

**Update on Schools Response to the Government's White Paper:
Educational Excellence Everywhere**

Summary

1. This report provides information about the Government's White Paper and proposed Education Bill: Education for All and the implications for the school system in York.

Background

2. The Department for Education published the White Paper: Educational Excellence Everywhere on 17 March 2016. The White Paper followed the publication of consultation documents on the proposed move to a National Funding Formula for Schools. Read together these documents articulated the Government's vision for further reform of the school system and outlined the creation of a fully academised system by 2022 as a central part of this vision.
3. Since the publication of the White Paper and consultation on the National Funding Formula there have been significant changes in Government resulting in a new Cabinet being appointed including the appointment of a new Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Education. This has resulted in a delay to the implementation of changes to the National Funding formula reforms and a lack of clarity about whether the proposals outlined in the White Paper will be fully implemented.
4. Following the publication of the White Paper, the then Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan clarified the expectation that all schools should become academies by 2022. The current government's position is that they expect all schools to convert to academy status but have removed the expectation that all schools should become academies by 2022.
5. In May 2016 the Government outlined plans in the Queen's Speech for a new Education Bill: Education for All, to be brought before Parliament in

the autumn session 2016. This bill proposed to include:

- New legislation to expand the academies programme through the enforced academisation of schools in the lowest performing local authorities;
- The introduction of a new fairer funding formula;
- Measures to make schools accountable for the provision and progress of excluded pupils so that they receive an excellent education.

To date the bill has not been drafted and there is no clear timeline about its current progress.

6. On 12th September 2016 the Government published the consultation document 'Schools that work for everyone'. The consultation outlines the Government's proposals to significantly expand the number of good and outstanding school places in England through further structural change to address inequality of access to good schools places and to widen opportunity for all children regardless of their backgrounds. As well as children eligible for free school meals the consultation document focuses on the need to improve access to good and outstanding schools for low income working families 'who are just about managing'.
7. The consultation proposes creating further capacity and diversity in the school system in four key ways:
 - Expecting independent schools to play a greater role in improving quality in the state system by partnering existing schools or opening new state schools as a condition of maintaining their charitable status.
 - Expecting universities to play a direct role in improving quality and raising attainment by sponsoring existing schools or setting up new schools in exchange for the ability to charge higher fees.
 - Allowing selective schools (grammar schools) to provide more school places by allowing the expansion of existing selective grammar schools, allowing existing non-selective good and outstanding state schools to select by ability and allowing new selective schools to open.

- Removing the 50% cap on admissions for new academies and faith schools to allow them to admit up to 100% of pupils on the criteria of faith. A series of strengthened safeguards to promote inclusivity will be introduced. These include, twinning arrangements with other schools not of their faith, proving there is demand for school places from parents of other faiths, consider setting up mixed faith multi-academy trusts, including sponsoring underperforming non-faith schools and having representatives of other faiths or no faith on governing bodies/trust boards.

York schools' response and the implications for the future of the local education system

8. Since the publication of the White Paper schools have been looking at their future direction and the move towards academisation has started to accelerate. Between 2010 and 2016 the pace of academisation both locally and regionally was slow however the development of the role of Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) and policy statements from Government have caused a change of pace, with more good schools beginning to consider conversion. The introduction of the Education and Adoption Act in April 2016 has resulted in RSCs gaining new powers to intervene in maintained schools that are judged inadequate or 'coasting'. These new powers include enforced academisation.
9. York's educational performance places it as an outlier within the north of England and much has been achieved through the historically strong relationships between schools and the local authority which was built around a shared belief in the importance of providing all children with the best possible experience of education. This has resulted in York's schools having a relentless focus on the core business of improving teaching and learning to deliver great outcomes for the city's children. The collective ownership of school improvement was enshrined in the development of the York Education Partnership in 2011 and the geographical cluster model.
10. Despite the differences between the clusters, all share in common the fact that they have maintained a dialogue between the schools in each geographical area of the city and have promoted collaborative work on school improvement. These informal partnerships have provided a good base from which to build more formal structures in the future and can offer the opportunity for groups of schools to reflect on what works well in building school improvement partnerships as well as the opportunity to resolve the limitations of informal partnership structures as more schools join formal partnerships in the future.

11. It is undeniable that York's local school system is changing and will continue to change. The City now has four multi-academy trusts¹ all are currently York led and have grown from the existing partnerships between schools in the City. A fifth multi-academy trust is out to consultation and over the next few years York will continue to see a growth in the number of schools moving to academise. Key drivers in this are the policy statements made by central government and the increasingly challenging financial landscape in which York's schools operate.
12. As the local school system develops and changes it remains important to ensure that York's schools continue to maintain strong partnerships with each other and the Local Authority to ensure that outcomes for all the city's children continue to improve and that they continue to make a strong contribution to the multi-agency partnerships which keep York's children safe, happy and healthy.
13. In a period of significant and far reaching change it has to be an ambition for all schools in York to continue to work with the Local Authority to maintain a local education system which remains values driven and continues to focus on building the capacity to deliver an excellent education for all children through focusing on continuously improving the quality of leadership and teaching in the City's schools. Given the scale of structural change taking place and proposed in the Green Paper 'Schools that work for everyone' there is a danger that the local education system could become more fragmented and the Local Authority has a role in working with local schools to build a coherent partnership which continues to put children at the heart of all we do so that no child is left behind.

Recommendations

14. As this report is for information only there are no specific recommendations

Reason: To update the committee on changes to national education policy and the implications for schools in York.

¹ The Ebor Academy Trust, The Hope Learning Trust, Pathfinder Multi-Academy Trust and The Southbank Multi-Academy Trust

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