But sometimes parents need other support and information. Chapter 6 highlights the support available to children beyond the classroom. In the early years our Ten Year Childcare Strategy will see Sure Start Children's Centres in every community providing information and advice to parents.
- 5.27** Schools can also play an active role in offering parents (particularly those who may have missed out on a formal education) access to adult and family learning opportunities so they can update their skills, stretch their aspirations and understand how they can support their child's learning.
- 5.28** Because parents want easier access to information at all ages, we plan to refocus the remit of Children's Information Services. Instead of focusing just on early years, they will provide information for parents of children up to age 19. And we are committed to improving the national parents' helpline and parents centre web service. This will mean that more parents will be able to get help with parenting over the phone at times to suit them and that information will be more relevant, comprehensive and easy to access.
- 5.29** Many parents face particular difficulties and uncertainties when their child starts or moves school, particularly when they move from primary to secondary school. Some parents find secondary schools less intimate and approachable.
- 5.30** To meet these concerns, we will provide additional funding to enable schools to offer information sessions to parents when their child starts at primary or secondary school. In these sessions, parents will receive advice on issues ranging from how to help their child with their homework to how to deal with bullying. There would also be links with other family support services to which some parents could be referred.
- 5.31** The challenges faced when children change schools may be even greater for those from poorer and minority ethnic backgrounds. At the same time these parents may feel less confident to come forward and ask for support, especially if they do not speak English fluently. This makes it important that schools make a particular effort to reach out to those parents who might not normally be engaged – including parents, often fathers, who do not live with their children.

Some schools now employ dedicated home-school outreach workers and we would like to see a greater use of these in encouraging and supporting disengaged parents to attend parents' evenings, target setting events and information sessions, and to provide practical help in accessing transport to and from school and child care.

- 5.32** In addition, we expect schools and local authorities to take extra steps to ensure that the benefits of positive parental engagement in learning are not lost for children in local authority care. This may be through additional pastoral support, but also through more proactive links between foster and other carers locally.

Supporting Children and Parents

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Summary:

We will enable schools to support the broader health and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- ensuring schools develop childcare and other services that give pupils and parents more opportunities and support outside the normal school day;
- ensuring better access to targeted support services for children who need it;
- ensuring every school is able to provide a safe environment for children and young people and identify those who are at risk from abuse or neglect, and take appropriate action; and
- taking action to help schools improve children's health and to improve school food.

6.1 High educational standards and well-being go hand in hand. Children will succeed best when they are healthy, self-confident and well-motivated. The best schools sit at the heart of their local communities, drawing strength and support from those they serve and, in turn, working with a range of other services to support families and children and young people facing the greatest challenges.

- 6.2** Through extended schools, we will offer a wider range of activities to a larger group of children. This will stretch and stimulate children and young people, ensuring that opportunities to learn and engage in sport and enrichment activities are widely available, particularly to the disadvantaged. This will extend childcare choice for parents with, over time, an offer of 8am–6pm care available in every community, giving them flexible opportunities to work and peace of mind that their children are safe and constructively engaged. As a community resource, these schools, working together and with other agencies, will provide an accessible base for a range of services to support children and families.
- 6.3** Many schools already provide a range of support to help pupils learn and achieve and we set out in Chapter 4 how we propose further to tailor that support. But there is more that schools can do to extend the opportunities available to meet children’s individual needs and talents. This is important for all children – but for those from deprived backgrounds it can make all the difference to their chances in life.
- 6.4** Many children and young people experience problems at some point in their lives. If these become serious, they can lead to a wide range of negative outcomes for young people, including health problems, teenage pregnancy or being out of education or employment. They can also contribute to poor behaviour by young people. Where this happens, we need to provide the right mix of support and challenge.
- 6.5** Many such problems cannot be solved by a school acting alone. Close working is likely to be needed not only with parents but also with other public services, such as the local health service and the police.
- 6.6** We therefore need to ensure that different services working with the same child do so coherently. Too often a child needing additional support has been faced with a slow and incoherent response, with numerous agencies working separately. Equally, some agencies have felt too pressurised to be able to deal with all the demands made of them.
- 6.7** Our reforms to early years and childcare provision are already showing what is possible where services work together effectively to support children and families. Our *Every Child Matters* reforms set a framework for local authorities, health, Youth Offending Teams and other partners to agree priorities and commission services that respond better to children’s and families’ needs. For young people we want these to include more positive activities, and opportunities to volunteer. An integral part of the reforms will be taking forward the National Services Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services – a ten-year strategy that sets national standards for improving children’s health and wellbeing.

- 6.8** At the school level, extended schools will increasingly broaden what schools can offer. From this September, the new school inspection arrangements recognise the contribution schools make to pupils' wider well being – being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well being – the five outcomes for children to which we are committed.

Extended schools: support for all children

- 6.9** Our ambitious commitment to schools offering extended 8am–6pm provision to pupils, and our childcare pledge are key to supporting children's learning and to families' involvement and engagement with schools in their communities.

Extended services at Galliard Primary School, Enfield

Galliard is a 620 pupil community primary school which has developed a range of extended services to engage parents and families in the school. These include a breakfast club and after-school play and holiday activities. Headteacher Rosemarie Hopkins says "The impact of extended services has been phenomenal. Not only has it encouraged more parents and community members to come into the school, but last year's results were significantly higher than we expected. We attribute much of this improvement to the programmes and support that we offered to pupils and families."

The school collaborates with other agencies to provide different services. Social services provide a family worker one day per week, the Primary Care Trust provides speech and language clinics, and a school nurse provides drop-in clinics for parents. In partnership with other services and the voluntary sector, the school has also established a family drop-in centre to provide a wider range of support.

A study of last year's Key Stage 1 results showed that, in comparative terms, the children in Year 2 who had received this Full Service Intervention support achieved better results than their year group.

- 6.10** We want all schools to work with other children's services and the private and voluntary sector to offer access to a range of extended services at or through their school. These will include homework clubs as well as opportunities for sport, music and drama; special interest clubs such as additional languages, chess or first aid courses; visits to museums and galleries; and volunteering, business and enterprise activities. These will give all children and young people a richer experience that will widen their horizons and help stretch and extend their learning and development.

- 6.11** Extended schools will also offer services for their local community, such as ICT services, sports facilities or adult learning. This may include parenting support, including information sessions for parents at key transition points, parenting programmes or family learning sessions that allow parents to learn with their children.
- 6.12** By 2008, we want half of all primary schools and a third of all secondary schools to be providing access to these extended services, with all schools doing so by 2010. We have already spent £160 million to support this, and will invest a further £680 million by 2008. Local authorities, schools, parents and the private and voluntary sectors will need to work together to plan and develop services in each community, which seek to take account of the problems children and young people from workless and low income families may have in taking part in activities that are charged for.

Targeted support

- 6.13** For children and young people who have additional needs or who face particular problems, parents and teachers need to be able to draw on appropriate specialist services outside schools, through the stronger links being established by the new Children's Trusts at local level.
- 6.14** Children's Trusts are seeking to shift resources to preventative work designed to catch problems early. That will help ensure an earlier and more effective response to young people, for example those who may be at risk of getting involved in anti-social behaviour or offending. Many Trusts are trialling a Common Assessment Framework, designed to enable practitioners to identify additional needs and intervene early. They are also developing a lead professional role as a single point of contact at local level to co-ordinate services where more than one agency is involved.
- 6.15** More and more schools are choosing to share their premises with professionals from other agencies, meaning on-site support is available quickly when a problem is identified. Some primary schools are co-located with children's centres which bring together childcare, early development, health and parenting support and employment advice for parents of under-5s. Safer School Partnerships are also tackling youth crime by basing police officers directly in schools.
- 6.16** Our Green Paper *Youth Matters* set out an ambition to provide better and earlier support for young people, particularly those with additional or complex needs. Children's Trusts will pilot targeted youth support teams which will work closely with schools and with the new school behaviour collaboratives to improve access to services beyond the school.

Identifying and helping vulnerable children

- 6.17** All agencies share responsibility for safeguarding children and protecting them from harm.
- 6.18** Schools have a statutory duty to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This means providing a safe environment for children and young people in their care. It means being able to identify children and young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, abuse or neglect and taking appropriate action to make sure they are kept safe both at home and at school. And it means schools working with other children's services and the new Local Safeguarding Children's Boards to report concerns about children's welfare and play their part in multi-agency work to protect them. Schools need to ensure staff have the awareness and training they need to do this.
- 6.19** Good and up-to-date information is key to ensuring that children at risk do not slip through the net. Without the right information, practitioners cannot form sound judgements, assess needs and decide which services are needed to support a child. We are currently consulting on draft guidance on information sharing for all practitioners who work with children, young people and families, whether in the public, private or voluntary sectors. We have been developing proposals for an index with national coverage of children and young people to support information sharing practice and expect to make an announcement on this later in the autumn.

Special Educational Needs and disability

- 6.20** Individual children's SEN or disabilities can present significant barriers to learning, and the school environment has a vital part to play in overcoming those barriers. As part of their annual self-evaluation, schools will need to show how all their pupils are achieving, including children with SEN and disabilities. This process will help them to fulfil the duties they will have under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people and develop and publish a Disability Equality Scheme.

Missing children

- 6.21** A small but significant group of children are missing out on education altogether. These children are a diverse group and by definition, difficult to identify and bring back into learning. Some have personal or family issues that have made it hard for them to access learning; others may be asylum seekers or Travellers who are not settled in one place.
- 6.22** We are consulting through the review of Pupil Registration Regulations on new measures to tighten up the requirements on schools to inform the local authority

of children leaving their school rolls. And we want to build on the good practice in many authorities for identifying children missing education. By December 2005, all local authorities should have systematic arrangements in place for identifying children missing from education, so that suitable provision can be made for them.

Boarding provision

6.23 Most parents want their children to be in a local school. However, for some children, this will not always be the right way to meet their complex needs. Boarding schools can meet the needs of some children in difficult family situations who require additional support to prevent family breakdown or a move into the care system. The total number of children falling into this category will always be small, but we believe that boarding provision should be used in more cases than at present, where a careful assessment of the child's individual needs indicates that this would be beneficial. We will, therefore, work with a sample of local authorities and other partners to design a pathfinder project to develop tools for identifying and assessing those children whose needs could be met by appropriate boarding provision

Looked After Children

6.24 "Looked After Children" – children in care – remain one of the most disadvantaged groups in our society and need particular support and access to specialist services. Whilst some do well at school, as a group they underachieve. Fewer than 10% achieved five good GCSEs or the equivalent in 2004. We are determined to improve the opportunities they have to succeed.

6.25 We have introduced a new duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of all the children for whom they have responsibility. We will expect the new School Improvement Partners – described in Chapter 2 – to hold schools to account for how well they support Looked After Children and for improving educational outcomes.

6.26 We will consult early in 2006 on a more wide-ranging set of proposals for transforming outcomes for Looked After Children. Achieving a step change in life-chances for this group will require continued improvements in fostering and residential care. But we also look at other ways in which these children might benefit from additional help and support.

Promoting good health

6.27 If children are to succeed they need to arrive in the classroom ready and able to learn. Poor health – and particularly a poor diet exacerbated by a lack of physical activity or sport – can mean children and young people are unable to

concentrate. This can compound problems of low-level disruption, poor behaviour and poor attendance.

- 6.28** Research suggests that low income is a major barrier to healthy eating – deprived households are more likely to have unhealthy food. And obesity rates are rising. The British Medical Association estimates that 1 in 5 boys and 1 in 3 girls will be obese by 2020. Recent research has found that, particularly among younger children, poor nutrition and obesity are associated with social deprivation.
- 6.29** Improving children’s health should therefore help to improve outcomes, particularly for the most disadvantaged. Our successful Healthy Schools Programme, run jointly with the Department of Health, brings together healthy eating, physical activity, supporting pupil’s emotional health and Personal, Social and Health Education to help pupils live healthy lives.
- 6.30** More than 16,000 schools and all local authorities are now involved in the programme. Schools with Healthy School status have better results at Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 science. Healthy schools are more inclusive and pupils report other positive improvements such as diminished fear of bullying and a reduced likelihood of using illegal drugs. Another £9.3 million will be available to ensure that, by next year, half of all schools in England should be part of the programme, with the rest working toward Healthy Schools status by 2009.

Hammersmith and Fulham Healthy Schools programme

A Smoothieathon competition created huge enthusiasm about healthy eating amongst the children in Hammersmith and Fulham schools, as part of the Healthy Schools programme last year. All schools that took part were given blenders, and prizes were awarded to the schools and children who produced the best drinks.

The Healthy Schools programme now extends to 53 schools in the borough. Ten schools have achieved the Healthy Schools standard, with ambitious take-up targets for forthcoming years. The programme has introduced a number of borough-wide initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles, as well as supporting individual schools.

The programme has provided vital support to All Saints’ Primary School in Fulham, which has introduced a number of healthy food projects, including a gardening club. The club was part-funded by the programme, and they bought seeds and organised a community gardener and community dietician. The children’s awareness of healthy eating has improved and they enjoy cooking and eating food they have grown themselves.

6.31 The national school sport strategy is ensuring more and more children and young people do a minimum of two hours of high quality PE and sport each week. The 2004/05 school sport survey showed that 69% of pupils in the 11,400 schools taking part were spending at least two hours in a typical week on PE and sport, up seven percentage points from the previous year. The strategy includes targeted action to engage and encourage those groups – girls, children with SEN or disabilities and those from ethnic minority or deprived backgrounds – who have often been reluctant to participate in sport or physical activity.

Healthy school food

6.32 Diet can be an important factor in ensuring that children are ready and able to learn effectively. We have taken decisive action which will help ensure a step-change in the quality not just of the main school meal at lunch, but also of the food available throughout the day, for example in vending machines or tuck shops. In March 2005, we announced a £235 million transitional funding package to support schools and local authorities to transform school meals. And in October 2005, the School Meals Review Panel's final report recommended tough new nutritional standards.

6.33 These standards are currently subject to consultation, but we firmly support the recommendation that, from September 2006, lunches will need to meet tough food-based standards, with stretching nutrient-based standards to be introduced in future years. We also support widening the scope of legislation to enable similar standards to be applied to other food outlets in schools such as tuck shops and vending machines.

6.34 Many schools already recognise the benefits of improving school meals. Parents are also increasingly putting pressure on local authorities and schools to improve. We welcome this and are establishing the School Food Trust to give independent support and advice to schools and parents to improve the standard of school meals. We must ensure that changes are lasting and that parents have the right information to guide their children's choices.

Fresh Start menus, Orchard Vale Community School

Orchard Vale Community School is taking part in a pilot with the local authority in Devon and Devon Direct Services to improve pupils' health and lifestyle, as part of the Fresh Start menus programme.

The new menus include roasts, fish, home-made pies, fresh fruit and home-made puddings. Out go high fat, high salt processed meat and in comes fresh produce and dishes cooked from scratch. The new menus have been very popular with the children and take-up of school meals has improved.

The school also involves parents. Recently 200 parents and children took part in a school meal tasting session. Parents could see what food the school has to offer and dispel some of the myths about school food.

Headteacher Jan Baker said: "The new menus have made a tremendous improvement to the quality of our school meals. It is important to give the right sort of 'fuel' to the pupils, making them more able to take part and enjoy our structured exercise programme 'Take 10'. The pupils feel that their work improves after eating healthy food and taking part in regular exercise."

School nurses

- 6.35** Schools nurses can play a critical role in supporting schools to promote good health. We remain committed to ensuring that by 2010 every Primary Care Trust – working with Children's Trusts and local authorities – will be resourced to have at least one full-time year-round qualified school nurse working with each cluster or group of primary schools and the related secondary school, taking account of health needs and school populations.
- 6.36** We will encourage heads to engage with Primary Care Trusts to consider how school nurses could best help improve the health and well-being of their pupils. We will be providing – in November 2005 – a practical guide for headteachers, *Looking for a School Nurse?*, which will set out both the benefits and some of the practical considerations that are associated with having a school nurse on-site or assigned to a school or cluster of schools.

School Discipline

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Summary:

The Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline – a group of experienced headteachers and senior teachers – has examined these issues in detail. We will implement their recommendations by:

- introducing a clear and unambiguous legal right for teachers to discipline pupils, including re-affirmation of the right to restrain pupils using reasonable force, backed by an expectation that every school has a clear set of rules and sanctions;
- extending parenting orders, so that schools can use them to make parents take responsibility for their children's bad behaviour in school;
- expecting parents to take responsibility for excluded pupils in the first five days of an exclusion, by ensuring their children are supervised doing schoolwork, with fines for parents if excluded pupils are found in a public place during school hours;
- expecting headteachers collectively to develop on and off-site alternative provision for suspensions longer than five days, with all exclusions properly recorded;
- requiring local authorities to make full-time provision for permanently excluded pupils after five days; and
- making discipline a key factor in evaluating school performance.

- 7.1** Good discipline is vital in school. Without it, it is impossible for teachers to teach and for pupils to learn. Good schools already have clear discipline and behaviour codes in place, where everybody knows what is expected of them – and what the sanctions are for misbehaviour.
- 7.2** We want this best practice to be shared by every school. That is why we invited the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline – a group of experienced headteachers and senior teachers led by Sir Alan Steer – to examine these issues in detail. Their report, published on 21 October, warmly welcomes a number of our programmes to improve behaviour in schools. It confirms that the quality of teaching and learning is inseparable from behaviour in schools and that school leaders, school staff and parents all have a crucial role to play in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour.
- 7.3** We will work with the professional associations, local authorities and other partners to disseminate the Group's findings on good practice and to ensure that they are embedded in every school. The Group also makes a number of detailed policy recommendations, and these have led to many of the proposals in this chapter.

Progress since 1997

- 7.4** This Government is the first to implement a comprehensive national strategy for improving behaviour in schools. We are:
- backing the authority of headteachers to impose discipline. We have confirmed headteachers' power to exclude a pupil permanently for serious misbehaviour (even for a first offence) and have reformed exclusion appeal panels to strike a better balance between the interests of the individual and the school community as a whole;
 - providing schools with guidance and training materials, supported by expert advice through the National Strategies;
 - providing extra resources through Excellence in Cities, the Behaviour Improvement Programme and other channels to support schools facing the greatest challenges (see box below);
 - improving the quality of out-of-school provision through guidance to schools and local authorities on their respective roles and responsibilities in managing alternative provision; and
 - reinforcing parents' responsibility for their children's behaviour. We have enabled schools and local authorities to make parenting contracts with parents whose children have been excluded for misbehaviour; and local authorities to apply for court-imposed parenting orders for parents of excluded pupils.

We now have:

- 12,000 learning mentors;
- 1,500 in-school learning support units;
- 400 Safer School Partnerships, placing police officers in schools;
- 140 multi-agency Behaviour and Education Support Teams;
- 14,500 places in out-of-school Pupil Referral Units (compared with 7,500 in 1997); and
- A requirement on local authorities to make full-time educational provision for all permanently excluded pupils from the sixteenth day of their exclusion.

7.5 We are clear that there must be zero tolerance of both serious and lower-level discipline and behaviour issues. We are further strengthening our existing approach through:

- legislating to give headteachers new powers to search pupils for knives and other weapons;
- sharpening the focus on those secondary schools where Ofsted have judged standards of behaviour to be unsatisfactory. Over 200 expert National Strategies' behaviour consultants are now supporting and challenging these schools. Ofsted is making follow-up visits within a year to check on progress; and
- encouraging schools to form or join partnerships with other schools to improve behaviour and reduce persistent truancy. Such partnerships will be able to use pooled funding from the schools' delegated budgets and funding devolved from the local authority to plan, provide and drive up the quality of alternative provision.

7.6 While 74% of secondary schools now have good or better behaviour according to Ofsted, 20% have behaviour that is only satisfactory and 6% have behaviour that is unsatisfactory or worse. This is often caused by too little consistency in dealing with poor behaviour, particularly the low-level disruption to lessons – back chat, rudeness, calling out in class – that makes teaching and learning more difficult, saps morale and is widely cited by teachers as a key reason for leaving the profession. Ofsted confirm that this is by far the most common type of misbehaviour. Any practical discipline and behaviour strategy must therefore deal with low-level disruption as well as more serious misbehaviour. It must also deal with those parents that do not take their responsibilities seriously enough; and even question the teacher's right to discipline their child.

- 7.7** Therefore, we will implement the key Steer Group proposals and reinforce the importance of robust discipline and behaviour policies in schools. Although more pupils attend school than ever, we will bear down on the small hard core of persistent truants. And we will make it clear that bullies should be punished.

The right to discipline

- 7.8** We will introduce a clear and unambiguous legal right for teachers to discipline pupils, backed by an expectation that every school has a clear set of rules and sanctions. This was originally recommended by the Elton committee in 1989, but was not implemented by the Government of the day. Since then many heads and teachers have found that their authority is being challenged by violent and threatening parents, who question their decision to punish, detain or suspend badly-behaved youngsters. Moreover, the current law is based on the *in loco parentis* principle and the supporting case law is now quite old.
- 7.9** There is no place for ambiguity when it comes to the right of teachers to discipline children. We have already published guidelines on teachers' rights to restrain pupils. Now we believe that the right to discipline should be set down clearly in law so that no parent can again question a teacher's authority on this matter, when he or she is acting reasonably. We will consult with schools and teachers on how we frame the new law.

Parents must take their responsibilities seriously

- 7.10** Most parents recognise that it is their responsibility to ensure that their child behaves well. But this is not true for all parents: some parents refuse to take their parental responsibilities seriously; others feel unable to do so, because they have never been shown how.
- 7.11** Since February 2004, parenting contracts and parenting orders have been available to reinforce parents' responsibilities following the exclusion of their children. Schools, local authorities and parents have already agreed more than 400 contracts – feedback has been positive. We will allow parenting contracts to be used earlier in order to tackle poor behaviour before exclusions occur. Parenting orders, for parents that will not engage with voluntary measures, compel parents to attend a parenting programme and comply with any other conditions imposed by the court. We will extend parenting orders, so that schools can use them to make parents take responsibility for their children's bad behaviour in school and so that they can be used for serious misbehaviour where the pupil has not been excluded.

Excluded pupils

- 7.12** There are now 10,000 permanent exclusions and 344,000 suspensions (fixed-period exclusions) each year, involving 200,000 individual pupils. This is a crucial

sanction for headteachers, and an important part of any discipline code. But it is also crucial that each suspension is seen as a serious punishment, both by the pupil and his or her parents.

- 7.13** We will build on the recommendations from the Steer Group and establish a new regime for suspended pupils. We will expect parents to take responsibility for excluded pupils in the first five days of an exclusion (by ensuring that their children are supervised doing schoolwork at home or, for example, at a relative's house) and will introduce a new offence, with fines for parents if excluded pupils are found in a public place during school hours. We will also legislate to implement the Group's recommendation that reintegration interviews following any exclusion from a primary or special school or exclusions of five days or more from a secondary school should be mandatory for parents.
- 7.14** We will expect headteachers to use their delegated and devolved funding collectively to develop on and off-site alternative provision for suspensions longer than five days. We will also insist that all exclusions are properly recorded. We agree with the Steer Group's recommendation that there should be a proper focus at national level on the professional development of staff in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and alternative provision, as part of our drive to improve the quality.
- 7.15** Local authorities are currently required to provide permanently excluded pupils with a full time education from the sixteenth day of their exclusion. We will require local authorities to make such provision from the sixth day.

Pupil Referral Units

The Pupil Referral Units in Wycombe Grange in High Wycombe and Chess Valley Grange in Chesham provide education and support to pupils who have been excluded from school or are unable to attend. This includes pupils who have been excluded for all or part of the week, those who are out of school due to chronic illness, pregnant teenagers and young mothers. The Wycombe Grange Unit received the DfES Raising Achievement Award for three years running. It is a fully accredited "Healthy School" and in 2003 achieved The Buckinghamshire Swan Award for Exceptional Pupil Progress.

The Units provide a wide range of services which effectively support young people by working in partnership with them, their parents, the local authority and an array of related professionals. They also provide support for pupils who risk social exclusion because they find it difficult to cope in a mainstream school setting. Both Units are well resourced and help deliver all elements of the National Curriculum, Foundation Subjects and an ever-increasing range of alternative provision.

Both sites have recently been graded 'outstanding' under the new Ofsted framework.

- 7.16** We have considerably reformed exclusion appeals panels, first set up by the previous administration in 1987, so that there is a stronger voice for serving and former headteachers, teachers and others with current or recent direct experience of schools. The result has been that, of nearly 10,000 permanent exclusions in 2003/04, just 130 students were reinstated on appeal.
- 7.17** We asked the Steer Group to tell us whether the panels should be completely replaced. Like many headteachers, the Group worry that their absence could see too many cases ending up in court. Instead, they have proposed reforms which will reduce the risk of cases being overturned on technicalities. Panels would have to:
- accept the judgement of headteachers and governors where it is clear that the pupil has committed the offence;
 - emphasise the need for headteachers and governors to be from the same phase of education as the excluding school; and
 - make training for clerks and chairs mandatory.

We will implement the Group's recommendations.

- 7.18** We continue to be concerned at the overrepresentation of black pupils in exclusion figures. The Group made strong recommendations designed to ensure that schools adhere to principles of equality and fairness when considering exclusion. We will work with local authorities and schools to take this forward.

Putting schools in the lead

- 7.19** We believe that headteachers and schools should take the lead when it comes to local discipline policies. They should have the funding and the powers collectively to set up their own on or off-site alternative provision or pay others, including excellent voluntary providers, to provide them. They should be able to employ staff to monitor and enforce behaviour in their schools.
- 7.20** We have encouraged schools to form partnerships with other local schools to improve behaviour and reduce persistent truancy. We expect every secondary school to be part of such a partnership by September 2007. With those responsibilities, secondary schools will also be required to make arrangements for "hard to place" pupils, ensuring that no school takes an unreasonable share of children with challenging behaviour, including pupils who have been excluded from other schools.
- 7.21** School partnerships should develop good relationships with other providers and agencies, including children's social services to meet the full range of children's needs. These partnerships will contribute to the reform of children's services launched by *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*.

- 7.22** We accept the Group's advice that the new arrangements for school self-evaluation and accountability are an important means of improving the effectiveness of behaviour management. We will expect all schools to review their behaviour policy each year against established effective practice. We will work with Ofsted to make this a reality at the earliest opportunity. We will also explore with partners whether and how it would be helpful to develop a National Behaviour Charter, as recommended by the Group, to clarify the rights and responsibilities of pupils, parents and staff in promoting good behaviour in schools.
- 7.23** We agree with the Group that we should review whether or not to extend the right to search pupils without consent to include drugs and stolen property, in the light of schools' experience in implementing the new right to search for weapons.

A whole-school approach to improving behaviour

In 2000 Hillcrest School and Community College, Dudley, had only 80 children apply to attend the school – and even then, many as a third choice – after it had been in special measures for two years. Now, the school is oversubscribed. This year 450 pupils applied for the 150 places available following the implementation of a whole-school behaviour improvement strategy, developed and put in place by the leadership team.

The school has succeeded in minimising low-level disruption, tackling persistent misbehaviour and decreasing the number of exclusions. The creation of an internal exclusion room was an important part of this; helping to reduce classroom misbehaviour and repeat offences. The school day was also staggered, with half hour lunch periods that allowed for monitoring of children's diets and led to improved attendance and behaviour in the afternoons. A parent link worker is employed to support parents, strengthening links between school and home.

A mentoring and anti-bullying strategy using former Year 11 pupils allows the school to respond immediately to any issues raised by the mentor. The school is also better staffed to minimise the problems that can be associated with supply teachers and instability. Its social environment has been further improved with "buddy" support for new starters and rewards for good behaviour. The Headteacher, Dame Mo Brennan comments that; "Unless there is consistency within a school when it comes to the children's behaviour from all members of staff, then the school will be unable to combat behavioural problems. We have managed to implement a consistent approach to managing the student's behaviour and as a result there is a better understanding amongst the staff and between the staff and their students. This consistency has allowed us to combat unruly behaviour and create a better learning environment."

Good teaching and vocational education

7.24 Well-planned and well-delivered lessons inspire and engage pupils, minimising the risk that a minority will lose interest and drift into low-level disruption. There is no excuse for such bad behaviour, but it is also every school's responsibility to ensure its pupils receive a tailored education, matching their individual strengths and weaknesses. Our proposals to personalise learning, set out in Chapter 4, are an important plank in our overall strategy to instil good behaviour in every school.

Learning Support Units

Nottingham City Local Authority has invested in Learning Support Units (LSUs) that have seen most of the pupils who use the provision successfully re-integrated into mainstream. Of the 194 Key Stage 3 pupils accessing LSU provision in 2004, 22% achieved the desired level in English and 31% in maths. Over half of the 144 pupils achieved five or more GCSEs.

The LSU network in Nottingham finds the most appropriate curriculum to re-engage challenging pupils who have become disengaged with their learning in the school mainstream. Each of the 18 secondary schools in Nottingham City has at least one LSU for Key Stage 3 and/or 4 pupils.

Professor Saul Becker of Birmingham University has researched the therapeutic approaches used in the Nottingham City's LSUs and found them key to helping pupils return to mainstream provision successfully: "The key elements are the relationships that pupils make with LSU staff, the safe, positive and supportive environment that is established and the time available for pupils' needs to be addressed through individual and small group work."

7.25 We will also ensure that there is curriculum flexibility, so that all pupils can benefit from the style and pace of learning that fits with their aptitudes, interests and learning styles. The *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* set out our plans to review the Key Stage 3 curriculum, creating more time to stretch the more able and support those who are behind. The White Paper also set out our plans to develop a strongly work-focused programme for those 14-16 year-olds most at risk of disengagement. We will pilot the new programme from 2006 and expect to make it available to up to 10,000 young people from 2007/08. The programme will have an important role in re-engaging some of our most disaffected young people.

Strengthening the links between home and school

7.26 We are sympathetic to the case the Group makes for all schools to develop the function of a Pupil and Parent Support Worker to work with parents and pupils in

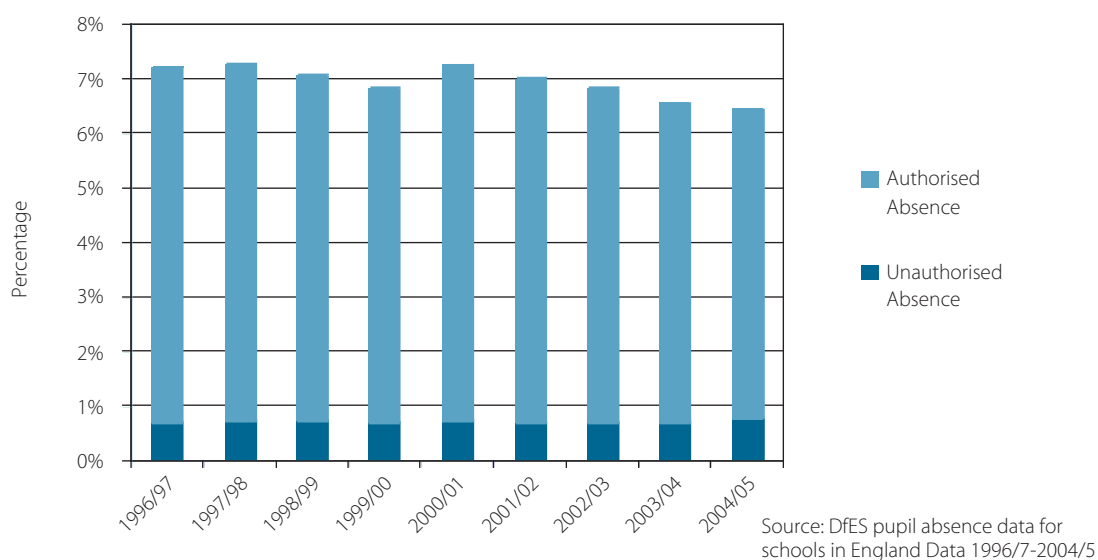
cases of misbehaviour. We will consider with partners how this function might be developed, building on existing learning mentors and using the flexibility created by the reforms we have made to the nature of the school workforce (see Chapter 8).

7.27 Parents can feel frustrated when they have serious concerns about behaviour and the school is not willing to act. We set out in Chapter 5 our proposals for ensuring that parents have access to clear, local complaints procedures, including, where appropriate, the ability to trigger action by Ofsted.

Tackling truancy

7.28 Truancy blights the lives of young people and reduces their chances of achieving at school and beyond. Truants can make the lives of others a misery and those who truant persistently are more likely than others to turn to crime or to end up unemployed.

Absence from Primary and Secondary Schools 1996/97-2004/05



7.29 There are two strands to school attendance. The first is where parents seek permission to take children out of school during term, perhaps for a family holiday. Such absence can disrupt a child’s education, not least when it is at a crucial stage in their school career. We have encouraged schools to discourage such term-time activities; often, permission is now refused.

7.30 We have also encouraged schools to tighten procedures for monitoring and managing absence. We have supported the development of e-registration, which helps schools identify absence trends at class and individual pupil level as a basis for early intervention.

7.31 As a result, we have improved school attendance overall. Absence rates have fallen for four years in succession since 2000/01, to a new record low rate of

6.45%. This reduction in absence equates to an average of 54,000 more pupils in school every single day.

- 7.32** But there is a smaller, more worrying strand. Unauthorised absence is made up of pupils deliberately skipping school and parents keeping their children away from school without permission. The level of unauthorised absence has stubbornly failed to fall, despite the introduction by schools of better registration systems and earlier notification to parents.
- 7.33** We will clamp down on truancy. Parents will be more strongly discouraged from condoning truancy, through greater use of fines and further truancy sweeps in urban areas.
- 7.34** However, at the heart of this problem is a hard core of persistent truants. Research in inner city secondary schools found that 2% of pupils accounted for nearly half of all unauthorised absence in those schools. We have begun immediate action in the 146 secondary schools attended by 8,000 known truants. We will expect each of these schools to detect and prevent truancy in its earliest stages.

Tackling truancy

In 2002/03 absence at Filsham Valley Community School was 11.9% – over 40% higher than the national level for secondary schools. But by making a concerted effort to tackle truancy, absence fell by 20% in 2003/04, and further in 2004/05, to 8.6% – close to the national average.

The school's systems for recording and monitoring attendance were satisfactory; the school felt that too many parents had been condoning their child's absence. Supported by East Sussex Local Authority, the school used the *Fast-track to Attendance* model to address this. Following an initial push, with a formal attendance panel held on a weekly basis, the school increasingly engaged parents in discussion regarding absence using regular telephone contact, empowering them to act. This also enabled the school and its Education Welfare Officer to deal with poor attendance more quickly and effectively and to prosecute where progress was inadequate. The engagement of pupils was achieved through curriculum development, a clear rewards system focussed on attendance and mentoring and support.

Tackling bullies

- 7.35** A significant part of the discipline problem in schools is caused by bullies, who make their fellow pupils' lives a misery. Bullying has no place in schools – and every school has a responsibility to make this clear to pupils, parents and teachers.

7.36 Schools should set out their response to bullying as part of their discipline code, with punishments and sanctions set out clearly for all to see. Schools should act decisively to send a clear message to the bully, parents and pupils that such behaviour will not be tolerated. We will accept the Steer Group's recommendation and will issue further advice on tackling bullying motivated by prejudice, including racism and homophobia. Victims must see that when they have had the courage to report bullying, their complaints are acted upon. Victims should not be made to feel that they are to blame: responsibility should be directed where it belongs.

7.37 We take bullying very seriously. We have done much to help schools to reduce and respond to bullying. Central to this drive is the Anti-Bullying Charter for Action. The Steer Group has recommended that the Charter be re-issued to schools every two years, to sustain momentum. We accept this recommendation and shall be circulating the Charter to all schools this year during Anti-Bullying Week. We are looking to all schools to demonstrate their commitment by signing up to and implementing the Charter.

7.38 As part of their discipline policy, schools should have a range of sanctions to deal with bullying, which should be fairly and consistently applied. These might include:

- removal from the group (in class);
- withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges;
- detention;
- withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum; or
- fixed period exclusion.

Where violence takes place, schools should be ready to involve the police, and in the most severe cases, they should exclude pupils permanently.

Pupils with BESD

7.39 There is a small group of pupils with severe or complex behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). We want to ensure that the underlying causes of their behaviour are identified as early as possible so that these children can access multi-agency support. We accept the Steer Group's recommendation that further investigation is required to determine how we might improve BESD provision.

The School Workforce and School Leadership

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Summary:

To develop a workforce that will benefit every child, we will:

- train and assess new types of specialist staff to:
 - support personalised learning
 - enrich the primary curriculum
 - foster good behaviour and discipline
 - deliver vocational subjects for 14-19 year olds
 - expand out-of-hours opportunities;
- develop new professional standards for teachers, supported by high quality in-school training and mentoring and effective performance management linked to rewards;
- ensure an improving supply of high quality specialist teachers and teaching assistants in maths and science;
- expand Teach First to five more cities;
- ensure clear career pathways and better recognition for support staff;
- recognise our best headteachers as “National Leaders of Education”; and
- ensure better support for governors.

- 8.1** As described in Chapter 1, since 1997 we have transformed the shape and quality of the workforce in our schools. We have increased the numbers of teachers; they are better rewarded – pay has increased 20% in real terms; and pay and promotion are increasingly linked to results and pupil progress. School support staff numbers have doubled, to over 260,000, with more trained and qualified staff than ever before playing leading roles in the classroom. ICT is available to support the work and aspirations of the whole workforce.
- 8.2** We have tackled the longstanding problems with teacher supply. We have introduced bursaries and golden hellos for shortage subjects and new routes into teaching. Record numbers are now applying for teacher training. Teaching is now the first-choice profession for graduates. Headteachers are able to focus their energies on improving standards for children, rather than being preoccupied with filling vacancies.
- 8.3** We have introduced the first ever guarantee that primary teachers can spend more time assessing individual pupil progress and tailoring their lessons to pupil needs. And, for all teachers, we have guaranteed that this important time will not be taken away to cover for absent colleagues.

Planning and Preparation Assessment Time: Tidemill School, Lewisham

At Tidemill School in Lewisham, the introduction of Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time has reduced teacher stress in the school, improved lesson preparation and delivery and enabled staff to work more effectively as a team. It has allowed teachers to concentrate on teaching, improving morale, performance and school standards. PPA means that teachers are teaching less, but better.

Tidemill School was in special measures for over two years, having failed its Ofsted report at the end of 1999. In late November 2001 the school was at risk of closure and was extremely vulnerable. The school took some serious decisions about how they used their teachers, and guaranteed teachers 10% release time from teaching. They have introduced 'enrichment afternoons' involving outside specialists, such as an international women's footballer, musicians, and staff from a local dance centre.

The next phase of modernisation

- 8.4** These reforms have been cutting edge. They have set real challenges for those working in schools. And they have been designed and implemented in partnership with employers and unions. Over the coming years we will seek to

maintain this partnership as we continue our programme of modernisation to ensure higher standards and personalised learning for all pupils.

A new professionalism

- 8.5** Better standards are dependent on better teaching. The quality of teaching in our classrooms has been transformed since 1997. Ofsted judged teaching to be good or better in 78% of secondary schools inspected in 2004/05 compared with 59% in 1996/97, and in 74% of primary schools, compared with 45% in 1996/97. According to Ofsted, we already have the best ever generation of teachers.
- 8.6** We need high-quality teachers, with access to better professional development and a continuous focus on teaching and learning. But too many schools, and too many teachers, have not given a high enough priority to their own professional development.
- 8.7** A thorough reform of all teachers' professional standards will set out what can be expected of teachers at every stage of their career. This will include the need for teachers to have good up-to-date knowledge of their subject specialism as part of a clear commitment to effective professional development. We will introduce into this framework more stretch at all levels.
- 8.8** We will make performance management more effective. The greatest rewards and promotion throughout a teacher's career will go to those who make the biggest impact on pupils' progress and who show commitment to the development of themselves and their colleagues. The best training will be delivered in schools by our best teachers and we will ensure classroom observation and feedback are improved.
- 8.9** For our best and most experienced classroom teachers, access to the Excellent Teacher grade will be dependent on having been assessed as meeting demanding Excellent Teachers standards, showing that they have developed themselves professionally – including demonstrating excellence and up to date knowledge in their specialist area – and provided regular coaching and mentoring of other teachers.

Specialist teaching

- 8.10** We will ensure a good continuing supply of high-quality specialist teaching, including in the critical areas of maths and science. Since 2000/01 there has been significant improvement in recruitment to maths and science PGCE courses, with annual recruitment to maths up by around 60% over that period. We will, from September 2006, increase the value of the incentives for new maths and science trainees to £9,000 for bursaries and £5,000 for golden hellos.

- 8.11** We are committed to enabling every secondary school to recruit a maths and science Higher Level Teaching Assistant specialist by 2007/08. And through the establishment of national centres for both maths and science, we will provide high quality subject-specific training and development for the whole school workforce.

The brightest and best in teaching

- 8.12** We have developed new routes to enable teachers to train in the classroom, gaining practical day-to-day experience. The Graduate Teacher Programme, by providing more than 5,000 places a year, is now helping a significant number of adults who want to change careers to come into teaching. And, every year, 180 of the country's top graduates begin teaching in challenging city schools, as part of the Teach First programme.
- 8.13** Following the success of Teach First in London we will now extend the programme to five more cities, giving even more of our best graduates the opportunity to work in our most disadvantaged areas.

Teach First

Katherine Potheary graduated from University College, London with a degree in Physical Sciences. She applied for the Teach First programme, which is targeted at top graduates who might not otherwise have considered teaching. The programme places participants in London secondary schools which are facing challenging circumstances, where they teach shortage subjects for two years.

Katherine was placed in a large comprehensive school with a rich ethnic mix in the heart of East London. Nearly a third of pupils speak English as an additional language. Katherine describes it as a "fantastic opportunity to teach in some of the most challenging schools" and calls her experiences over the last two years "amazing and rewarding".

Having now completed her two years on the Teach First programme, Katherine has decided to continue teaching for a little longer, before pursuing a career in law, and she is moving to another challenging school in London as Head of Key Stage 5 science.

- 8.14** We will build on the Training and Development Agency for School's (TDA's) target of recruiting 9% of all newly qualified teachers from black and minority ethnic communities by 2008 to ensure we have a workforce – including headteachers and school leaders – which is more reflective of the pupils in our classrooms. We will also expand support available through the National Strategies to ensure all teachers have the skills and confidence to teach in a diverse classroom.

The right mix of high quality staff

8.15 We will ensure that the school workforce is able to play the wide range of roles set out in this White Paper, through:

- a group of leading teachers in every school to coordinate catch up and stretch activities, within and beyond the normal school day. This is essential for one-to-one and small group tuition;
- more support staff trained to a high level in literacy and numeracy; and more staff trained in vocational areas, like catering, to come into our schools and colleges to deliver the 14-19 diplomas;
- health and welfare staff ready for the new roles they will play in full-service and other extended schools;
- trained sports coaches, music tutors and modern foreign language assistants to enrich the primary curriculum;
- professionals with the credibility, recent practical experience and workplace knowledge to provide high-quality vocational education. Some of these will be school employees; some will be brought in from employers, work-based learning providers or colleges;
- trained specialists able to deal with disruptive behaviour, truancy and pastoral issues; and
- trained bursars and other administrative staff, freeing teachers to teach and ensuring the best use of resources to improve outcomes for children.

Wyndham School, Newcastle

Wyndham School in Newcastle has seen dramatic improvements in its results and in staff morale since it started making better use of its support staff. This is summed up by one of the school's parents: "if the school had been the same as it was in 2001, I wouldn't have wanted my child to go there – now I wouldn't want them to go anywhere else."

The school began remodelling its staff structure in 2001, following a poor Ofsted and falling rolls. Results have improved steadily. In 2004, the Key Stage 2 results were above the national average in English, with a value-added score among the highest in the country. More and more parents are now choosing to send their children to the school.

Support staff have been instrumental in the school's progress. They meet every fortnight with the headteacher to discuss what is happening in the school, looking at practical aspects, and examining any difficulties between teaching and non-teaching staff. This allows the school to be run much more effectively as any problems are ironed out and teachers can then concentrate on teaching.

Dame Pat Collarbone, Director of the National Remodelling Team, believes that "Successful remodelling embeds a positive, ambitious and inclusive culture in schools that enables everyone to play a part in driving change forward. The contribution of support staff to Wyndham's school improvement is testament to this."

- 8.16** We will ensure that all staff are able to make the optimum use of ICT in their work. And will encourage increased sharing of staff across schools, and between schools, colleges and business.

A modernisation agency

- 8.17** It will continue to be for schools to decide which staff they employ and how they deploy them. But to ensure that there is a coherent approach to change and development across the system we will designate the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) as our modernisation agency for the school workforce. The TDA will ensure there is an integrated programme to support modernisation across the school system; that training and assessment regimes are in place; and that professional advice on deployment and other staffing issues is available, building on the work of the former Teacher Training Agency and National Remodelling Team.
- 8.18** We and the TDA will work closely with unions, local authorities and other employers as we take forward the next phase of modernisation. The reforms of the last three years would not have been delivered without this partnership and we want that same spirit to continue.
- 8.19** An early challenge will be ensuring fair play and rewards for support staff. As the school system becomes more diverse, with increases in self-governing and Trust schools, we want to ensure this is supported by a more coherent approach to union recognition at school level; clearer career paths and skills escalators for support staff; and a more standardised and benchmarked approach to grading, job descriptions, contracts, rewards, deployment and support staff training and development.

Links to the wider children's workforce

8.20 The TDA – as a key partner of the new Children's Workforce Development Council and member of the Children's Workforce Network – is ideally placed to ensure there is the consistency of approach across the wider children's workforce that our partners on local authorities expect. It will also ensure that the common core of skills and knowledge for all who work with children, young people and families is integral to the development of school staff.

School leadership

8.21 Good leadership is at the heart of every good school. A strong headteacher, backed by an able leadership team and governing body, is vital for success. We are giving school leaders unprecedented freedoms and flexibilities to enable their schools to succeed:

- we are ensuring that from September 2006 all schools will receive multi-year budgets to aid longer-term planning, with a Dedicated Schools Grant and distribution at local level determined by the local authority, in consultation with headteachers, governors and other stakeholders through School Forums;
- the new approach to challenge and support for schools and the ongoing work of the Implementation Review Unit (described in Chapter 2) are putting all schools in charge of their development and stripping out bureaucracy and unwarranted interference; and
- we are improving the quality of local support services for children, and giving schools new opportunities as multi-service providers at the heart of their communities.

But alongside these freedoms and flexibilities, our best headteachers know the importance of responsible leadership and management, bringing school staff and the local community with them.

8.22 These changes are welcomed and encouraged by our best school leaders. As a next stage, we will develop better career paths for:

- those with the ability to run our most challenging schools;
- those with the talent to be developed as the school leaders of the future;
- those who could play expert non-teaching roles to improve the effectiveness of school senior management teams; and
- school leaders who have the talent and experience to be considered as national leaders of education.

Leading challenging schools

- 8.23** We have the best-ever generation of school leaders. But our best school leaders are not always been matched with our most challenging schools.
- 8.24** The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) has been reformed under powerful new leadership. We will ensure that high quality programmes are taken forward by the College, working in partnership where appropriate with the National Strategies, to develop the leaders of our most complex and challenging schools – those facing multiple disadvantage, Academies and in federations.
- 8.25** We will encourage the growth of federations and other partnership arrangements which ensure our most successful school leaders are used to best effect and are able to support our less successful schools.
- 8.26** We will help existing school leaders to bring on the next generation that will succeed them. We will look to the National College to help schools make more effective succession planning arrangements and to work with governor associations and other key partners, including local authorities, to develop advice to governors on recruitment, selection and succession planning.
- 8.27** And we are recasting the fast-track programme as a leadership development programme for serving teachers.

Gordon Hart, Headteacher of Park Middle School in Knypersley, Stoke-on-Trent.

When Gordon Hart took the helm at Park Middle School in Stoke-on-Trent the school was spiralling towards special measures. Now, three years into his headship, Park Middle is on the road to recovery, with Ofsted inspectors judging it to be an effective school with greatly improved teaching and learning and pupil achievement – and putting much of the change down to Gordon's "excellent leadership."

Gordon says that the development opportunities given to him by NCSL's Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH) played a major role in this transformation

"I came into a school that was failing amidst a good level of resourcing. We were able to turn that around into a very slick machine that Ofsted said gave good value for money. Ofsted attributed a good deal of this to my leadership, and I attribute a lot of that to LPSH. One of the most important things LPSH did for me was to reassure me that my approach to the school's problems were the right ones. It gave me great confidence. I found the opportunity LPSH gave me to examine myself and my motivations, as well as reflect on my colleagues' views of my leadership, to be very useful indeed."

A new mix amongst school leaders

- 8.28** We will support schools who wish to bring in a much wider field of professionals. That will enable people with expertise in, for example, human resources, estates management, or finance, to contribute to the strategic and operational direction of the school and its effective and efficient administration.
- 8.29** We shall develop clearer career paths within the school system for talented administrative and other staff from a non-teaching background. We will work with our partners on how we can support more minority ethnic teachers to become school leaders and ensure mainstream leadership programmes address issues for black and minority ethnic pupils more centrally.

Developing school leaders into national leaders

- 8.30** The National College for School Leadership is already undertaking a radical revision of the existing leadership development programmes to ensure every school leader benefits from more tailored provision to fit their current and future needs.
- 8.31** In addition, we will ask the College to identify, with the help of a range of partners, a new group of national leaders of education, drawn from those who are succeeding in our most challenging leadership roles.
- 8.32** These top headteachers will work closely with the College to influence the direction and targeting of leadership provision across the school system. They will also be able to advise Ministers on the future direction of education policy on the basis of their expert experience.

School governors

- 8.33** A huge debt is owed to school governors for their dedication and commitment. This is why we have made sure that school governors will be recognised in the next round of the Teaching Awards. One of the strengths of our school governing bodies is that they bring together experienced and energetic people from all backgrounds – people who know what is best for their school and their children.
- 8.34** The governing body remains responsible for the strategic leadership of all our schools whether Academy, Trust or voluntary aided. We see an enhanced role for governors as schools increasingly become more autonomous. Trust status will offer governors a real opportunity to have more control over the employment of staff, to be their own admissions authority and to ensure that the school provides the best possible education for its pupils.
- 8.35** Setting up charitable Trusts who can appoint governors is a way of strengthening school governing bodies, preserving their ethos, helping to invigorate school leadership and providing an external source of direction,

continuity and focus for the school. But it will be for the governing body to decide whether to acquire a Trust following a formal consultation process.

- 8.36** The provisions of the 2002 Education Act which allow each governing body to choose its own size (up to a maximum of 20 members) will remain in place. Many governing bodies have already decided on an optimum size. We hope that, as part of acquiring a Trust or otherwise, all governing bodies will consider carefully their optimum size. We encourage them to opt for the smallest effective model as we believe that this is the way to create energetic and focused governing bodies. For Trust schools where the Trust appoints a majority of the governors, the school could have a governing body of 11 members.
- 8.37** We want and need governing bodies capable of providing strong leadership; equipped and supported to contribute fully to effective decision-making and able to provide strategic direction. We are ambitious for schools and their governing bodies and that is why we recognise just how important good governor training is. We developed a national training programme for governors in 2001 which included comprehensive induction training. We will increasingly expect all new governors to take up induction training and all schools to make this a priority when making decisions about training and budgets. Last year, we launched “Taking the Chair” to support the crucial role of chair of governors and provided, through the “Leading Together” programme, the opportunity for governors and their senior management teams to develop their strategic leadership skills together.
- 8.38** Schools who take up the opportunities these programmes offer will build their capacity for the strategic leadership that is so necessary for the school of the future. We are currently collaborating with the National College for School Leadership, to develop a mentoring programme to further support the crucial role of chair of governors. We will continue to promote and accredit our training programmes with the help of our partners in local authorities.

A New Role for Local Authorities

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Summary:

To realise the vision set out in this White Paper we will ensure that:

- the local authority becomes a powerful champion of parents and pupils in their area, commissioning rather than providing education;
- the provision of new schools is opened up to greater competition, with blocks on progress reduced by abolishing the School Organisation Committee, which represents the interests of existing providers;
- local authorities have new powers and duties to enable them to undertake their commissioning role through which they will:
 - promote choice, diversity and fair access as well as high standards
 - map what is needed in their area, looking at demographics, diversity and demand for children’s services
 - ensure a sufficient supply of places, letting popular schools expand or federate, closing schools that are poor or fail to improve, and running competitions to open new schools
 - specify, for new and replacement schools, what the school should provide, the community it should serve, and how it should work in partnership with other schools and services;

- help all schools improve their standards, through the support and challenge of School Improvement Partners – and intervene decisively in schools that are falling below expectations, including ‘coasting’ schools, by issuing warning notices and taking radical action promptly where necessary; and
- our major programmes of capital investment support real choice, diversity and fair access in local areas.

- 9.1** The best local authorities are strategic leaders of their communities, listening to, and then speaking for their citizens, demanding the very best for those who elected them and building cultural and civic identity. They work with neighbourhoods and local communities to help them articulate their needs, and ensure that the pattern of local services matches up to their vision and aspirations. They act as the commissioners of services and the champions of users.
- 9.2** The best local authorities also recognise that providers need autonomy if they are to be able to innovate and develop, and that their role is to provide robust challenge when standards are not high enough.
- 9.3** We will support local authorities in playing a new commissioning role in relation to a new school system, at the heart of their local communities, and responsive to the needs of parents and pupils. They will support new schools and new provision where there is real demand or where existing provision is poor. This is a very different role from acting as a direct provider of school places. We recognise that in many ways it is more challenging. But it also offers the scope to ensure that communities receive the education they deserve and aspire to.

A new role for local authorities

- 9.4** The *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* programme, the 10 Year Child Care Strategy, the *Youth Matters* Green Paper and our 14-19 education reforms all reflect this commissioner role – putting children and families at the heart of the design and delivery of services. We now need to extend this role to the school system, building on existing good practice. This will be crucial to doing the best for parents and pupils, pushing up standards, and achieving our ambitions for extended schools and for real integration of education and other services.
- 9.5** We have already taken action to ensure that local authorities’ structures and ways of working reflect and support their responsibilities for young people’s education and their wider well-being. Under the Children Act 2004, local authorities have the lead role with local partners in setting up children’s trusts, focused on improving the well-being of all children and young people, and integrating services around their needs. This will include working in closer partnership with Local Learning and Skills

Councils (LLSCs) to deliver our 14-19 reforms and make sure that young people over the age of 16 can pursue the courses they want and the local economy needs.

- 9.6** A single Director and Lead Member in each local authority will be responsible for leading the partnership across education and other children’s services. To reinforce that integration, and the links to the local authority’s wider role in community leadership, we propose to remove the term ‘local education authority’ from the statute book, and, from now on, to refer to ‘local authorities’ in our publications and our new legislation.

Clarity of purpose

- 9.7** Local authorities have longstanding duties to ensure that there are enough school places in their area, and must carry out all their duties to promote high standards. But they have never been charged specifically with promoting choice and diversity in school places, nor ensuring that places are accessible for all. To underpin their role as commissioner of places and champion of pupils and parents, we will place local authorities under a new duty to promote choice, diversity and fair access.

A new role for the local authority in Sheffield

To clear the ground for a new way of planning provision and services across the city, Sheffield City Council has:

- agreed a settlement with secondary governors and headteachers which sets out the values and ambitions which will guide joint strategic decision-making. The four values are *equity, teaching and learning quality, trust and ambition*; and
- agreed that these values are underpinned by a commitment to four agreed ways of working: *collaboration, shared leadership, innovation and diversity*.

Sheffield is currently taking decisions on the development of 14-19 and post-16 provision, school reorganisation, the BSF programme, the operation of the New Relationship with Schools, secondary school improvement and the role of two new Academies. Each issue has a partnership group at its core.

Sheffield has also set out a new pattern of delivery for *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* through seven new service districts which will determine local responses, drawing on the integrated resources of all the city’s child and family support agencies. The governance and management arrangements of these districts will be informed by the same values and ways of working. One of the service districts will be supported by the two adjacent Academies, thereby sharing the benefits of their new investment in facilities and professional capacity with the wider community.

Parents' views

9.8 Local authorities already have a duty under the Children Act 2004 to take account of the importance of parents in drawing up their overall plans for children's services. This and the new duties set out in this White Paper will extend the local authority's role:

- we will expect all local authorities to find out parents' wishes in relation to schools and extended services – making a particular effort to seek the views of those whose voices may not otherwise be heard;
- we will require local authorities to respond to parental demand for new types of school, and expect them to give expert support to help parents develop their own proposals (see Chapter 2); and
- where schools are found to be failing their pupils, we will give the local authority a particular duty to seek parents' views, and a power to appoint a champion to support parents (see Chapter 2).

Designing the local school system

9.9 Local authorities will need to plan how many schools their local area needs, where and how big they need to be, what kind of schools will serve the area best, and who the schools should serve. Local authorities will draw on their analysis of parental demand and their consultation with local partners to draw up a strategic plan for the pattern of schools in their area, as part of their Children and Young People's Plan.

9.10 They will be able to make proposals to close down schools that are not doing well, and run competitions to open others, setting out what they want the new school to offer. They will be able to make decisions about where an Academy might be needed to drive up standards; and about how Building Schools for the Future funding should be used to support their aims. The local authority and LLSC will also need to work together, in the light of local demand, to secure the right pattern of provision from age 14.

9.11 To ensure their plans respond effectively to the new duties in respect of choice, diversity and fair access, local authorities will be supported and challenged by the new Schools Commissioner (see Chapter 2). We will expect local authorities to:

- hold competitions whenever a new school is required – we will extend the duty which they already have in respect of new secondary schools to cover primary schools as well;

- work actively with promoters, who might be parents' groups, education charities backed by business or community or voluntary sector bodies, to develop high quality proposals for Trust or voluntary aided schools to meet specific needs;
- make their own proposal for a self-governing (Foundation) school, if they cannot find a suitable promoter, in keeping with the commissioner role – no more community schools (primary or secondary) will be established;
- set out their expectations in respect of the community to be served by the school, when inviting proposals for new schools, considering the pattern of childcare or extended services, Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision, a focus on the needs of particular groups or black and minority ethnic children, and collaboration with other schools and services;
- work with new schools to ensure they continue to meet community needs – the nature of the school, including any specialist SEN provision, cannot be changed without further proposals; admission arrangements will be legally binding for the first three years; and the responsiveness and impact of extended services will be reported on by Ofsted;
- be able to make proposals for the expansion of existing schools, or the addition of specialist SEN facilities – a power which we will extend to cover self-governing (Foundation) and voluntary schools as these form an increasing proportion of schools. Local authorities will not have a monopoly on making proposals for expansion – they will need to build into their plans the scope for successful schools to expand and to add a sixth form, supported by the extra capital that we will make available; and
- use their leadership and influence to encourage and support collaborative working among schools, including independent schools, both to promote high standards and good behaviour and to ensure a seamless pattern of extended services. They will want to ensure that new schools play a full part in meeting the needs of the whole community.

9.12 Currently, local School Organisation Committees, which represent existing schools and providers in an area, decide whether or not proposals for new schools and for major changes to existing schools are accepted – with a right of appeal to the independent Schools Adjudicator. This adds to bureaucracy and gives a bias in favour of the status quo. We will therefore abolish School Organisation Committees and transfer these powers to the local authority. Guidance to local authorities will make clear that there should be no arbitrary obstacles preventing good school expansion or federation. The Schools Commissioner (see Chapter 2) will advise the Secretary of State on the use of her powers where an authority fails to accept these new responsibilities. And

providers or parents who are dissatisfied with a local authority decision will be able to appeal to the Schools Adjudicator.

The pattern of provision from the age of 14

- 9.13** Ensuring that all young people have access to the broader range of opportunities envisaged in our White Paper *14-19 Education and Skills* will require schools and colleges to work together at local level to offer more between them than any one could offer alone.
- 9.14** Across the country, in rural and urban areas, pathfinder projects have been testing out a variety of different models for delivering extended curriculum choice to young people. These have shown how, where schools and colleges agree common frameworks within which to timetable, very significant improvements can be made in the choices available to young people, especially post-16.
- 9.15** We will expect all local authorities and LLSCs to draw up a prospectus for their local area, setting out clearly and simply for young people what schools, colleges and other providers have to offer. Where there are gaps in provision, we will expect local authorities and LLSCs to commission provision to fill them, so that the full range of curriculum provision is available, subject to a reasonable level of demand. We will ensure that, in each locality, Building Schools for the Future visions are designed to deliver the 14-19 entitlement.
- 9.16** Schools will be responsible for ensuring that young people on their roll have access to the full range of opportunities. For 14-16 year olds, this is likely to mean working with other schools and with colleges to guarantee access to the full range of choices through local agreements about timetabling and transport. To deal with any problems which might arise, we propose to take powers to give local authorities and LLSCs a duty to secure sufficient provision, subject to a reasonable level of demand, and schools and colleges a duty to provide access to it.
- 9.17** Effective local leadership will be central to the delivery of our 14-19 reforms. We will keep the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of local authorities and LLSCs under review. In some areas, local authorities and LLSCs have begun to develop increasingly effective ways to strengthen their partnership, including by examining the use of pooled budgets. We will encourage some pilots to explore the potential of this approach. We are considering what further legal underpinning would be helpful in securing joint working. We believe that the principles underpinning Children's Trusts can form a constructive basis for this partnership, but want to leave enough flexibility to allow arrangements to be developed locally.

Leading in driving up standards

- 9.18** Local authorities have been under a duty since 1998 to help to drive up standards in schools, but we will build on recent reforms to strengthen this role. Ensuring quality does not mean trespassing on school autonomy, but offering support and challenge to maintain the momentum for higher standards on behalf of children and parents. The New Relationship with Schools will in future set the framework for this role, replacing the Code of Practice on LEA/School relations which does not reflect the new and dynamic system we are putting in place.
- 9.19** Under the New Relationship (see Chapter 2), local authorities will have access to up-to-date and authoritative information about how their schools are serving all their pupils: from the individualised data now available; from the School Improvement Partners they employ; and from the more frequent school inspections. For example, the local authority could challenge a school that was doing well for most pupils but letting down others (such as children in care) or that had a poor record on behaviour.
- 9.20** Their position as champions of pupils and parents will mean that local authorities will have every incentive to take early and decisive action where quality is unacceptable. In addition we will:
- make it easier and quicker for local authorities to ensure improvement in weak schools, or those ‘coasting’ schools failing to do well by all their pupils, by reforming the statutory basis for ‘warning notices’ to trigger urgent action outside the Ofsted inspection cycle;
 - expect local authorities to take more radical action in case of school failure identified by Ofsted, and work with schools receiving Ofsted improvement notices so that they are improved within a year (or are subject to radical action); and
 - give local authorities the power to require failing schools to collaborate with others as part of their improvement programme – as well as encouraging the use of voluntary collaboratives for wider school improvement, behaviour and extended services.

Championing the child and family

- 9.21** As well as ensuring that parents and children are involved as plans are formed and proposals developed, the role of champion extends to making sure that the individual child and family can have a real say, real choice and the information they need to exercise it. There is much in this White Paper to reflect that role. In summary, local authorities will:

- be expected to give parents much fuller information about choice of secondary schools, including through face-to-face sessions on secondary choice for hard-to-reach parents;
- ensure that school transport makes a reality of choice for children from the poorest families;
- be responsible for commissioning information, advice and guidance for young people in secondary schools, working through Children's Trusts, schools and colleges; and
- have a new duty to ensure that pupils excluded from school for more than five days have access to education. This may also involve working through groups of schools.

9.22 In addition, local authorities will continue to have their current role in co-ordinating school admissions, ensuring that no child is without a school place, and taking steps to identify those who do not seek admission or drop out of education. The continuing local authority role in relation to children with Special Educational Needs will remain central to ensuring that they have any necessary specialist provision.

9.23 Local authorities and their partners in Children's Trusts have a role which extends well beyond education to the whole of children's well-being. They have an important role in helping to break down the barriers between schools and other services for children. For example, local authorities will be in the lead in helping schools develop extended services (including childcare) that can serve the whole community.

9.24 Local authorities are already expected to consult schools on their Children and Young People's Plan, which covers all education and children's services in the area, and schools are encouraged to take this overarching plan into account as they plan their own development. To give greater weight to these arrangements, which are generally working well, we will put both these expectations on a statutory footing, requiring local authorities to consult schools and schools to have regard to the Children and Young People's Plan, for example, when creating their own School Development Plan.

9.25 We believe the role summarised in this chapter gives local authorities the tools they need to play their important roles in supporting parents, securing high standards in schools and joining up local services. But we will continue to consult with local government about this and on what further powers, if any, may be necessary.

Capital investment

9.26 By 2007/08, we will be providing over £6.3 billion a year to invest in our school buildings and ICT equipment. This compares with just under £700 million in 1996/97.

- 9.27** Our strategy is spearheaded by the ambitious Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and Academies programmes. We aim – over the next fifteen years – to bring every secondary and special school building in the country up to 21st century standards, using state-of-the-art procurement, design and construction techniques. All this investment will be backed by strong educational visions to transform standards.
- 9.28** A quarter of all local authorities have already started in the BSF programme and we have 27 Academies open. Subject to future spending decisions, those local authorities in later phases of BSF will receive sufficient funding to build one new school in the next few years – we have already announced the first twelve that will benefit from this investment.

Building Schools for the Future in Knowsley

In Knowsley, Building Schools for the Future (BSF) will provide just under £150 million to replace eleven existing secondary schools with eight new-build learning centres, including an Academy. These will provide opportunities for all Knowsley residents to learn in state-of-the-art environments by 2009.

The programme has allowed Knowsley to be truly transformational in its vision for secondary education, with the emphasis placed firmly on improving standards and promoting achievement for all.

Knowsley is one of 18 authorities in the first wave of BSF. Through extensive consultation, it has developed a vision for secondary education which seeks to build on the significant improvements they have already made. A number of key actions are at the heart of the Knowsley's vision:

- enhancing parental choice and the diversity of school provision available to Knowsley residents;
- building on schools' existing strengths through support to developing and furthering specialisms; promoting partnership, collaboration and federative approaches;
- supporting the implementation of integrated children's services, 14-19 education and workforce remodelling;
- placing schools at the heart of the community and lifelong learning by promoting, developing and supporting the offer of extended and co-located provision, including health and social services;
- ensuring an inclusive approach to education; and
- providing appropriate, viable, stable and sustainable learning environments that support teachers and learners.

- 9.29** A parallel programme for primary schools will start from 2008, when additional funding of £150 million (rising to £500 million per year) becomes available. This will renew at least half of all primary schools in around fifteen years. As with secondary schools, we have commissioned exemplar designs to stimulate excellence.
- 9.30** This is a once in a generation opportunity to transform our schools. We expect to see innovative new and remodelled schools that are well-designed, with cutting-edge ICT and stimulating places in which to teach and learn; that provide places that parents want, where they want them; and that are a real asset and source of pride for their communities. These major capital allocations will in future only be released where we believe that higher standards, parental choice, greater diversity, fair access, the effective provision of extended services and 14-19 vocational opportunities, and responsiveness to demographic change are at the heart of the local authority's vision.
- 9.31** We will also continue to provide substantial funding directly to local authorities and schools so that they can invest in their local needs. Local authorities' asset management plans will reflect their new role as commissioners, as well our priorities and the needs of all their schools. This investment will give local authorities the opportunity to expand existing successful primary and secondary schools, forge federations and partnerships between strong and weak schools, and invite new providers to take on the management of new and rebuilt schools.
- 9.32** In all of this, we will ensure that publicly-provided or funded assets – land and buildings – are properly protected and kept available for use by future generations.

Resource and Legislative Implications

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The majority of the proposals in this White Paper are about getting better value from existing programmes, both in terms of capital and revenue spending. However, there are additional costs for some elements of the proposals and we will make specific resources available to fund them, so as not to create unfunded new burdens for local authorities and schools, or put any pressure on Council Tax. We will consider with key stakeholders, including local government, the costs and the best methodology and route for distributing funds as policies are developed further. We will keep the resource implications under review.

We will introduce legislation to achieve the aims set out in this White Paper. Many of our proposals have been described earlier and a summary of proposed legislative changes is set out below.

A school system shaped by parents

- We will legislate for a statutory procedure for schools to become 'Trust schools' and we will provide in legislation for some minimum requirements in relation to the establishment and status of their 'Trusts'.
- We will amend existing regulations to allow the 'Trust' to appoint the majority of school governors.
- We will legislate to extend the existing Power to Innovate provisions and enable the 'Trust' to apply for freedoms on behalf of all their schools.

- We will legislate to place a new duty on local authorities to respond to representations from parents (and prospective parents) who are not satisfied with the provision of schools in their area.
- We will take powers to allow maintained schools and further education colleges to collaborate formally (in the same way that maintained schools can currently collaborate with each other).
- In relation to schools causing concern:
 - we will place a new duty on local authorities (in relation to maintained schools) and on the proprietors of independent schools to consider the full range of their powers immediately on receipt of notice of an adverse Ofsted report and to consider how to involve parents in the school improvement process (for example, appointing a parent champion);
 - we will legislate to provide local authorities with new powers to require a failing school to take advice from an external partner and to require a failing school to take steps to collaborate or federate with a strong school;
 - we will make some minor amendments relating to the Secretary of State's role in maintained schools' delegated budgets, giving more powers to local decision-makers; and
 - we will amend the legislation governing formal warning notices to enable local authorities to tackle school failure and underperformance more quickly and effectively.
- We will legislate to remove the outdated Code of Practice on local authority and maintained school relations in line with the New Relationship with Schools.

Choice and access for all

- We will legislate to require local authorities to provide free transport for disadvantaged pupils (i.e. those eligible for free school meals or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit, and children in local authority care) to attend any of three suitable secondary schools closest to their home, where these schools are more than two (and less than six) miles away.
- We will also legislate to extend the powers of the Learning and Skills Council to provide home to school and college transport for students between the ages of 16 and 19.
- In relation to admissions we will legislate to:
 - allow for banding in schools' admission arrangements
 - prevent new and expanded schools from amending their admission arrangements for three years from the date on which they open

- prevent admission authorities, which have had an objection against their admission arrangements upheld by the Schools Adjudicator or Secretary of State, from amending that aspect of their admission arrangement for three years.

Personalised learning

- We will legislate to prescribe curriculum entitlements for learners aged 14-19 (including the delivery of the commitment made in the 14-19 White Paper to entitle learners to double science).

Services that support children and families

- We will legislate to permit nutritional standards to be applied to all food and drink supplied on school premises, and to change the duty to charge into a power to charge.

Parents driving improvement

- We will amend existing regulations to require all maintained schools to give parents thrice yearly information on the progress of their child.
- We will amend the Terms of Reference Regulations 2000 to put a new duty on the governing bodies of maintained schools to have regard to the views of parents in their conduct of the school.
- We will legislate to require the governing bodies of Trust schools, at which the majority of governors are those appointed by the Trust, to establish parents' councils to ensure that parental influence in the running of the school is secured.

School discipline

- We will legislate, after consultation, to introduce a right for teachers to discipline pupils.
- We will legislate to extend the scope of parenting orders and parenting contracts in particular, so that governing bodies can use them to make parents take responsibility for their children's behaviour at school.
- We will legislate to require parents to take responsibility for excluded pupils in their first five days of exclusion, whether fixed term or permanent, and we will introduce requirements for governing bodies and ultimately local authorities to provide for supervision and alternative provision in longer exclusions. We will introduce fixed penalty notices for parents where excluded pupils are found in a public place during school hours without reasonable excuse.

A new role for local authorities

- We will legislate to place new duties on local authorities to promote choice, diversity and fair access to schools, when carrying out their existing duties relating to the provision of schools in their areas and the sufficiency of such provision.
- We will legislate to place a new duty on local authorities to identify children missing from education.
- We will legislate to place decisions relating to school organisation matters with local authorities (abolishing school organisation committees). We will also remove the right for local authorities to publish their own proposals for the establishment of new community schools. Local authorities will decide competitions but if they have themselves made proposals for a new self-governing (Foundation) school, the Schools Adjudicator will decide the competition.
- We will legislate to provide for a mediation duty on local authorities and governing bodies of 'Trust' and voluntary schools, with recourse to the Schools Adjudicator instead of requiring the consent of the Secretary of State for land transfers (consent relating to playing fields will remain with the Secretary of State).
- We will take a power to update all of the references in legislation to 'local education authorities' and "children services authorities", making it clear that they are all the same (integrated) local authority.

Wales

- The policy objectives set out in this White Paper are those for England. The Bill will cover England and Wales, but most of the provisions will apply only in England.
- The Welsh Assembly Government has welcomed the opportunity to participate in the proposed legislation for more robust standards in school food. With regard to other legislative changes proposed, the Welsh Assembly Government is considering which changes might apply to Wales and whether to take the opportunity described in the White Paper "*Better Governance for Wales*" to seek framework powers in relation to some topics dealt with in this Bill. This would give the National Assembly more permissive powers to determine how these proposals might be implemented in Wales at a later stage.



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