

Dear colleagues

I wrote to you recently to inform you about the publication of [Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child](#) and the [SEND review: right support, right place, right time](#). I have even had the opportunity to speak to some of you about it already.

As this is the first new Schools White Paper since 2016, I wanted to take the opportunity to write to you about it in more detail. In the coming months, I will be reaching out to you for more conversations about making this ambition a reality.

Below gives an overview of what we ran through at the roundtables recently. As we are unable to share the slides we used yet, I hope this will give some better understanding of the key themes addressed.

Ambitions by 2030



This Schools White Paper has the Government's Levelling Up mission at its heart, that by 2030, 90% of children will leave primary school having achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, up from 65% in 2019. In the White Paper we have added to this goal by setting an ambition that in secondary schools, the national GCSE average grade in both English language and maths increases from 4.5 in 2019 to 5 by 2030. Literacy and numeracy skills are the cornerstone of a good education, unlocking further learning, employment and fulfilling experiences.

At the heart of these ambitions is the need for an excellent teacher for every child in classrooms across England. We know that quality of teaching is the single most important in-school factor in improving outcomes for children, especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with special educational needs and disabilities. That is why our policies are focusing on the recruitment and retention of teachers, making sure that they have access to high quality professional development throughout their careers, underpinned by 500,000 teacher training and development opportunities by 2024.

Teachers



Standards



We also know that a child needs a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where they can be ready to learn, and where teachers are empowered to focus on delivering the best possible lessons. To support teachers to deliver a broad and rich curriculum, we are establishing a new arms-length curriculum body that works with teachers across the UK to co-create free, optional, adaptable digital curriculum resources.

Many of our children need additional, targeted support to access these lessons and help them achieve their potential. We all know that this must come as quickly as possible. This requires a focus from every teacher, school and trust in the country to identify children at risk of missing out and deliver the right combination of academic, pastoral and specialist support they need to thrive, including wider children's services where needed. The Parent Pledge will ensure that children falling behind will receive timely support and that parents will be fully engaged. We will also re-endow the Education Endowment Fund so that schools continue to have access to the very best evidence.

Targetted Support



System



We want to, with you, create a school system that raises standards for children. A system that spreads the benefits of the best multi academy trusts so that every child learns with the benefits of a strong, supportive family of schools. Every part of the system will be held accountable to a set of clear roles and responsibilities, with a single regulatory approach for trusts. It is only through a collaborative system in which everyone involved in education plays their part that we will achieve our ambitions.

As mentioned above, this week has also seen the publication of the SEND and alternative provision green paper which builds on the Schools White Paper setting out a national vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those in alternative provision. It will be backed by a full and open 13-week public consultation, as part of the publication of the SEND Review.

SEND and alternative provision green paper



This consultation will give families frustrated by the existing, complicated and bureaucratic system of support the opportunity to shape how a new system will work in the future - and give them confidence that their local school will meet their children's needs so they can achieve their full potential. Our goal is to ensure that children and young people with SEND receive the right support in the right place at the right time. You will have received a letter from Baroness Barran providing more detail on this separately.

Schools that are not making necessary improvements



On the 28th March the Department began a consultation on a more ambitious approach to support the small group of schools that are not currently Inadequate, but which have not made the necessary improvements to be judged as Good or Outstanding after having received a Requires Improvement judgement. The consultation is your opportunity to give your views on the intention to introduce a new measure for intervention whereby any school that is currently rated as 'requires improvement' ('RI') by Ofsted and was rated as less than good at its previous Ofsted inspection, will now be considered for intervention action by the relevant Regional Director (RD, formerly known as Regional Schools Commissioner). You can provide your views by clicking on the link at the bottom of this newsletter.

I also wrote to you last week to let you know that, as part of our Future DfE Programme, we will shortly be announcing that each of the regional teams in our new Regions Group will be led by a Regional Director. These roles will replace the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) role, with a title change to reflect their broader remit across schools, children's social care, and SEND.

Future DfE



I will be the Regional Director for the South East region and as mentioned in my previous letter, an additional Regional Director will be recruited in due course to take into account the increase from 8 to 9 regions. The new appointment will lead the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Trust Capacity Fund



This week you will have also seen applications are open for Trust Capacity Fund 2022-2023, a fund to help trusts develop their capacity to grow and take on underperforming schools in Education Investment Areas, Priority Education Investment Areas and other places of higher need. The application window runs from 1 April to 30 June 2022. Up to £86m has been committed over the next 3 financial years.

If you are considering applying for TCaF, you should contact the RSC office for the area in which you are proposing to work to discuss this. Details of the fund operating from September 2022 to March 2025 will be announced in due course.

Some of you will have already been to an event where you have heard from me in more detail about the Schools White Paper and the SEND and alternative provision green paper. If you have not already an invitation to such an event will be on its way to you soon. Over the coming term I will be reaching out for more conversations with you, as mentioned above, so we can talk about making these ambitions a reality in your Local Authority, Trust or Diocese. I am really looking forward to your support, and to working with you to deliver for our school system and its children and parents.

Dame Kate Dethridge

Regional Schools Commissioner, North West London and South Central