

Appendix 1

'Educational Excellence Everywhere' - A briefing note

In March 2016, the DfE published a White Paper, setting out its proposals for fundamental shifts in the way education is organised and managed. The White Paper sets out broad concepts rather than provides detail. This is a very far reaching paper with a range of diverse proposals within its scope. The broad headlines of all changes, including changes to the curriculum proposed which are set out in bullet points in Annexe 1 while the main briefing focuses on the five main changes as these have a direct impact on the partnership between the authority and the school.

- Every school to convert to academy status
- Changes to local authority responsibilities
- Changes to funding
- Changes to the provision for children with additional needs, including the use of boarding schools instead of the care system
- Changes to commissioning Alternative Provision

Every school to convert academy status

The White Paper sets out the government's intention to convert **every school** in the country to academy status. It argues that to convert to schools to academy status is to free them up from local authority control and provide greater room for innovation to raise standards. The White Paper provides no empirical evidence to support this.

The White Paper proposes that the ownership of all local authority school sites will transfer directly to the Secretary of State, who will then grant a lease to the relevant academy trust.

The expectation is that the majority of schools will either join or set up a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). 'Effective' schools can become Single Academy Trusts (SATs) unless they are 'too small to be successful and sustainable'.

Schools will receive most of their funding directly under new proposals for a National Funding Formula for schools. In reality, this funding will come via the relevant MAT and MAT Boards will be ultimately accountable for ensuring that schools within the Trust are operating within budget.

All schools should have converted or at least started the conversion process **by 2020** and those who have not begun the process will be directed by the Secretary of State to do so. The paper states that 2022 *'we will have brought a definitive end to the role of local authorities to maintain schools'*.

Changes to local authority responsibilities

The White Paper makes clear that the government's intention is to introduce significant the local authority duties for schools. These change proposed are:

- No further role in school improvement (this will become the MAT responsibility)
- No further role in allocating funding to schools (this will be driven by the (proposed) National Funding Formula)
- A continuing and growing role related to the education of 2,3 and 4 year olds
- A continuing role in 'safety, welfare and extremism'
- A focus on 'working as partners with the school system and champions of parents and the local community':
 - **Ensuring that every child has a school place:** including an enhanced role in admissions, securing agreement to expand or introduce new schools as necessary; developing school transport policies, taking a lead in crisis management and

emergency planning. The strategic planning of new school places, which is more complex than agreeing with schools and then funding places, appears to sit with the Regional Schools Commissioner though this is not explicit. Funding for ‘just in time’ major maintenance is proposed to be distributed directly by central government to the MATS where funding for. Funding for targeted improvement works is by application to the EfA.

- **Ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils are met:** including identifying, assessing and making provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), ensuring Alternative Provision (AP) is available (but not commissioning it), the performance of Children Looked After (CLA), the effectiveness of Elective Home Education (ELE), attendance, safeguarding, including children at risk of exploitation and an enhanced role for Virtual School Head to include children previously looked after (adopted).
 - **Acting as Champions for parents and families:** including promoting the needs of parents children and communities, supporting parents to navigate the system, an enhanced role in school admissions, engaging them in co-production of SEND policies, service commissioning and delivery, encouraging high performing schools to establish new school places and calling for RSA action in the case of under-performance.
- The future roles of Directors of Children’s Services and Lead Members will also be considered

The local authority role diminishes as each school converts to academy status. When the final school in an authority converts, the local authority current role in areas such as school improvement and standards ceases.

Changes to funding

The DfE consultation on a National Funding Formula is due to close on 17th April. In the meantime, the White Paper underlines its message. Essentially, the new formula is promoted as attempting to create a level playing field nationally so that all schools receive the same level of financial support, regardless of their location. Pupils with additional needs will still attract more funding and disadvantaged areas more per pupil.

There is a body of concern that there will be a levelling down of allocations to the lowest funded authorities, as opposed to ‘levelling up’ to the highest funded. The following table is extracted from the paper setting out how funding will work in broad terms:

Schools Proposals	High Needs Proposals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To introduce a national funding formula for schools from 2017-18. Funding would be allocated to local authorities to distribute for the first 2 years, and then allocated directly to schools from 2019-20 • To use 4 building blocks for the formula: per pupil costs; additional needs costs; school costs; and geographic costs • To allocate funding for premises factors, growth and business rates to local authorities in 2017-18 and 2018-19 on the basis of historic spend, for them to distribute at local level 	<p>To introduce a national funding formula for high needs from 2017-18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use factors in the formula including population; health; disability; low attainment; and deprivation • To continue to allocate funding to local authorities for high needs, but on a formula basis • To ensure stability by retaining a significant element of funding based on what local authorities are currently spending, and capping the gains and losses of local authorities each year

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure stability by retaining the ‘minimum funding guarantee’ • To provide practical help for schools, including through an ‘invest to save’ fund • <i>To create a new ‘central schools block’ to fund the ongoing duties local authorities hold for both maintained</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide financial and practical help to authorities to assist them in reshaping their provision, including capital funding for new specialist places and new special free schools
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The proposals are due to come into force in two years’ time. The local authority role continues with its current role until 2019/20 with an expectation that during this period, they pass on all their schools block funding to schools. In 2019/20, a ‘hard’ national funding formula is to be introduced and the local authority role will reduce significantly.

The local authority will manage a ‘central schools block’. The intention is to ‘baseline’ each authority’s 2016/17 spend rather than its allocation and re-allocate based on evidence of need. Similarly, high needs block funding will be scrutinised to create a level playing field.

Changes to the support for children with additional needs

The White Paper acknowledges that some children need additional support, such as children with SEND, children looked after, children previously looked after and children with challenging home circumstances. It proposes to:

- Enhance the role of the Virtual School Head to include previously looked after (adopted) children
- **Promote the benefits of boarding schools to provide stability as an alternative to entering the care system**
- Begin inspections to review the effectiveness of SEND reforms, including what is happening for children with SEND but without EHC plans or statements

Changes to Alternative Provision (AP)

The White Paper sets out an intention to create some fundamental changes to the way AP is provided:

- Additional alternative provision places will be provided through the Free Schools programme
- Schools will be funded for and directly commission AP places themselves
- Schools will retain the responsibility for educational outcomes
- A minimum standard of curriculum will be introduced
- Schools will support AP providers in sharing specialist subjects and facilities

It is not clear who should decide that AP is the most appropriate provision for individual children, and who commissions AP if a child needing this provision presents themselves to the authority for the first time. At the moment, authorities sometimes commission AP directly. There is a risk that under new proposals, parents will be bounced from school to school in the application process if there is no central control within the local authority.

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Annexe 1 - The White Paper in bullets

Universal Academisation

- The government wants every school to become an academy
- The government is not taking immediate powers to force conversion.
- Schools must have a plan in place by 2020 for completion by 2022.
- The MAT is the preferred option but is not compulsory.
- Local authorities will lose their statutory school improvement role.

Funding

- More funds for primary sport from the sugar tax.
- Extra funds to speed transition to a national funding formula.
- A fund secondary schools can bid for to extend the school day. This is voluntary and secondary only.
- A further rise in employer pension contributions. The amount is not clear and it may cancel some of the above increases.

Teaching

- New content for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) on evidence based practice and subject knowledge.
- Commitment to retain a role for universities in ITT.
- National vacancies website.
- Reform of QTS so it is awarded by the school after two to four years.
- Endorsement for a College of Teaching and a new peer reviewed education journal.
- Broader remit for Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

Leadership

- Foundation for School Leadership expected to take over development in due course.
- Offer of an Ofsted holiday for new leaders.
- A new fund for innovative leadership development programmes.
- Governance to be skills based.
- A database of governors, including those barred from the role.

School improvement

- There will no longer a local authority function from 2017.
- Build capacity for school-to-school support in areas of the country where it is weak. These will now be called Achieving Excellence Areas. Remember action zones anyone?
- The government will break the link with the Ofsted outstanding grade for participation as teaching schools and system leaders.

Curriculum

- A new focus on Science, Maths, Engineering and Technology (STEM) subjects
- A minimum standard of curriculum for all AP

Accountability

- Schools will remain accountable for the education of children they refer to Alternative Provision

System and resources

- Confirms commitment to a national funding formula.

- Local authorities will retain a role for schools places, admissions, special needs and high needs funding and championing the needs of families and children