



Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child

Summary of the Schools White Paper

On 28 March 2022 the Department for Education published a Schools White Paper called [Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child](#).

This is an at-a glance guide to the newly announced policies it contains, drawn from the paper's four chapters:

1. An excellent teacher for every child
2. Delivering high standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance
3. Targeted support for every child who needs it
4. A stronger and fairer school system

Two 'national ambitions'

The government has set two national ambitions for 2030:

1. 90% of primary school children to achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by a third.
2. In secondary schools, the national GCSE average grade in both English language and in maths will increase from 4.5 to 5.



1. An excellent teacher for every child

- Introduction of a Leading Literacy National Professional Qualification from September
- New National Professional Qualification for Early Years Leadership
- There will be a consultation on introducing a SENCO National Professional Qualification (to replace the National Award in SEN Coordination as the mandatory qualification for new SENCOs)
- Levelling Up Premium - worth up to £3,000 tax-free for eligible maths, physics, chemistry and computing teachers, in years one to five of their careers, who choose to work in disadvantaged schools, including in the new Education Investment Areas

2. Delivering high standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance

- From September 2023, a minimum expectation on the length of the school week of 32.5 hours for all mainstream state-funded schools, but not specialist settings.
- A new arms-length curriculum body that works with teachers to co-create optional, adaptable digital curriculum resources (building on the success of Oak National Academy).
- Extension of the legal requirement to provide independent careers guidance to all secondary school children.
- Introduction of a new test of literacy and numeracy, taken by a sample of children in year 9, to estimate performance at a national level.
- A National Behaviour Survey to better understand what parents, children, teachers and leaders think of behaviour and wellbeing in their school.
- Revision of the Behaviour in Schools guidance and the statutory Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance to provide more practical support to school leaders.
- Design of a national data solution and legislation to modernise the rules on recording attendance.



3. Targeted support for every child who needs it

- A Parent Pledge - schools will provide evidence-based support if a child falls behind in English or maths, and schools will communicate this to parents.
- A re-endowment of the Education Endowment Foundation with at least £100million.
- Reform of the SEND and Children's Social Care systems.
- £2.6bn in high needs capital investment over the next three years.
- DfE new Regions Group to hold local authorities and academy trusts to account for local delivery for children and young people with SEND, make better use of data to understand system health and work with independent inspectors and health colleagues.

4. A stronger and fairer school system

General announcements:

- By 2030 all schools to be in a Trust or with plans to join or form one.
- The system will have a single regulatory approach.
- Consultation on moving schools that have received two consecutive below 'Good' judgements from Ofsted into strong trusts.
- Consultation on a statutory framework to govern children's movements so that all placement decisions – including AP – are always made in the best interest of the child.
- Up to £86m in trust capacity funding over the next 3 years, with a particular focus on Education Investment Areas.
- A new collaborative standard requiring trusts to work constructively with others.
- A new CEO development programme for established leaders.
- An expectation that most trusts will be on a trajectory to either serve a minimum of 7,500 pupils or run at least 10 schools.
- No maximum size of trust, but there will be a limit on the proportion of schools in local area that can be run by an individual trust so that trusts.
- So that Trusts "continue to be responsive to parents and local communities, all trusts should have local governance arrangements for their schools."



Local authorities

- Local Authority to be able to establish new Trusts where too few strong trusts exist. "These trusts will be regulated in the same way as any other trusts, and we will ensure that safeguards are in place to effectively manage any potential for conflicts of interest both for the trust and the local authority – including limits on local authority involvement on the trust board."
- A clearer role for local authorities "empowered to champion the interests of children".
- New powers enabling the Secretary of State to bring a local authority's maintained schools into the academy system where a local authority has requested this as part of their local strategic plans.
- Local authorities will retain the overall sufficiency duty to provide an appropriate place for every child - will determine the number of school places, including special and alternative provision places, that are needed in a locality.
- Strengthened role overseeing local admissions arrangements, assuring arrangements to keep children safe, and make sure children attend school.
- Government will work with local authorities, trusts, schools and parents to reform the admissions framework, including the over-subscription criteria.
- Consultation on a new backstop power for local authorities to direct trusts to admit children – with the right of appeal for trusts to the Schools Adjudicator
- Local Safeguarding Partnerships will commission safeguarding audits every three years.

Regulatory review:

- To increase clarity in the short term, government proposes to bring together both proposed and existing requirements on academy trusts (currently set out in legislation and funding agreements) into statutory academy trust standards.
- New statutory intervention powers will underpin the standards – will provide a framework to tackle any trust which fails to achieve the expected outcomes by managing and governing their schools effectively.
- RSCs become regional directors - will take a single regulatory approach to trusts.



- Consultation on “the exceptional circumstances in which a good school could request that the regulator agrees to the school moving to a stronger trust”.
- A definition of trust strength AND the academy trust standards will be the basis for transparent assessments of their potential for growth.
- New transparency measures will ensure that it is always clear to parents how the flexibility to GAG pool is being used.

The White Paper also provides a **definition of a ‘Strong Trust’** (which is very similar to that [proposed earlier this year by CST](#)):

- **High Quality and Inclusive Education** – delivers high quality education, including for disadvantaged children and children with SEND, and operates fair access. Has effective central leadership teams, strong school leadership and teaching, and uses evidence-based curriculum design and implementation.
- **School Improvement** – works quickly to improve standards within all their schools, particularly transforming previously under performing schools.
- **Strategic Governance** – operates an effective and robust governance structure that involves schools and exemplifies ethical standards. Utilises the expertise and skills on its boards to oversee the strategic direction and hold leaders to account. Has a strong local identity, engaging effectively with parents and the wider community.
- **Financial Management** – is underpinned by strong and effective financial management, prioritising the use of resources, including the estate, to deliver the best educational experience for children.
- **Workforce** – trains, recruits, develops, deploys and retains great teachers and leaders throughout their careers. Deploys the best staff in the schools where they are needed most and prioritises staff wellbeing.

We broadly support the definition of a strong trust set out in the White Paper. However, we would argue that high quality, inclusive education and school improvement should not be considered as separate elements of the definition. A trust delivers high quality, inclusive education through its school improvement practices.



We also believe that the definition of a strong trust should include public benefit and civic duty – proposed in CST’s discussion paper, [What is a Strong Trust?](#) We note that the White Paper refers to a wider civic responsibility for trusts, which is most welcome. CST has long made the case the school trust is a new form of civic structure that exists to advance education for public benefit.

Please do share your reflections on the Schools White Paper by emailing us at executiveteam@cstuk.org.uk.



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The Confederation of School Trusts (CST) is the national organisation and sector body for school trusts in England advocating for, connecting and supporting executive and governance leaders. We are a membership organisation of organisations. This means that the organisation – the Trust – is the member. Our mission is to build an excellent education system in England – every school part of a strong and sustainable group in which every child is a powerful learner and adults learn and develop together as teachers and leaders.

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