

# Schools White Paper delivers real action to level up education

Any child who falls behind in maths or English will get the support they need to get back on track, as part of a pledge the Education Secretary will make to every parent in the country today (Monday 28 March), as he launches the first Schools White Paper in six years.

Schools will identify children who need help, provide targeted support via a range of proven methods such as small group tuition, and keep parents informed about their child's progress.

The Parent Pledge will support the government's Levelling Up mission for education, previously set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, for 90% of primary school children to achieve the expected standard in Key Stage 2 reading, writing and maths by 2030.

In 2019, only 65% of children achieved this standard, with the covid pandemic exacerbating challenges despite the incredible work of parents and teachers during this time.

A second ambition for secondary schools aims to see the national average GCSE grade in both English language and maths increase from 4.5 in 2019 to 5 by 2030.

The Schools White Paper sets out a series of new measures to support the delivery of these ambitions, including:

- Schools will offer a minimum school week of 32.5 hours by September 2023
- Ofsted will inspect every school by 2025, including the backlog of 'outstanding' schools that haven't been inspected for many years
- By 2030 all children will benefit from being taught in a school in, or in the process of joining, a strong multi-academy trust, which will help transform underperforming schools and deliver the best possible outcomes for children
- At least £100m to put the Education Endowment Foundation on a long-term footing so they can continue to evaluate and spread best practice in education across the country

If achieved, the wider benefits of pupils in 2030 meeting the Key Stage 2 and GCSE ambitions are estimated to be worth at least £30 billion each for the economy.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Literacy and numeracy are the building blocks of a world-class education. They unlock the learning, knowledge and skills that every child needs to succeed in later life.

So today, we are making a pledge to every parent – if your child falls behind at school in either of these key subjects, their school will help them get back on track.

By making sure every child receives excellent teaching which helps them reach their full potential, we will spread opportunity and futureproof our mission to level up the country.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

This is levelling up in action. The Opportunity for All White Paper will deliver for every child, parent and family, living anywhere from rural villages, to coastal towns through to the largest cities, by making sure all children have access to a school that meets our current best standards, harnessing the incredible energy and expertise of the one million people that work in schools.

Any child who falls behind in maths or English will get the support they need to get back on track, and schools will also be asked to offer at least a 32.5 hour school week by September 2023.

We know what works in schools and we are scaling up to ensure that every child can expect interesting, enriching lessons. Parents rightly expect a world class education for their children and that is what we will deliver.

Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee said:

The publication of the Schools White Paper could not have come sooner. The four key pillars of teacher development, improving curriculum standards especially with regard to literacy and numeracy, parental engagement and uniformity of school hours are a welcome ambition to help ensure the Government works to level-up education.

Increasing parental engagement through the “parent pledge” will help break down long-standing and often complicated barriers that exist to help increase attendance, especially in relation to the 124,000 “ghost children” who have dropped out of the school system following the outbreak of the pandemic.

I am particularly pleased to see the commitment made by the Department to establish a uniformity of school hours. It is my hope that this will mean pupils up and down the country will have more time to catch up on their lost learning from the pandemic, and to also develop their skills by exploring creative subjects like sport, drama and music. Not only will this benefit their mental health and resilience, but it will also improve their educational attainment and allow every child to climb the ladder of

opportunity, regardless of their background or circumstance.

Other plans in the White Paper to deliver on the missions for children's attainment at the end of primary and secondary include:

- 500,000 teacher training and development opportunities by 2024
- £30,000 starting salaries to attract and retain the best teachers
- Payments to recruit and keep talented physics, chemistry, computing and maths teachers working in disadvantaged schools
- A register for children not in school to make sure no child is lost from the system
- Every school to have access to funded training for a senior mental health lead to deliver a whole school approach to health and wellbeing
- Oak National Academy becoming a government body with sole focus on supporting teachers to deliver the very best lesson content
- Up to 6 million tutoring courses by 2024 and action to cement tuition as a permanent feature of the school system
- The school system working as a whole to raise standards with trusts responsible for running schools while local authorities are empowered to champion the interests of children

The SEND and alternative provision green paper will launch tomorrow (Tuesday) and build on the Schools White Paper by setting out a national vision for more inclusive culture and practice in mainstream schools, helping the workforce to adapt to every pupil's needs.

John Jolly, Chief Executive of Parentkind, said:

Parentkind strongly welcomes the 'parent pledge' that is embedded at the heart of this white paper. Our organisation exists to give parents a voice in their child's education, and our aim is to bring schools and parents closer together in partnership.

I am delighted that the Education Secretary has taken notice of the research on parent voice, recognised the vital contribution of parents and sought to place parents at the front and centre of the schools paper.

Children's literacy and numeracy have been shown to improve with parental support, and making dedicated efforts to enable greater parental participation in children's learning can only have hugely beneficial consequences for families and society.

Dame Rachel de Souza DBE, the Children's Commissioner said:

Last year, I conducted the largest ever survey of children, The Big Ask, and the overwhelming message I got back from over half a million responses was that today's generation are bright, outward looking, and aspirational, in every corner of England. They like

school, and its absence over lockdown meant they relish the chance to be back.

I welcome the commitment to making sure all children receive the help that they need to succeed, we should be ambitious for every child, regardless of their background, family circumstances or whether they need additional support. Analysis by my office this week tells us that 'vulnerable' and 'disadvantaged' children are less likely to go to a good school, and yet when they do, their outcomes are much better. We must now redouble our efforts and have a race to the top so that all children receive a fantastic education and springboard to happy, successful adulthoods.

The commitments to making sure all children receive the help they need to succeed are important, in particular that every school will be able to access mental health training, that all schools will be inclusive of children with additional needs, and that we will have a national register to make sure no child can go missing from the system.

Local authorities are to be permitted to establish trusts and gain the legal power to request their non-academy schools join a trust, where that is the right approach for local schools.

The government plans to support schools that have received two consecutive Ofsted judgements of below 'Good' to join strong trusts – a significant step up from the current requirement for Inadequate local authority maintained schools to do so. The initial focus will be on schools in the 55 Education Investment Areas, as these are the locations where the most support is required area-wide.

The government will make £86 million available to grow and strengthen multi-academy trusts over the next three years, with a particular focus on Education Investment Areas. Across a subset of 24 priority Education Investment Areas – including all previous Opportunity Areas – which have some of the highest rates of disadvantage in the country, a further £40 million of additional funding is to be provided for bespoke interventions to address local needs, such as high absence rates.

As part of a review to launch in the summer looking at accountability and regulation of trusts, the department will consider how best to hold trusts accountable against a new strong trust definition, focused on the quality and inclusivity of the education they provide, how they improve schools and maintain their local identity, how they protect value for money for the taxpayer and how they develop their workforce.

Sir Hamid Patel CBE, Chief Executive of Star Academies, said:

At the heart of the White Paper is an unwavering commitment to improving the life chances of all our young people. High-quality teacher development, a knowledge-rich curriculum and personalised

intervention are recognised as crucial to success. Renewed parent partnerships centred on children will help to create the conditions in which their talents can flourish.

Sir Dan Moynihan, Chief Executive of Harris Federation, said:

The White paper creates a coherent blueprint for the future development of schools, and represents the right way to proceed in a mature school led system.

The additional resources and higher priority for SEND announced in the White Paper are very welcome and much needed. This will lead to more joined up and better provision for children in need.

The increased academic aspiration in both primary and secondary schools are to be welcomed, especially the greater emphasis on using what works to improve standards in literacy and numeracy. The development and provision of free schemes of work and lesson plans will play a major role in reducing teacher workload and help free teachers up to focus on providing every child with a great education.

Leora Cruddas CBE, Chief Executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, the sector body for academy trusts, said:

The evidence is clear that the quality of teaching is the single most important in-school factor in improving outcomes for pupils. CST strongly supports the focus on evidence-informed professional development. There is no improvement for pupils without improvement in teaching, and no improvement in teaching without the best professional development for teachers. We believe School Trusts have the capacity and can create the culture and conditions where professional development can be most effective.

CST supports the ambitions of this White Paper and the proposal for all schools to be part of a group in a strong trust. We particularly welcome the recognition that strong trusts will be solely accountable for school improvement. We look forward to working with ministers on the proposed regulatory review.

Director of Children's Services at Kent County Council, Matt Dunkley, said:

Kent County Council very much welcomes the government's ambitious reform agenda and the commitment to a stronger, fairer school system. We support the focus on helping each child meet their potential with the right support at the right time. We agree that putting evidence at the heart of school improvement activity is

vital. We know this approach works as we have started to see the benefits from our jointly-funded project with the Education Endowment Foundation that is embedding evidence-informed practice in over a third of our schools and academies so far. We look forward to Local Authorities now having new opportunities to work with schools and academies to build further on this.

Streamlining of the current fragmented school system is well overdue, and we appreciate the proposals to match Local Authorities' responsibilities as system leaders with the appropriate powers to meet those responsibilities. The creation of a unified school system that works for all children, enables schools to benefit from collaboration whilst maintaining their own identity, autonomy and accountability to their local community is the ambition, and the prize at stake here.

Updated data published today shows pupils continue to make progress following the pandemic with the support of the education recovery programme, now worth nearly £5 billion. By Autumn 2021, the average primary school pupil was 1.9 months behind in maths compared to 2.8 months in the summer, whilst the average primary school pupil was 0.8 months behind in reading, compared to 0.9 months behind in the summer.

The new tools and interventions set out in the White Paper will make sure every teacher, school and trust in the country is focused on identifying children who remain at risk of not meeting their potential, and providing them the right combination of academic, pastoral and specialist support they need to thrive.