

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Committee 2 February 2011

Report Title The Implications for Local Authorities of the DfE White Paper “The Importance of Teaching”

Summary This paper is a summary of the key issues in the White paper “The Importance of Teaching” and highlights the main implications for local authorities.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision] No

Background papers

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN: Details to be specified

Other Committees

Local Member(s)

Other Elected Members CYP&F O&S Chair & Vice Chair
Cllr June Tandy
Cllr John Ross

CYP&F O&S Spokespersons
Cllr Peter Balaam - – *Comments incorporated*
Cllr Carolyn Robbins

Cabinet Member For information:
Cllr Heather Timms – CYP&F Portfolio Holder

- Other Cabinet Members consulted
- Chief Executive
- Legal Fay Ford – *No comments*
- Finance David Clarke, Strategic Director – Resources
- Other Strategic Directors
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals Jane Pollard, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

FINAL DECISION **NO**

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 2 February 2011

The Implications for Local Authorities of the DfE White Paper “The Importance of Teaching”

Report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families

Recommendation:

That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- note the implications of the White Paper “The Importance of Teaching” and consider what further actions may be needed by the Authority in response.

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 The Government has set out its proposals for radically transforming the education system in the White paper, “The Importance of Teaching”, published in November 2010. A summary of the proposals can be found in **Appendix 1** along with a copy of the presentation that will be given to the Committee. This paper will concentrate on the issues that particularly affect the Local Authority and that require Member consideration and issues affecting Council policy.

2. Increasing School Autonomy

- 2.1 It is the view of the Department for Education (DfE) that outcomes for children are best served through; increasing the autonomy for individual schools to run their own affairs, reducing regulation and lessening the bureaucratic burden. As well as increased freedoms for schools the Government intends to strengthen further school accountability by increasing the amount of information that is published regarding school performance.
- 2.2 Consequently the White Paper increases the opportunities for more schools to become academies or free schools. It encourages outstanding and good schools to apply to become academies and those judged as satisfactory by Ofsted also to apply in conjunction with an outstanding school. Local Authorities are encouraged to promote academy status for any schools that requires special measures or where attainment is low.

- 2.3 Local Authorities are encouraged to work with interested parties locally to establish free schools in future where new schools are needed. Free Schools are very similar to academies in status, the difference being that Free Schools are new schools while academies are schools that have changed their status.
- 2.4 Warwickshire has taken a neutral stance on academy status leaving the decision to individual schools. The Department would like Authorities to promote academy status. The White Paper speaks about “when all schools become academies”. As I understand it the top slice is not applied proportionately to the number of schools becoming academies in the LA. Instead, it is a flat-rate academies adjustment to all top tier Las’ Formula Grant. A number of secondary schools have already applied to become an academy and others are investigating the matter. It is likely nine of the thirty six secondary schools in Warwickshire will become academies within this academic year. Primary schools have shown much less interest and none have yet applied to become an academy, but they also incur additional responsibilities.
- 2.5 Academies receive additional funding over and above the allocation of resources to them through the Local Authority funding formula to enable them to undertake certain responsibilities carried out on behalf of non-academies by the Local Authority. Currently those additional resources are substantial; an individual secondary school could expect to receive, under the current formula, approximately £500,000 per year. However, the Department for Education is reviewing the formula and it is possible that in future years the additional resources made available to academies may be less. The additional funding is provided directly by government from resources top-sliced from the resources made available to all authorities.

3. The Changing Role of the Local Authorities

- 3.1 The Government envisages a different role for authorities in future. Their view is that authorities must be the key strategic commissioner and planner of school places but may no longer choose to be the direct provider. Authorities are encouraged to shift their emphasis away from providing services to schools if these could be better done by commercial operator. As more schools become academies or free schools they will be funded directly and therefore have the choice where to purchase services at best value (as indeed do all schools.) A further continuing role for the LA is as a “champion for children and learners”.
- 3.2 The Local Authority does retain responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient school places in the County. The places may be in an academy or free school rather than a maintained school. It is anticipated that the Authority has a strategic plan that gives maximum choice and opportunity for learners. However, the Authority may not, in future, maintain as many schools as now.

4. The Local Authority and School Improvement

- 4.1 The future role of Local Authorities with regard to quality assurance is not clear. The School Improvement Partner programme has been abolished which means that Local Authorities will have far less information about local school performance and consequently less opportunity to intervene swiftly when things go wrong. There is an increased risk of failure. Where a school is an Academy or a Free School the Local Authority will not be in a position to intervene to prevent or remedy failure.
- 4.2 The future model for school improvement is one that promotes school to school support. It is hoped that good schools will assist less successful ones or that successful ones will take over the leadership of weaker schools under a federated structure model where the successful school “brand” is shared. The Local Authority has a role in shaping and facilitating these arrangements rather than providing direct school improvement advice and guidance. Area Officers will have responsibility for monitoring the performance of all schools in each area of the County.
- 4.3 The Local Authority will need to act on behalf of all learners and challenge schools where necessary if there is evidence of poor provision. For example, the Authority may ask Ofsted to inspect a school (including Academies or Free Schools) if performance data suggests the pupils are not performing well enough.
- 4.4 The Authority will retain a smaller School Improvement team. The present advisory service will end and schools will need to purchase advice and guidance from other sources in future. The Authority will move to be a broker of services rather than having a centrally retained team that supports schools.

5. Special Needs and Vulnerable Groups of Pupils

- 5.1 At the time of writing we are awaiting a further White Paper setting out the Government’s proposals following their review of provision for pupils with special needs. Significant changes are expected although it is very likely that Local Authorities will retain their responsibilities for this. Special Schools are also able to become independent academies and this may affect the way we fund specialist provision.
- 5.2 The White Paper suggests that all schools have a responsibility for the education of all the pupils in their area. We will monitor closely the number of exclusions from Academies and Free Schools. The concern some parties have is that the move towards greater autonomy for some schools may mean that the maintained schools may be left shouldering a larger share of challenging children with less resource than at present.

5.3 The Government suggest that the Pupil Premium will play an important role in giving additional funding to those schools who have a higher proportion of children from poorer homes and in receipt of free school meals.

6. Funding

6.1 The Government believes that schools have been shown some protection with regard to their funding compared to other sectors. They also suggest the pupil premium will assist the improvement of provision for the most vulnerable. However, they also feel that the present arrangements for school funding is too variable across the Country and not transparent enough. The Government will review the present funding arrangements with a view to developing greater standardisation across the system.

6.2 The White Paper sets out how the Government plan to publish further details about how much money each school receives per pupil per year. In Warwickshire there are significant variations across schools in the Country in terms of funding per pupil. The cost of educating a pupil in a small primary school is significantly higher than a similar pupil in a larger school. This information will become more transparent in future.

6.3 The Government will end the disparity between the funding of post 16 students in schools and colleges. In the past post 16 students in schools have been funded at a higher rate. This difference will be phased out in the next three years and this will mean schools will receive less funding for their 6th forms than they have in the past. This will put additional pressure on small school 6th forms which will find it increasingly challenging to offer a wide range of courses of high quality in future.

6.4 The Government is reviewing its capital spending for schools following the ending of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. It is confident there will be a capital building programme but this will take account of the need for additional places and maintenance costs rather than major rebuilding plans.

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2nd February 2011

Executive Summary

1. We are fortunate that our school system has important strengths. But our commitment to making opportunity more equal means that we cannot shy away from confronting its weaknesses.
2. There are many outstanding school teachers and leaders. But teachers consistently tell us that they feel constrained and burdened, required to teach the same limited diet to successive classes of young people. Most children and young people behave well, but teachers consistently tell us that their authority to deal decisively with bad behaviour has been undermined. More children are participating in education for longer, but the curriculum they are following contains too much that is non-essential and too little which stretches them to achieve standards matching the best in the world.
3. More young people are achieving qualifications, but it is no coincidence that many of the qualifications which have grown in popularity recently are not those best recognised by employers and universities, but those which carry the highest value in school performance tables. Schools have become skilled at meeting government targets but too often have had their ability to do what they think is right for their pupils constrained by government directives or improvement initiatives. Schools have more money overall, but it is distributed unfairly, with too much consumed by bureaucracy, both local and national.
4. As a result, our school system performs well below its potential and can improve significantly. Many other countries in the world are improving their schools faster than we are. Many other countries have much smaller gaps between the achievements of rich and poor than we do. The very best performing education systems show us that there need be no contradiction between a rigorous focus on high standards and a determination to narrow attainment gaps between pupils from different parts of society; between a rigorous and stretching curriculum and high participation in education; or between autonomous teachers and schools and high levels of accountability. Indeed, these jurisdictions show us that we must pay attention to all of these things at once if our school system is to become one of the world's fastest improving. Even the best school systems in the world are constantly striving to get better – Singapore is looking again at further improving its curriculum, while Hong Kong is looking at ways in which it can improve its teacher training.
5. In England, what is needed most of all is decisive action to free our teachers from constraint and improve their professional status and authority, raise the standards set by our curriculum and qualifications to match the best in the world and, having freed schools from external control, hold them effectively to account for the results they achieve. Government should make sure that school funding is fair, with more money for the most disadvantaged, but should then support the efforts of teachers, helping them to learn from one another and from proven best practice, rather than ceaselessly directing them to follow centralised Government initiatives.

6. This White Paper sets out our plans for continuing to take the action that is urgently needed.

Teaching and leadership

7. All the evidence from different education systems around the world shows that the most important factor in determining how well children do is the quality of teachers and teaching. The best education systems in the world draw their teachers from among the top graduates and train them rigorously and effectively, focusing on classroom practice. They then make sure that teachers receive effective professional development throughout their career, with opportunities to observe and work with other teachers, and appropriate training for leadership positions.
8. So, we will:
- Continue to raise the quality of new entrants to the teaching profession, by: ceasing to provide Department for Education funding for initial teacher training for those graduates who do not have at least a 2:2 degree; expanding Teach First; offering financial incentives to attract more of the very best graduates in shortage subjects into teaching; and enabling more talented career changers to become teachers.
 - Reform initial teacher training, to increase the proportion of time trainees spend in the classroom, focusing on core teaching skills, especially in teaching reading and mathematics and in managing behaviour.
 - Develop a national network of Teaching Schools on the model of teaching hospitals to lead the training and professional development of teachers and head teachers, and increase the number of National and Local Leaders of Education – head teachers of excellent schools who commit to working to support other schools.
 - Sharply reduce the bureaucratic burden on schools, cutting away unnecessary duties, processes, guidance and requirements, so that schools are free to focus on doing what is right for the children and young people in their care.
 - Recognise that schools have always had good pastoral systems and understand well the connections between pupils' physical and mental health, their safety, and their educational achievement and that they are well placed to make sure additional support is offered to those who need it.

Behaviour

9. The greatest concern voiced by new teachers and a very common reason experienced teachers cite for leaving the profession is poor pupil behaviour. We know that a minority of pupils can cause serious disruption in the classroom. The number of serious physical assaults on teachers has risen. And poorly disciplined children cause misery for other pupils by bullying them and disrupting learning. It is vital that we restore the authority of teachers and head teachers. And it is crucial that we protect them from false allegations of excessive use of

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force or inappropriate contact. Unless we act more good people will leave the profession – without good discipline teachers cannot teach and pupils cannot learn. So, we will:

- Increase the authority of teachers to discipline pupils by strengthening their powers to search pupils, issue same day detentions and use reasonable force where necessary.
- Strengthen head teachers' authority to maintain discipline beyond the school gates, improve exclusion processes and empower head teachers to take a strong stand against bullying, especially racist, homophobic and other prejudice-based bullying.
- Change the current system of independent appeals panels for exclusions, so that they take less time and head teachers no longer have to worry that a pupil will be reinstated when the young person concerned has committed a serious offence.
- Trial a new approach to exclusions where schools have new responsibilities for the ongoing education and care of excluded children.
- Improve the quality of alternative provision, encouraging new providers to set up alternative provision Free Schools.
- Protect teachers from malicious allegations – speeding up investigations and legislating to grant teachers anonymity when accused by pupils.
- Focus Ofsted inspection more strongly on behaviour and safety, including bullying, as one of four key areas of inspections.

Curriculum, assessment and qualifications

10. Raising the status of teachers and giving them renewed freedom and authority will make a significant contribution to improving schools. However, the best performing education systems also set clear expectations for what children must know and be able to do at each stage in their education, and make sure that the standards they set match the best in the world. Our system of curriculum, assessment and qualifications gives us the ability to do that in this country, but at present the National Curriculum includes too much that is not essential knowledge, and there is too much prescription about how to teach.
11. We need a new approach to the National Curriculum, specifying a tighter, more rigorous, model of the knowledge which every child should expect to master in core subjects at every key stage. In a school system which encourages a greater degree of autonomy and innovation the National Curriculum will increasingly become a rigorous benchmark, against which schools can be judged rather than a prescriptive straitjacket into which all learning must be squeezed.
12. So, we will:
 - Review the National Curriculum, with the aim of reducing prescription and allowing schools to decide how to teach, while refocusing on the core subject

knowledge that every child and young person should gain at each stage of their education.

- Ensure that there is support available to every school for the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics, as the best method for teaching reading.
- Ensure that there is proper assessment of pupils at each vital transitional stage of their education, to provide information to parents about how well their child has done and about the effectiveness of schools, and objective evidence for teachers: at age 6, a simple test of pupils' ability to decode words; at 11, as pupils complete primary education; and at 16 as pupils complete compulsory schooling.
- Introduce the English Baccalaureate to encourage schools to offer a broad set of academic subjects to age 16, whether or not students then go down an academic or vocational route.
- Hold an independent review of key stage two testing, seeking to retain a strong basis for accountability and information to parents and secondary schools, while alleviating the damaging effects of over-rehearsal of tests.
- Give the independent regulator, Ofqual, the task of making sure that exam standards in this country match the highest standards overseas.
- Reform vocational education so that it supports progression to further and higher education and employment, and overhaul our vocational qualifications following Professor Alison Wolf's review to ensure that they match the world's best.
- Raise to 17 by 2013 and then 18 by 2015 the age to which all young people will be expected to participate in education or training.

The new school system

13. Across the world, the case for the benefits of school autonomy has been established beyond doubt. In a school system with good quality teachers, flexibility in the curriculum and clearly established accountability measures, it makes sense to devolve as much day-to-day decision-making as possible to the front line.
14. In this country, the ability of schools to decide their own ethos and chart their own destiny has been severely constrained by government guidance, Ministerial interference and too much bureaucracy. While Academies and City Technology Colleges (CTCs) have taken advantage of greater freedoms to innovate and raise standards, these freedoms too have been curtailed in recent years. Meanwhile, it has been virtually impossible to establish a new state-funded school without local authority support, despite convincing international evidence of the galvanising effect on the whole school system of allowing new entrants in areas where parents are dissatisfied with what is available.
15. We want every school to be able to shape its own character, frame its own ethos and develop its own specialisms, free of either central or local bureaucratic

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constraint. It is our ambition, therefore, to help every school which wishes to enjoy greater freedom to achieve Academy status. Some schools will not want to acquire Academy status just yet, others do not yet have the capacity to enjoy full Academy freedoms without external support or sponsorship. But our direction of travel is towards schools as autonomous institutions collaborating with each other on terms set by teachers, not bureaucrats.

16. So, we will:

- Increase freedom and autonomy for all schools, removing unnecessary duties and burdens, and allowing all schools to choose for themselves how best to develop.
- Restore for all Academies the freedoms they originally had while continuing to ensure a level playing field on admissions particularly in relation to children with Special Educational Needs.
- Ensure that the lowest performing schools, attaining poorly and in an Ofsted category or not improving, are considered for conversion to become Academies to effect educational transformation.
- Dramatically extend the Academies programme, opening it up to all schools: already there are 347 Academies, up from 203 in July.
- Ensure that there is support for schools increasingly to collaborate through Academy chains and multi-school trusts and federations.
- Support teachers and parents to set up new Free Schools to meet parental demand, especially in areas of deprivation.
- Give local authorities a strong strategic role as champions for parents, families and vulnerable pupils. They will promote educational excellence by ensuring a good supply of high quality school places, co-ordinating fair admissions and developing their own school improvement strategies to support local schools.

Accountability

17. Analysis of the international evidence also demonstrates that, alongside school autonomy, accountability for student performance is critical to driving educational improvement.
18. It is vital that schools should be accountable to parents for how well pupils do, and how taxpayers' money is spent. Clear performance information and good comparative data are positive features of our system. But we must do better. Greater transparency in the funding system will mean that every parent will know the money which is allocated for their child's education, the amount spent by local government, and the amount available to the school. Comparisons between different schools and local authority areas will drive higher performance and better value for money.
19. Clear accountability measures are vital if we are to identify good practice in the best schools and identify those schools where students are being let down. But

existing measures of performance encourage 'gaming' behaviour – with primary schools over-rehearsing tests and secondary schools changing the curriculum to embrace 'equivalent' qualifications which count heavily in performance tables.

20. So, we will:

- Put far more information into the public domain, so that it is possible to understand a school's performance more fully than now.
- Place information on expenditure, including the amount allocated per pupil, online.
- Reform performance tables so that they set out our high expectations – every pupil should have a broad education (the English Baccalaureate), a firm grip of the basics and be making progress.
- Institute a new measure of how well deprived pupils do and introduce a measure of how young people do when they leave school.
- Reform Ofsted inspection, so that inspectors spend more time in the classroom and focus on key issues of educational effectiveness, rather than the long list of issues they are currently required to consider.
- Establish a new 'floor standard' for primary and secondary schools, which sets an escalating minimum expectation for attainment.
- Make it easier for schools to adopt models of governance which work for them – including smaller, more focused governing bodies, which clearly hold the school to account for children's progress.

School improvement

21. Over recent years, centralised approaches to improving schools have become the norm. Government has tended to lead, organise and systematise improvement activity seeking to ensure compliance with its priorities. Government has ring-fenced grants, fettered discretion, imposed its will through field forces and intervened to micro-manage everything from the hours allocated to specific kinds of teaching to the precise nature of after-school activities.
22. We think that this is the wrong approach. Government should certainly put in place the structures and processes which will challenge and support schools to improve. And where schools are seriously failing we will intervene. But the timetabling, educational priorities and staff deployment of schools cannot be decided in Whitehall. And the attempt to secure automatic compliance with central government initiatives reduces the capacity of the school system to improve itself. Instead, our aim should be to support the school system to become more effectively self-improving. The primary responsibility for improvement rests with schools, and the wider system should be designed so that our best schools and leaders can take on greater responsibility, leading improvement work across the system.

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23. So, we will:

- Make clear that schools – governors, head teachers and teachers – have responsibility for improvement. We will end the requirement for every school to have a local authority school improvement partner (SIP) and end the current centralised target-setting process.
- Instead, increase the number of National and Local Leaders of Education – head teachers of excellent schools committed to supporting other schools – and develop Teaching Schools to make sure that every school has access to highly effective professional development support.
- Make it easier for schools to learn from one another, through publishing ‘families of schools’ data for every part of the country, setting out in detail how similar schools in a region perform, so that schools can identify from whom it is possible to learn.
- Make sure that schools have access to evidence of best practice, high-quality materials and improvement services which they can choose to use.
- Free local authorities to provide whatever forms of improvement support they choose.
- Ensure that schools below the floor standard receive support, and ensure that those which are seriously failing, or unable to improve their results, are transformed through conversion to Academy status.
- Encourage local authorities and schools to bring forward applications to the new Education Endowment Fund for funding for innovative projects to raise the attainment of deprived children in underperforming schools.
- Establish a new collaboration incentive, which financially rewards schools which effectively support weaker schools and demonstrably improve their performance.

School Funding

24. Our school funding system needs radical reform to make it more transparent, fairer and progressive. The lack of clarity about how Government allocates funds means that it is almost impossible, as things stand, to state definitively and transparently how much is allocated for each pupil in each school. And that opacity generates unfairness.
25. At present, one school may receive up to 50 per cent more funding than another school in similar circumstances serving a similar pupil body. The current funding system means that the money that schools receive depends more on history than on the current composition of their pupil body. At the same time, only around 70 per cent of the money that is intended by Government for the most deprived pupils is actually allocated to schools on that basis. We need to ensure there are appropriate incentives for schools to attract poorer students and raise their attainment.

26. The schools budget was protected in the recent Spending Review. At a time when deficit reduction is an urgent national priority, and other budgets are being cut, there is a real terms growth in school funding. It is vital that we now ensure that this money is distributed fairly and spent wisely. And with more limited capital resources, it is equally important that money is allocated more efficiently and less wastefully.
27. So, we will:
- Target more resources on the most deprived pupils over the next four years, through a new Pupil Premium. In total we will be spending £2.5 billion per year on the Pupil Premium by the end of the Spending Review period.
 - Consult on developing and introducing a clear, transparent and fairer national funding formula based on the needs of pupils, to work alongside the Pupil Premium.
 - In the meantime, increase the transparency of the current funding system by showing both how much money schools receive and what they spend their funds on.
 - End the disparity in funding for 16–18 year-olds, so that schools and colleges are funded at the same levels as one another.
 - Take forward the conclusions of the review of capital spending, cutting bureaucracy from the process of allocating capital funding and securing significantly better value for money.
28. The actions we set out in this White Paper learn systematically from the most effective and fastest improving school systems in the world. They are designed to tackle the weaknesses of our system, strengthening the status of teachers and teaching, reinforcing the standards set by the curriculum and qualifications, giving schools back the freedom to determine their own destiny, making them more accountable to parents, and helping them to learn more quickly and systematically from good practice elsewhere. Through taking these steps, we believe that we will create a system in which schools are better able to raise standards, narrow the gap in attainment between rich and poor and enable all young people to stay in education or training until at least the age of 18.