

Educational Excellence Everywhere – The Education White Paper 2016: A Summary

Three key threads run through the White Paper which appeared in March 2016, the over-arching theme is an increasingly school-led system.

- **The first thread is the concept of competition whereby the most successful MATs grow in size and the less successful are taken over by other MATs**
- **The second is an ever-increasing level of autonomy delegated to schools, including the accreditation of teachers.**
- **The last is the ever-increasing influence of regional school commissioners.**

Before May 2010 there were just 203 academies. By December 2015 the total sponsored and converter academies had reached 5,065. The majority of secondary schools have now become academies.

Nothing is yet absolutely finalised and some things of course require changes to statute. (37 items in all)

Academies and MATs

The government proposes that by the end of 2020 all schools should have become, or be in the process of converting to, an academy. LAs will be under a duty to facilitate this.

The vast majority of schools will work in multi-academy trusts (MATs). A MAT growth fund will be established.

The RSCs will in future intervene promptly where academies or MATs are underperforming to force MAT re-organisations and mergers. In this way the system will be dynamic, responding to success and failure.

Initial Teacher Training and Teaching

The main thrust running through all proposals is to place much more focus on schools in the training, recruitment and retention of teachers. Increasingly, the “best” schools will be playing the key role in all of these elements.

“By 2020 we want to build on these changes so that the school-led system is in control....”

New high quality criteria for ITT providers will be introduced, with allocations to the best being made over several years to provide greater certainty.

There is no doubt that schools in some areas of the country are finding the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers becoming more difficult.

Independent working groups are working on different aspects: a framework for ITT initial with greater emphasis on subject knowledge, practical behaviour management skills and greater understanding of evidence based practice. This will be part of new accreditation.

The Teaching Schools Council is developing a new standard for ITT mentors. All groups will publish their reports in the coming months.

Teaching School Alliances

These are seen as a source of support on which autonomous schools can choose to draw. They will have a specific focus on providing high quality leadership development activities. The government is committed to ensuring that teaching school alliances cover the whole country, especially boosting capacity in challenging areas.

The DfE intends to create up to 300 more teaching schools and 800 more leaders of education (NLEs) with school improvement funding “increasingly routed” through these system leaders from September 2017. They will be held accountable for the quality and impact of the support they provide.

They will act as “brokerage hubs” by coordinating the supply and activity of NLEs and specialist leaders of education (SLEs) and matching these with schools in need.

Teaching schools will take on a “more focused role” that prioritises coordinating and delivering school based ITT, spreading excellent practice and providing evidence based CPD for teachers and leaders across their network.

Accountability and Assessment

Regional Schools Commissioners will be able to commission support and intervention for schools identified as under-performing. Headteacher Boards will provide checks and balances for academy leaders to challenge the decisions of RSCs.

More accessible performance data will be published, including MAT performance tables in addition to that for individual schools.

A new primary floor standard and a new secondary measure, Progress 8, will be introduced from 2016. Attainment 8 will also be published.

For 16-19 providers new headline performance measures will be introduced.

Ofsted and Inspection

The White Paper proposes that, in the new academic year, Ofsted will consult on:

“removing the separate graded judgments on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment”.

It does, however, point out that:

“teaching, learning and assessment are a school’s core business”

and also reminds schools that:

“inspectors will still report on the impact of teaching, learning and assessment though the other graded judgments.”

Ofsted will expect to see evidence of the monitoring of teaching and learning and its link to teachers’ performance management and the teachers’ standards. This should be information the school uses routinely, not generated additionally.

Leadership Development

The best leaders will be given a greater opportunity to spread their influence wider, with executive heads, MAT CEOs and system leaders playing a growing role within the system. MAT leaders (at all levels) in particular are seen as central, with the paper stating that a head of subject could lead that subject across 30 schools.

The National Professional Qualifications will be redesigned to make them fit for purpose within the new systems, but there is no stated plan to make them statutory, so they will remain voluntary. Executive heads and MAT CEOs are seen as the best placed professionals to “talent spot,” i.e. recognise teachers with leadership potential and provide opportunity for them to develop.

A new National Teaching Service will be introduced to support elite teachers and strong middle leaders, aligning this with existing targeted leadership programmes.

Seed-funding will be offered to stimulate new activities to support the development of strong leaders in challenging areas, where providers “with innovative new approaches” propose programmes that are able to become self-sustainable over time.

Curriculum

There is a clear focus on knowledge alongside the instillation of character traits and values. There is little overt mention of skills and this reflects the National Curriculum itself, which is fundamentally core knowledge driven.

There is also strong emphasis on British values and character building, with a commitment to build in character development approaches to teacher training programmes, working with networks like teaching schools to spread the most effective methods.

The National Citizen Service (NCS) will be extended so that by 2021 it will cover 60% of all 16 year olds. Programmes will be expanded to spread the opportunity for pupils to take part in adventure challenges and complete social action projects.

Extra funding will be made available so that 25% of secondary schools can extend their school day and develop provision.

The National Curriculum programmes of study will be reviewed and a group comprising head teachers and practitioners will produce an action plan with recommendations for improving PSHE.

Additional Needs

There will be an increased focus on the most academically able pupils in the new core ITT framework and this group will also be the focus of funding to further enhance their attainment in state schools.

There will be investment in training in areas such as autism and dyslexia so that schools and colleges achieve better outcomes for pupils with SEN and disabilities.

The DfE will consider extending the role and responsibilities of virtual school heads and designated teachers for LAC in schools so they continue to support children who have left care under an adoption order.

Governance

Governing Boards remain the key accountable body for their school and retain the responsibility for strategic vision and ethos, holding leaders to account and ensuring that money is well spent.

There is a further move away from stakeholder involvement. No longer will academy trusts be required to reserve places for parents on governing boards. This applies to all open and new academies.

Parents will still be encouraged to sit on governing boards – if they can demonstrate the right skills. A competency framework will be developed through schools and MATs. Governing boards will be required to ensure all governors are properly inducted and receive the training they need to meet the skills contained within the framework.

Edubase will be extended to establish a database of everyone involved in governance, with schools required to provide information from September 2016. The DfE will take powers to bar unsuitable individuals from being governors of maintained schools, to match what is already in place for academies and independent schools.

Parents

A new online “Parent Portal” to be launched in 2017, containing general information and key facts about individual schools. It will work alongside a new performance tables website.

There will no longer be places for parents on governing boards. This applies to all open and new academies. However, parents will still be encouraged to sit on governing boards (usually as trustees) – if they can demonstrate the right skills.

Governance structures are not the right vehicle for gathering parents’ views. Every academy will be expected to *“put in place arrangements for meaningful engagement with all parents, to listen to their views and feedback”*. The paper states that Free Schools will empower parents where they feel a new school will better deliver the type of education they want for their child

Early Implications for Doncaster:

- The most immediate implications for Doncaster are linked to the **increased role of the Regional Schools Commissioner** and the promised growth of academies. Doncaster already has a very complex landscape of providers. There is no logical landscape for growth of Primary academies based on their secondary partners. It is vital that , in order to avoid more fragmentation, that the Council works with the Primary Maintained and Special schools to support a place-based formation of future school partnerships.
- The white paper intention of **all schools becoming academies** is more likely to be applied to Council areas who have large numbers of school still requiring improvement. Our schools are making progress, but we have a number still awaiting inspection and it will take some time before the scores reflect the progress schools have made. It is unlikely that Doncaster would be considered exempt from forced academisation in these circumstances.
- **The growth of Teaching School Alliances:** Doncaster has a very successful teaching schools alliance that has been working in partnership with us to deliver training and school improvement initiatives. More use of this partnership as Council services diminish will be an advantage for Doncaster as it already holds the vast majority of schools as members.
- As the **powers of the Regional Schools Commissioner** are now equal and above those of the Local Authority, good communication with her is vital. We have improved our dialogue with the DFE in order for us to move forward with the formation of academy partnerships to suit the local need, rather than an ad hoc growth that is likely to occur otherwise.
- **The changes to school and academy governance** will impact on the roles our communities play in education. Our traded services to governors will be mindful of the proposed changes and ensure that governors are trained and advised on future involvement in schools.
- **The development and training of school system leaders is welcome.** Doncaster has offered training and support via Partners in Learning teaching school alliance, but central training programmes will provide a national structure for leadership development.