

Press release: £260 million of clean air funding launched by government

The UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations was produced by the government in July last year, and outlined that councils with the worst levels of air pollution at busy road junctions and hotspots must take robust action in the shortest time possible.

Fulfilling a commitment to support local authorities to deliver these plans, the government has today launched a £220m Clean Air Fund to minimise the impact of local plans on individuals and businesses. A range of options local authorities could consider to utilise this money such as new park and ride services, freight consolidation centres, concessionary travel schemes and improvements to bus fleets have been set out.

At the same time, more than £40 million from the £255 million Implementation Fund has been awarded to support local authorities take action as soon as possible to improve air quality.

This includes:

- £11.7 million to the 28 local authorities with the biggest air quality challenges to help carry out the work needed to develop air quality plans, including securing resource and expertise
- £24.5 million to the same 28 local areas to support a range of measures to take action locally. Examples include installing electric charge point hubs in car parks; junction improvements; bus priority measures; building cycle routes; incentivising ultra-low emission taxis through licensing schemes and leasing electric vehicles; and traffic management and monitoring systems
- £2.4 million from the 2017/18 Air Quality Grant for local community projects to tackle air quality at a grass roots level. This comes in addition to £3.7m already awarded in last year's Air Quality Grant, which included an award winning project taken forward by Westminster City Council to provide advice and toolkits for small and medium businesses to reduce transport emissions from deliveries associated with their operations
- £1.65 million to support the 33 local authorities that have been asked to conduct targeted feasibility studies to identify measures that could bring forward compliance dates within the shortest possible time

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

We have been clear that local leaders are best placed to develop innovative plans that rapidly meet the needs of their communities. Today's funding demonstrates the government's commitment to support the local momentum needed and continue to improve our air now and for future generations.

Improving air quality is about more than just tackling emissions from transport, so later this year we will publish a comprehensive Clean Air Strategy. This will set out how we will address all forms of air pollution, delivering cleaner air for the whole country.

Today's announcement is part of a £3.5 billion plan to improve air quality and reduce harmful emissions.

[News story: Nick Gibb attends International Summit of the Teaching Profession](#)

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb recognised the dedication and passion of teachers around the world as he opened an international summit on teaching today (22 March).

Speaking in front of his global counterparts and representatives from teaching unions, the Minister highlighted the difference teachers in England make to their pupils' lives in classrooms every day.

During his [speech](#), the School Standards Minister highlighted the performance of schools in England. Thanks to a hardworking and talented generation of teachers, alongside the government's bold reforms, there are now 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010, our pupils are now amongst the best readers in Europe and GCSEs have been reformed to match the best education systems in the world.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

We are striving for a world-class education for every pupil, whatever their background. Thanks to the hard work of teachers and our reforms, academic standards are rising in this country, with 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010.

We must further raise our game to ensure our education system is fit for the future. By bringing together governments, teaching unions and experts, this summit provides the opportunity to share examples of excellent teaching and best practice from around the world and to celebrate our teachers' achievements.

The Minister's attendance at the summit comes after the Education Secretary announced a package of support – together with Ofsted and the Association of School and College Leaders – to help schools with teacher recruitment and retention, and to reduce the workload that too often stops teachers from having the time and the space to focus on what actually matters to pupils.

It also comes ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting where leaders, business, civil society and young people from around the world will meet to discuss a common future and how they can work together to ensure that all young people can make the most of their lives. The Department for Education has created an education resource pack for teachers and this can be found [here](#).

Speech: Nick Gibb welcomes teachers to international conference

It is a pleasure to be here in Lisbon at the ISTP 2018, a year on from the successful and fruitful ISTP 2017 in Edinburgh co-hosted by the United Kingdom and Scottish Governments.

Last year, we agreed to promote greater equity through commitments to ensure that:

- Every pupil has the opportunity to achieve their potential, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- We raise the status of the teaching profession; and
- Teaching is firmly grounded in high quality research.

Over the course of the last year, England has continued to make strides in these important areas.

In 2010, the government introduced the English Baccalaureate – known as the EBacc. This is a school performance measure rather than a qualification. It is designed to increase the number of pupils taking core academic GCSEs – English, maths, sciences, a language and either history or geography. These GCSEs provide pupils with the broad academic grounding up to the age of 16 that they need to be successful, whatever route they choose to pursue post-16.

Many countries represented here today will consider it axiomatic that pupils study these subjects to at least the age of 16. But in England in 2010, only 1 in 5 pupils were taking this combination of academic GCSEs. That figure is now almost 2 in 5. The government is ambitious for this figure to rise further – to 90% of year 10 pupils studying the EBacc by 2025.

Already, there are promising signs. This year, we saw the highest proportion

of disadvantaged pupils, those who receive free school meals, pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language taking these core academic GCSEs.

Not only this, results show that the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers has shrunk at primary and secondary school. Since 2011, the attainment gap at age 11 has decreased by 10.5%. Whilst at 16, it has shrunk by 10% since 2011.

The government is raising standards for all pupils, but the tide is rising fastest for those who need it most.

Academies and free schools – which now make up over 70% of secondary schools and over 25% of primary schools – operate independently of local government.

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Dixons Trinity Academy – a free school based in Bradford – achieved extraordinary results with its first set of GCSEs, placing it in the 10 top schools in England for the progress achieved by its pupils. Strikingly, the progress score for disadvantaged pupils was higher than for that of their more affluent peers.

But the success of the free school and academy movement is not confined to individual schools. The growth of multi-academy trusts has seen excellence spread across schools. Multi-academy trusts are combinations of academies, from 2 or 3, to as many as 50 or 60 academies, all reporting to one group of independent trustees.

Made up of a combination of schools that have been taken out of local authority control because of that poor performance, which we call sponsored academies; and high performing schools that have voluntarily opted out of local authority control, which we call converter academies; and newly created academies, which we call free schools. These high performing multi-academy trusts demonstrate what it is possible to achieve when power is placed in the hands of high-performing, competitive trusts.

Irrespective of the history of the schools they run, these multi-academy trusts have generated excellent academic results for the pupils they serve, as they compete with other multi-academy trusts in terms of their reputation for academic rigour.

So, the clear advantage of taking schools away from local authority control, is that for the first time, schools are now accountable to their trustees rather than to bureaucracies and there is genuine competition between groups of schools which forces them to respond to the concerns of parents for higher standards of behaviour and stronger academic results.

Thanks to a forensic approach to curriculum design and the implementation of evidence-based approaches to managing poor behaviour, the Inspiration Trust and the Harris Federation – two of the best performing multi-academy trusts – have conclusively demonstrated that all pupils can achieve – whether they live in coastal Norfolk or inner-city London.

They demonstrate that neither the socio-economic context of pupils nor the historic reputation of a school need be a barrier to excellence. And – just as importantly – they provide a model for ensuring that all children succeed. As with Dixons Trinity, schools in these leading multi academy chains are characterised by knowledge-rich curricula, high behavioural expectations and evidence-based teacher-led instruction.

As well as providing the freedom and autonomy to leading free schools and multi-academy trusts, the government is determined to support and empower teachers to raise standards in their schools. The recently closed consultation on how to improve career support and progression for teachers was designed in tandem with the profession. We will respond to the proposals outlined in that consultation – including how we can take forward plans for an Early Career Content Framework – later in the spring. And we will continue to work closely with teachers and teacher representatives on these proposals.

Another key strand of the government's work to support and empower teachers is the government's priority of reducing teacher workload. Teachers should be freed from spending hours on marking and entering progress-data, particularly when evidence suggests these do not improve pupil outcomes.

And headteachers need the security of knowing that their autonomy won't be compromised by rogue school inspectors. That is why the government – in tandem with Ofsted, the schools inspectorate – has been clear on what inspectors will, and will not, ask when they visit schools.

We are also committed to clarifying the roles of different actors within the system, including what we call Regional Schools Commissioners, the 8 regional offices of the Department for Education. In order to provide teachers and headteachers with the opportunity to innovate and raise standards, they need to know that the accountability system within which they work is fair, transparent and – when needs be – supportive rather than punitive.

The government has played an active role in raising standards in schools and in empowering and supporting teachers. But, it is by standing back and promoting teacher voices, that the government has helped to make the most progress in promoting evidence-based teaching.

There is still a long way to go in empowering all teachers with the knowledge they need. But the success of ResearchED – a series of teacher-led research conferences founded by the teacher Tom Bennett now spanning 4 continents – shows teachers' appetite for research. Tom Bennett [wrote recently](#) about the movement of teachers who are dedicating their Saturday's to discussing and sharing research with one another. Writing powerfully and metaphorically he penned the following:

My ambition is that we start to drive this voluntary professional development, which then cascades back into schools and starts conversations that start sparks in classrooms that catch fire and burn down dogma. That initial teacher training makes evidence its foundation (where it does not do so already), platforming the best of what we know rather than perpetuating the best of what we prefer. For new teachers to be given skills to discern good evidence from bad. For that to bleed eventually into leadership and from there into the structures that govern us.

But time and again, teachers run up against entrenched views held by those in positions of authority. For example, late last year, an academic from Durham University called the government's promotion of systematic synthetic phonics ['seriously flawed'](#); flying in the face of decades of evidence from around the world that phonics is the most effective method for teaching children to read. He went on to claim that drawing on scientific evidence to inform policy making in science "can be especially dangerous".

Thankfully, the results from the PIRLS international reading tests came out within a month of these comments. This assessment of 9 and 10 year olds' reading comprehension showed that England had risen from joint 10th place in 2011 to joint 8th place in 2016, thanks to a statistically significant rise in our average score. And low-attaining pupils had gained most showing again that the government is raising standards for all, but the tide is rising quickest for those who need it most.

These results were a vindication of the government's evidence-based insistence on the use of systematic synthetic phonics in teaching children to read.

Too often in education, academics use their positions of authority to ignore the evidence and promote their own beliefs. For too long, education has suffered from putting belief over evidence.

As policy makers, if we are to empower teachers to pursue evidence-based approaches, we must confront the evidence as we find it, not as we would wish it to be.

So, when we come to discuss so-called 'pedagogies of the future', I hope that we will treat unfounded claims sceptically. Instead, we should discuss the data from PISA 2015, which showed that in all but three countries, higher levels of teacher-directed instruction led to significantly higher science results. And we should interrogate the data showing that in the majority of countries, pupils reporting higher levels of enquiry-based instruction achieved significantly worse results.

As we would expect of teachers, data and evidence should be the starting point for our conversation, not something to fit with our pre-existing conceptions.

But we must not ignore these conceptions. These too must be interrogated and

the nuance explored. The caricature of teacher-led instruction as turgid and dull must be dispelled. Rosenshine's [Principles of Instruction](#) make clear that teacher-led instruction should be interactive. These evidence-based principles suggest that teachers, amongst other things:

- ask a large number of questions and check pupil responses; and
- provide models and worked examples.

And the evidence from PISA 2015 supports these findings. According to the data, the most successful science classrooms were those where teachers explained scientific ideas, discussed pupil responses to questions and clearly demonstrated an idea.

Rosenshine's principles, which draw heavily on cognitive science, are backed up by the PISA 2015 data.

Reflecting on the relationship between researchers and teachers in the conclusion to his 2002 essay [Classroom Research and Cargo Cults](#), E. D. Hirsch – the educationalist who has most influenced my thinking – stressed the need for this relationship to evolve.

Drawing on the comments of a colleague, he laid out his vision for cognitive science research and teaching practice to mirror the relationship between biochemistry and medical science.

In England, it is clear that schools are beginning to take this ambition to heart. The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), whose General Secretary Carl Ward is here today, and PTE, Parents and Teachers for Excellence, a pressure group calling for more subject knowledge in the curriculum – and whose CEO Mark Lehain is also here – together they organised a pamphlet to support teachers to adopt a knowledge-rich curriculum.

In this pamphlet, titled [The Question of Knowledge](#), Luke Sparkes – headteacher of Dixons Trinity Academy – explained how that school uses cognitive science to inform their curriculum planning:

A knowledge-based curriculum is about harnessing the power of cognitive science, identifying each marginal gain and acting upon it; having the humility to keep refining schemes of work, long term plans and generating better assessments.

Examples such as this show that Tom Bennett is right; teachers demanding better evidence is slowly changing education.

Thank you.

News story: Annual Conference: Hold the date – 25th June 2018

The GCA will present her annual report and new work programme at the 2018 conference at Church House in Westminster. YouGov will also announce the results of the 2018 survey and the audience will hear from a keynote speaker and senior representatives of the regulated retailers.

After the conference ends, the GCA and her team will be available to meet with suppliers and others to discuss issues in confidence.

Details of the programme are available here [2018 GCA Conference programme](#) (MS Word Document, 46.7KB)

You can register your attendance at the conference [here](#)

Press release: Blackpool, Bradford and Lake District to benefit from £15 million Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund

Three major cultural projects across the North of England will receive a share of the £15 million Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund, Arts, Heritage and Tourism Minister Michael Ellis announced today.

The fund, which was created to build a lasting regional legacy from the Great Exhibition of the North, will support diverse projects in Blackpool, Bradford and the Lake District.

A total of £4 million will help transform the vacant former Bradford Odeon cinema into a 4,000 capacity live music, entertainment and events venue.

Nearly £3.3 million will enhance the visitor experience at cultural attractions across the Lake District, the UK's newest World Heritage Site.

A further £4 million will be used to create a museum in Blackpool that will celebrate the town's history as the UK's first mass seaside holiday resort.

Michael Ellis, Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, said:

"These exciting projects will provide a true cultural legacy for people across the North that increases tourism, boosts local economies and creates

jobs for the future. They reflect the diversity and unique identity of Blackpool, Bradford and the Lake District and will enable them to realise their exciting cultural ambitions.”

Exchequer Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

“The UK has the most vibrant cultural scene and creative industry in the world today, but we want to ensure that reaches all parts of the country and that every young person has access to cultural experiences and opportunities. That’s why we are investing these resources to ensure there is a lasting legacy for the upcoming Great Exhibition of the North, driving the region’s economic and cultural success.”

Northern Powerhouse Minister, Jake Berry, said:

“These multi-million pound cultural investments in Blackpool, Bradford and the Lake District represent a major economic and cultural boost for the Northern Powerhouse. From converting a vacant cinema into a state-of-the-art venue to improving access to the UK’s newest World Heritage site, these investments will have a transformative effect, benefitting local communities by creating new jobs while increasing tourism from across the UK and further afield.”

Eleven towns and cities from across the North of England bid for a share of the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund, which encourages sustainable cultural and creative regeneration in the Northern Powerhouse and will benefit areas with historically low levels of cultural and creative investment.

As well as the three capital projects, a new fund providing access to finance for the cultural sector and creative industries in the North of England will be created.

Bradford Odeon – The 1930s twin domed cinema has been vacant since 2000. The redevelopment will be one of the biggest of its type in the country outside of London and will bring Bradford back on the national touring circuit. The venue, due to be run by NEC Group International, will aim to put on around 225 events to more than 270,000 people every year, creating 50 jobs in the city. The project is being led by a not-for-profit social enterprise, Bradford Live, assisted by Bradford Council.

Blackpool museum – Due to open in 2020, the museum will display artefacts, music and performances from within Blackpool and partners including the V&A, EMI Group Archive Trust and the British Music Hall Society. The museum – the biggest new museum development in the North West – is expected to attract almost 300,000 visitors a year and will be developed on the world-famous Golden Mile. It will aim to engage younger audiences in the history of Blackpool and further strengthen the town’s tourism offer.

Lake District – £3.29 million will be invested in a project to strengthen the visitor experience at Windermere Jetty, Dove Cottage, the Wordsworth Museum and Abbot Hall Art Gallery and Museum. The money will be used to enhance the

visitor experience at these attractions, increase accessibility and improve exhibition spaces. The regeneration project aims to attract nearly 150,000 additional visitors, create or maintain 150 permanent jobs and boost cultural tourism to the newly designated World Heritage Site.

The projects will build on the impact of the Great Exhibition of the North, which launches in Newcastle-Gateshead on June 22. The event is set to be the biggest in England this year and will showcase the best of Northern art, culture and innovation.

Notes to editors: The bids were coordinated by Local Enterprise Partnerships in Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Humber, Lancashire, Leeds City Region, Liverpool City Region, North East, Sheffield City Region, Tees Valley, and York, North Yorkshire and East Riding.

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