

## **The Importance of Teaching White Paper Equalities Impact Assessment**

### **Introduction**

1. It is unacceptable for educational attainment to be affected by gender, disability, race, social class or any other factor unrelated to ability. Every child deserves a good education and every child should achieve high standards.
2. It is a unique sadness of our times that we have one of the most stratified and segregated school systems in the world, with a gap between our private schools and the state system wider than in almost any other developed country. In 2006, England came near the bottom of a list of 57 countries for educational equality in an OECD report, and the gap is still vast. It is simply unacceptable that in the most recent year for which we have data, of the 80,000 students in one year eligible for free school meals, just 40 went on to Oxford or Cambridge universities - fewer than some private schools manage to send by themselves.
3. On an ethical level this gap between the rich and the poor is indefensible. But reducing inequality is not only the guiding ethical imperative of our education policy; it is an absolute necessity if we are to compete economically on the global stage. The truth is that 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. But most importantly, 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 gaps between pupils from different backgrounds.
4. Despite record central government spending over the last thirteen years we are clearly, as a nation, still wasting talent on a scandalous scale. It is a moral failure and an affront against social justice. We must put this right, and it is a determination to do so that drives our vision for reform as set out in *The Importance of Teaching White Paper*.
5. The changes we want to make are the proven routes to success taken by the highest performing schools here and the best-performing countries internationally. Taken together, these reforms will be a real break with the past, ensuring that every child receives a high-quality education regardless of their gender, race, disability or socio-economic background. We will:
  - a. Continue to improve the quality of teaching and leadership in schools by attracting more of the best graduates and career changers into teaching; improving initial teacher training; developing a national network of Teaching Schools to lead the training and professional development of teachers and head teachers; reforming governance to make it easier for schools to adopt models of government which work for them; and sharply reducing the bureaucratic burden on schools.

- b. Increase freedom and autonomy for all schools at the same time as dramatically extending the Academies programme and allowing groups of teachers and parents to set up new Free Schools to meet demand, especially in areas of deprivation.
- c. Clarify and strengthen teachers' and heads' powers to discipline pupils to reduce disruption and improve the learning environment, inside and outside of school; we will trial a new approach to exclusion, in which schools rather than local authorities are responsible for finding alternative provision for excluded pupils.
- d. Review the curriculum to ensure that it embodies rigour and high standards, and secures coherence in what is taught in schools. We want children to have a high minimum entitlement of knowledge and understanding, particularly in English and mathematics, and we want to ensure that assessment and qualifications are rigorous and internationally comparable.
- e. Ensure that schools are sharply accountable for the progress and success of all their pupils.
- f. End the anomalous and unfair funding system by progressively introducing a national funding formula, in which all schools will be funded equitably for the number of pupils they take in, as well as targeting more resources on the most deprived pupils through the Pupil Premium.
- g. Empower local authorities to have a strong, strategic role in championing the needs of parents and pupils - particularly the most vulnerable - and in school improvement. We should expect them to draw on the strengths of outstanding schools to support others, and to act to draw in new providers of schools so that every parent and pupil can choose a good school that meets their needs.

### **The evidence base**

6. This Equalities Impact Assessment (EQUIA) explains how the reforms and changes we must make to improve our school system will together amount to a real step change in tackling the vast and entrenched inequality of opportunity in our society. The evidence and data presented here focus on gender, ethnicity, Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disability and socio-economic disadvantage. *The Importance of Teaching* White Paper itself sets out more detail on the policy and thinking behind our plans for reform as a whole.
7. The wide and unacceptable gaps in achievement in our school system - between rich and poor children, between those from different ethnic backgrounds and between those who have Special Educational Needs and those who do not - were also highlighted earlier this year in the European Court of Human Rights report, *How Fair is Britain?*

8. We recognise that some of the reforms will impact upon the school workforce. Indeed, it is imperative that they do. But far from having a detrimental impact, these reforms will make sure that we get behind the efforts of teachers and heads. Because it is teachers and heads - not inspectors, advisors and central government bureaucrats - who are most able to extend opportunity to every child. That is why we will be replacing the ceaseless central government initiatives that have done little to impact on inequality in recent years with the freedoms and support our teachers and school leaders need to make the right choices for every child in their classroom.
9. We are determined to raise the achievement and wellbeing of children with Special Educational Needs and disabled children. We have been listening to parents, charities, teachers and other organisations as part of developing proposals for the forthcoming Green Paper on Special Educational Needs and Disability, which we will publish later this year. With this in mind, *The Importance of Teaching* White Paper, and this EQUIA, limits its consideration of children and young people with SEN to their access to the school system.

### **The importance of equality – and the challenge we face**

10. Billions of pounds have been spent on top-down initiatives in recent years but the gaps in attainment between children from different backgrounds have narrowed only marginally, if at all. Put simply, the system is not working for some of our poorest and most disadvantaged children. Attainment remains pitifully low for too many children with Special Educational Needs and for some of those from particular ethnic backgrounds. There is no good reason for boys to continue to underachieve relative to girls. Tackling such inequality of opportunity is the fundamental driver of our reforms and the source of our urgency in doing so.
11. In our education system, it is still far too often the case that deprivation is destiny. For after prior attainment and Special Educational Needs are taken into account, **poverty** is the best predictor of a child's success, both up to the end of compulsory schooling and on into adult life. Data from UK longitudinal studies shows that the impact of deprivation on cognitive and educational measures is apparent from an early age and is cumulative, so that children from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to fall further behind as they move through the education system. By age 18, the gaps are vast and damaging both for the individual and for the nation as a whole.
12. Using eligibility for free school meals (FSM) as a proxy for disadvantage, we see that at the national level, attainment gaps between FSM and non-FSM pupils have narrowed somewhat over the past ten years. Nevertheless, progress has been painfully slow and those gaps that remain are unacceptably large. The sad fact is that deprivation remains strongly associated with poorer performance, on average, at every key stage. Latest national data show, for example, that in 2009:

- Approximately one third (35 per cent) of five year old FSM pupils achieved a good level of development, compared with just over half (52 per cent) nationally.
- By the end of key stage two, the chance of a pupil who was eligible for FSM achieving Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics was almost 1.5 times lower than that of a non-FSM pupil.
- A child eligible for FSM was half as likely to achieve five or more GCSEs at grade A\* to C, including English and mathematics, than a child from a wealthier background.
- Persistent absentees were nearly 3 times more likely to be eligible for FSM than pupils who attend school regularly.
- FSM pupils were around 3 times more likely to receive either a permanent or fixed period exclusion than children who were not eligible.

13. Just as FSM children are, on average, failing to achieve their full potential, the same can be said of those children who have been identified as having a **Special Educational Needs**, the best measure available to identify pupils with a disability. Latest data show that in 2008/09, for example, just 16.5 per cent of all pupils with SEN achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics. This compares to 61.3 per cent of pupils without any SEN who achieved this measure. Where a child has a Special Educational Need and is also eligible for free school meals, the equivalent figure was just 8.9 per cent, making these pupils almost seven-times less likely to achieve five good GCSEs than pupils who fall into neither category. In addition to poorer academic attainment, pupils with SEN who are also eligible for FSM are almost twice as likely to be permanently excluded as pupils with SEN from wealthier backgrounds.

14. These figures highlight the enormous additional challenge for pupils who are both eligible for free school meals and have Special Educational Needs. Addressing their relative underachievement is made all the more urgent given the significant number of children and young people falling into both categories. For instance in 2010, pupils with SEN were more than twice as likely to be eligible for FSM as those without, at both primary and secondary level. In total, approximately 30 per cent of pupils with SEN are also eligible for FSM.

15. The silver lining is that whilst this overlap between deprivation and Special Educational Needs clearly reinforces and exaggerates attainment gaps between those who succeed and those who do not, it also presents us with an opportunity. It means that the measures we are proud and determined to implement to provide additional and tailored support to disadvantaged pupils - at the forefront of which is the Pupil Premium - will have a positive impact on a significant minority of poorer pupils with SEN.

16. Currently, just over a quarter of all pupils in maintained primary schools and just over a fifth in secondary schools are from minority ethnic groups. And like SEN and FSM children, children from certain **ethnic backgrounds** face

an uphill struggle to succeed in terms of their educational attainment and longer term life chances. Attainment gaps between all pupils and pupils from certain minority ethnic backgrounds are narrowing, but those gaps that remain are significant and a matter for ongoing concern. One study, for example, concluded that even when other contributory factors to low educational achievement are factored in, including poverty, gender, parental occupation and education, the achievement of African Caribbean pupils remains substantially below expectations. Of particular concern is that, even after controlling for FSM and SEN, African Caribbean pupils are 2.6 times more likely to be excluded than White pupils. The attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children remains stubbornly at the wrong end of attainment tables grouped by ethnicity.

17. However, there is no straightforward link between membership of an ethnic minority and underperformance. Indeed, the highest performing group at sixteen are Chinese girls, with those on free school meals outranking every other group except better-off Chinese girls. In contrast, after Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, the lowest GCSE performance of any group defined by gender, free school meals status and ethnicity is that of White British boys eligible for FSM.
18. The reasons behind the underperformance of certain ethnic groups are complex and multiple, and may include any or all of socio-economic factors, parental education and aspirations, low expectations, poor attendance, prejudice and high levels of exclusions. Racism and bullying may also play a part in suppressing the attainment of minority ethnic groups and there is worrying evidence to suggest that there is an upward trend for racist incidents in some schools.
19. The **gender** attainment gap is a near-universal feature of all developed educational systems and has been roughly constant over several decades, with girls consistently achieving better results than boys. Gender differences are apparent throughout compulsory education and are reflected in attainment and exclusions data. They persist into higher education and beyond. As an example, since 1995 the gap between boys' and girls' attainment of five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C has remained more or less stable, albeit with some narrowing at the margins. In 2009, the gap was 7.3 percentage points, down from 8.1 in 2008.
20. Important gender differences also appear in subject choices. Girls are more likely to take arts, languages and humanities subjects and boys to take geography, physical education and information technology. Girls are subsequently more likely to stay on in full-time education, (82 per cent of girls compared to 72 per cent of boys). The greatest gender divide concerns exclusions, for which boys account for 80 per cent of permanent exclusions, and 75 per cent of temporary exclusions.
21. Where FSM eligibility is a factor, we see that both boys and girls achieve less success than their peers, though the problem is most stark for FSM boys. Boys are also more likely than girls to be identified as having SEN: 70 per cent of children with identified SEN are boys; boys are more likely than

girls to attend special schools and are four times more likely than girls to be identified as having a behavioural, emotional and social difficulty.

### **Opportunities and challenges**

22. We have some of the best schools in the world, but too many are struggling, and the endemic inequality across our school system is a national scandal. The very best-performing education systems internationally show us that there is no contradiction between a rigorous focus on high standards and a determination to narrow attainment gaps between pupils from different backgrounds.
23. We are determined to make this a reality in our own system. We want every one of our schools to be engines of social mobility, where the unfairness of life's lottery is overcome through the democratisation of access to knowledge for all. And every one of our policies is driven by this guiding moral purpose. We simply must raise attainment for all children and close the gap between the richest and poorest.
24. There is no doubt that we have a radical and ambitious agenda for reform. It requires us to take a number of specific steps to mitigate risks and overcome barriers if we are to deliver what we need to achieve. But this agenda is also one which emulates the common features of the highest achieving and most equal school systems in the world, and we will be relentless and unapologetic in our drive to realise its fundamental aim – ensuring that every child achieves everything of which he or she is capable.
25. In the following paragraphs, we reference only those policies likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity in our school system. A full picture of education reforms, along with supporting evidence, can be found in *The Importance of Teaching* White Paper itself.

### **Reforming the system – autonomy for schools gives teachers and heads the freedom to raise standards and narrow gaps**

26. Across the world, the case for the benefits of school autonomy has been established beyond doubt. In a school system with good quality teachers and clearly established standards, devolving as much decision-making to school level as possible ensures that decisions are being taken by the professionals best able to make good choices for the children and young people in their care.
27. In Canada, and specifically in Alberta, schools have been liberated. Head teachers control their own budgets, set their own ethos and shape their own environments. The result is that Alberta now not only has the best performing state schools of any English-speaking region in Canada, with very high levels of satisfaction with the schools among parents, teachers and pupils, it has a narrower attainment gap than we do in England.
28. The same is true in Singapore. Although it is often cited as an exemplar of centralism, dramatic leaps in attainment have been secured by schools

where principals are exercising a progressively greater degree of operational autonomy. The Government there has deliberately encouraged greater diversity in the schools system and as the scope for innovation has grown, so Singapore's competitive advantage over other nations has grown too. And today, Singapore manages to achieve higher average attainment scores at the same time as keeping performance gaps narrower than we have in England.

29. The irrefutable evidence of inequality in our own school system clearly shows that, despite billions of pounds in spending and investment, central government's command and control, 'one size fits all' approach of recent years has done little to improve the life chances of some of our most vulnerable children. The fact is that government is simply not best placed to respond effectively to the wide variety of circumstances and challenges faced by schools and their pupils, and nor are inspectors, advisors and central government bureaucrats the people best able to extend opportunity to every child. So, instead, we need to make sure that the experienced and dedicated professionals in our schools have the freedoms and support that they need to succeed in delivering equality of opportunity.
30. This is why we will give school leaders the freedom to innovate in their own schools, and to share what they have learned with other schools. We will replace many of the centrally-driven and targeted programmes with fair and consistent funding to every school and a strong mandate for teachers and head teachers to use their judgement and professional skill to ensure every child realises his or her potential. With the appropriate tools and resources, teachers will have the freedom and ability to meet the particular needs and address the specific challenges of the pupils in their classroom, selecting only the most effective strategies and appropriate pedagogies to raise the attainment of all the children in their care.
31. We recognise and applaud the important and valued role schools have always played in supporting the wider health and wellbeing of every child in their care. We have every expectation that this vital role will continue as teachers recognise the need to deal with individual circumstances which can block a child's readiness to learn and their ability to succeed.
32. But the school workforce does not need the Government to tell them to do this, nor do they need literally hundreds of pages of guidance to tell them how they should do it. Having, as one example, over 600 pages of guidance on improving behaviour and tackling bullying is not a sign of diligence or of taking the issue seriously. In fact, it is totally counter-productive because schools feeling unable to absorb it in full will come to the decision that they will not read it at all. So by cutting away the unnecessary duties, processes, guidance, regulations and requirements, teachers and heads will instead be free to intervene early and focus on doing what is right for their pupils.
33. Responsibility for a pupil's wider wellbeing involves carefully considered action to address the particular needs and specific challenges faced by each child or young person as an individual. It is not a box-ticking exercise. Cutting back on centralised micro-management is about trusting committed

professionals to make informed decisions about what is right for every one of their pupils. It is absolutely not about attacking children's rights and safeguards for the vulnerable because, put simply, good schools work in the best interests and wider outcomes for children and young people as part of their core educational mission.

34. Critical safeguarding requirements will continue to be set in primary legislation with a minimum of clear non-statutory guidance on key topics, such as bullying and behaviour. But for the vast majority of cases, we will free all schools from the raft of individual rules and mountain of guidance on specific aspects of children's wellbeing and start trusting professionals - teachers and other children's services professionals who support children and schools - again. Schools should decide their own priorities, based on their local circumstances, the views of parents and the needs of their pupils.
35. Within the safeguards provided by these assurances, we believe innovation will flourish and quality will rise. New approaches - to the curriculum, to assessment, to discipline and behaviour, to pastoral care, new ways of gathering data on pupil performance, new ways of supporting teachers to improve their practice, new ways of tackling entrenched illiteracy and the tragic culture of low expectations which blights so many of our most deprived communities - will all drive improvement in the attainment and future success of every child, regardless of their sex, race, economic background or disability.

### **A Pupil Premium will give schools more funding to improve attainment of disadvantaged pupils**

36. At the heart of our Coalition's Programme for Government is a commitment to spend more money on the education of our poorest children. The Pupil Premium, as part of a fairer, more equitable and more transparent funding system, will give every school and teacher the resources they need to deliver excellence for the poorest pupils, without prescribing how.
37. Under the current system, funding is distributed in an illogical and unequal manner across England, often based on accidents of history rather than the circumstances of individual pupils. This variation has meant that for two schools in similar circumstances, but different regions, funding can vary by over £2,000 per pupil per year. Exacerbating this uneven distribution, in some local authorities only 70 per cent of the additional funding intended for pupils on free school meals actually reaches these pupils themselves, depriving those most in need of extra support.
38. These funding disparities can have a real impact on the education of poorer pupils. One study, for instance, has demonstrated that schools with higher proportions of pupils eligible for FSM were less likely to offer foreign language study at KS2, and a second showed that disadvantaged pupils were less likely to be offered opportunities for educational trips. It is simply not fair that pupils from deprived backgrounds may miss out on these sorts of valuable and inspiring experiences which add breadth and variety to their curriculum.

39. The Pupil Premium is designed specifically to tackle such disadvantage at root. As promised in the Coalition Agreement, we have announced that from April 2011, we will spend £2.5bn per year by 2014-15 directly on the most deprived pupils in our country, as well as on Looked After Children (LAC). As many deprived and LAC also have Special Educational Needs or are members of underachieving ethnic groups - 27 per cent of LAC have SEN with statements, and the same proportion are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups - significant numbers of pupils from these groups will also benefit from the extra resources and tailored support the Pupil Premium will provide
40. Because head teachers and teachers, rather than central government, are best placed to make the right decisions for their pupils, we will not tell schools how to use the Premium. They will decide how best to spend it based on their assessment of the specific needs of the disadvantaged pupils in their school. But we will expect schools to ensure that children struggling with the basics get the extra support they need, as soon as they need it, so that these pupils do not fall irretrievably behind their peers.
41. Progress depends on encouraging creativity. To underline our belief that innovation drives improvement, we have already announced the creation of an Education Endowment Fund. This fund will enable schools, local authorities, parents, voluntary and community sector organisations and social enterprises to bid competitively for money to trial innovative approaches to raising the attainment of pupils from deprived backgrounds – especially in underperforming schools. The fund will be set up by March 2011 with an investment of £110m and will be administered by an external body that will be expected to lever-in additional funding and expertise, running for a minimum of ten years. Whilst this fund will specifically target raising attainment for disadvantaged children, it will positively impact on the significant proportion of children with SEN and from underperforming ethnic groups who are also economically deprived.
42. We will also establish a new collaboration incentive worth £35m each year. This will financially reward schools which support weaker schools to demonstrably improve their performance while also improving their own. The fund will incentivise improvements in attainment overall, improvements in progression and narrowing of the achievement gap between deprived pupils and others.
43. Nothing makes more difference to the progress and attainment of any child or young person than good teachers and good teaching. That said, there is particularly strong evidence about which interventions and approaches are effective in supporting disadvantaged children to realise their potential. These include tracking the progress of individual pupils, one-to-one tuition, catch-up programmes in English and mathematics and good parental engagement. So to aid schools in effectively targeting their Pupil Premium on the inequalities of opportunity that they experience, the Department for Education will make evidence available on its website about what works to raise the attainment of specific pupil groups, including different ethnic backgrounds, boys and girls, and those with Special Educational Needs.

**Ensuring every pupil has access to high-quality teaching is the single most important thing we can do to narrow attainment gaps**

44. In the 1990s, a series of in-depth studies conducted by American academics revealed a remarkably consistent pattern. They showed that the quality of an individual teacher is the single most important determinant in the school system of a child's educational progress. Those pupils taught by the most effective teachers make three times as much progress as those taught by the least effective. Analysis of data from England has shown that a pupil taking eight GCSEs taught by 'good' teachers will score 3.4 more GCSE points than the same pupil in the same school taught by eight 'poor' teachers.
45. We have many thousands of gifted teachers who work tirelessly to change the lives of young people in our country for the better, and the evidence about who is being attracted to the profession is encouraging: where once the average degree class of those joining postgraduate initial teacher training was below average for the graduate population, it is now above average. But one of the tragedies of the last thirteen years is that, despite record spending, there are still not enough of these good teachers changing lives in good schools. For this reason, and in line with the best systems in the world, attracting and retaining the best teachers while ensuring that they receive quality professional training to develop and reach the highest standards lies at the heart of *The Importance of Teaching* White Paper.
46. There is no evidence to suggest that effective pedagogy for pupils from deprived backgrounds is qualitatively different to that for other pupils but there is evidence to suggest that pupils from deprived backgrounds may be less likely to experience the good quality teaching they need and deserve. It is an injustice that, as Cabinet Office data suggests, schools with more than 20 per cent of their pupils eligible for FSM are more likely to be rated worse in their teaching, employing teachers with lower levels of qualification and less likely to come from an outstanding training institution. Even in good schools, grouping practices may deprive disadvantaged pupils of the best teachers.
47. It is our duty to ensure that all pupils have access to high-quality teaching. The Government intends to attract more excellent teachers into the profession by reforming initial teacher training and creating a range of routes that select highly talented individuals, and develop teachers who go on to deliver excellence in the classroom. We will make it easier and more rewarding for teachers to acquire new skills and additional qualifications by, for instance, introducing a national bursary scheme to support those who wish to pursue further study in their subject or broaden their expertise. We will act to put an end to the bureaucracy which in the words of one leading head, is 'baseball-batting' teachers and heads and, outlined in detail below, we will take concrete steps to address violence and disruption in school. All of these measures will help to attract and retain talented teachers in every one of our classrooms.

48. As pupils eligible for FSM in primary schools and secondary schools are, respectively, 1.66 and 1.41 times more likely than wealthier pupils to be in a school rated as inadequate by Ofsted, by accelerating the pace at which the worst-performing schools are converted into Academies we will improve the quality of teaching available to many of our poorer children quickly. The positive impact of the Academies programme is outlined in more detail below.
49. We will also continue and expand the use of inspiring and experienced National and Local Leaders of Education (NLEs and LLEs) to support weaker schools in making informed choices about how best to overcome the specific challenges their pupils face. These models have had significant impact. Primary schools which received NLE support in 2007-8 saw a ten percentage point increase in pupils reaching the expected level by age 11 and secondary schools which received NLE support during 2007-8 improved pupils' success at GCSE twice as fast as the national average. Taken together, our reforms will ensure that weaker schools - whose intake often includes a large proportion of poorer pupils, those with SEN and from underperforming ethnic backgrounds - will receive the extra support they need and deserve to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards for all.
50. Thanks to Teach First, more and more of our most talented young graduates have gone on to teach in some of our toughest schools. In 2002, only four graduates from Oxford University chose a career teaching in a challenging school. This year, eight per cent of finalists applied to teach in such schools through Teach First. Studies have shown, and Ofsted have verified, that Teach First teachers have had an incredible impact on the challenging schools in which they teach.
51. This is why we are increasing the funding available to Teach First, allowing its expansion into primary schools, as well as new regions of the country, so that these able teachers can have a wider impact before disadvantaged pupils start to fall behind their peers. In all, by the end of this Parliament, Teach First will place 1,140 of the most talented and motivated graduates into schools serving our most deprived communities every year. We will also increase the supply of similarly talented middle and senior leaders to some of the most disadvantaged communities in England by expanding the Future Leaders and Teaching Leaders programmes. These programmes will help to develop between 125 and 175 of the most promising teachers into middle and senior leaders for some of our most challenging schools.

### **A new accountability framework will set out high expectations for every pupil**

52. We want to ensure that the twin virtues of greater independence and greater accountability drive rapid improvement in our schools. In recent years schools have suffered from a form of bureaucratic compliance which drove them to look first to meet government targets and strictures. Instead, schools should feel accountable to parents, pupils and communities for how well they serve their pupils – what we call democratic accountability.

53. The new accountability framework outlined in *The Importance of Teaching* White Paper will set clear, high expectations while giving teachers and heads the freedom to choose their own approach. Schools will be held to account for every child's attainment and progress as performance tables will include headline indicators that reflect the key priorities of raising the attainment threshold, improving progress for all pupils, and raising the attainment of disadvantaged children.
54. The current accountability regime incentivises schools to focus on pupils at the borderline of particular performance indicators, at the expense of lower attainers. One study has shown, for instance, that as the number of borderline pupils in a school increased, the low and very low achieving pupils in that school - disproportionately represented by pupils eligible for FSM, with SEN or from particular ethnic groups - did worse on both value-added measures and the national assessments on which school league tables were based.
55. For both primary and secondary schools, we will put greater emphasis on the progress of every child – setting out more prominently in performance tables how well pupils progress. It is clearly important that schools aim to raise absolute attainment – children who reach Level four at primary school are much more likely to achieve well at GCSE, and young people who achieve well at GCSE are much more likely to stay in learning, go to university and get a good job. However, schools should take particular responsibility for how much each child learns in school, and we should expect schools to make as much effort with a lower achieving or higher achieving pupil as with one whose achievement means that they are close to a threshold. So, performance tables will show more clearly how well all pupils progress.
56. At the same time, we will seek to focus more firmly on how well the least advantaged do, and make sure that schools are fully held to account for using the Pupil Premium to raise the achievement of eligible children. So, we will report specifically in the performance tables on how well those eligible for the Pupil Premium do in the basics at primary and secondary school. We will review performance measures for those special schools whose intake performs in the main below the levels of National Curriculum tests or GCSEs.
57. We are particularly concerned about the progress that the lowest attaining 20 per cent of pupils make at school. Many of these pupils have additional learning needs, and we will consider how we could report their progress in the performance tables as part of the forthcoming Green Paper on Special Educational Needs and Disability.
58. We will also put an end to the current 'contextual value added' (CVA) measure. This measure attempts to quantify how well a school does with its pupil population compared to pupils with similar characteristics nationally. However, the measure is difficult for the public to understand; and recent research shows it to be a less strong predictor of success than raw attainment measures. It also has the effect of expecting different levels of

progress from different groups of pupils on the basis of their ethnic background, or family circumstances, which we think is wrong in principle.

59. It is morally wrong to have an attainment measure which entrenches low aspirations for children because of their background. For example, we do not think it right to expect pupils eligible for free school meals to make less progress from the same starting point as pupils who are not eligible for free school meals (particularly once the introduction of the Pupil Premium ensures that schools receive extra resources for pupils from poorer backgrounds). We should expect every child to succeed and measure schools on how much value they add for all pupils, not rank them on the ethnic make-up of their intake: this is another reason to support placing greater emphasis in performance tables on the progress of every child.
60. We know that pupils' choices at age 14 lead to inequalities in later life. Too often girls opt out of science-based subjects and boys move away from humanities and languages. It is also unacceptable that, as suggested by current research, some schools may be steering lower attaining pupils from GCSE courses and towards unsuitable qualifications which take less time to teach and are 'easier' to pass. For the period 2004-2010, the number of vocational qualifications (excluding entries in GNVQs and vocational GCSEs) rose by a massive 3,800 per cent. Such practices can narrow the options available to young people - often over-represented by boys, those eligible for FSM and from particular ethnic communities - in post-16 education routes and qualifications, further entrenching social disadvantage.
61. For this reason, at secondary level, performance tables will focus on pupils' attainment of the basics, including five GCSEs at grade C or above, in English and mathematics. But this is not enough - we should expect every pupil to be offered a broad academic education to age 16 and so we will also report the proportion of pupils who achieve the new English Baccalaureate which includes GCSEs at grade C or above in English, mathematics, two sciences, a humanities subject and a foreign or ancient language.
62. Currently, a pitiful 3.8 per cent of pupils eligible for FSM achieve this broad core, compared to 16.6 per cent of wealthier pupils, so introducing it as a new performance measure is a significant raising of the bar for secondary schools. But it is right that we set out these aims for every pupil, because the evidence shows that a broad education and well-respected qualifications stand young people in good stead.
63. While our belief that every pupil should secure a broad base of academic knowledge will be reflected in the performance tables, it is equally true that employers justifiably value a whole range of practical skills and experience that go far beyond the most demanding academic paper. For this reason, schools should not - and will not - be prevented from offering pupils suitable technical or vocational qualifications, as long as this is complemented by a base of core academic knowledge.

64. Ofsted inspection offers a robust assessment of the quality of education that a school provides. The independent challenge inspection offers can confirm school self evaluation, boost staff morale and stimulate further improvement. However, in recent years inspectors' focus has been spread thinly over a long list of issues. We will replace this with a clear focus on four areas – pupil achievement, the quality of teaching, leadership and management, and behaviour and safety.
65. This increased focus on the core aspects of teaching and learning will allow inspectors to pay closer attention to the progress of all pupils, and the provisions will be underpinned by a requirement for the Chief Inspector to have regard to the needs and relative performance of the range of pupils. This includes, in particular, the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs or disabilities.
66. Inspections are often the catalyst for school improvement, so Ofsted should concentrate inspection where it is most needed. In the future, inspection will be targeted on poorer performing schools and, as we have seen that schools with high levels of deprivation are more likely to be judged by Ofsted to be inadequate, disadvantaged and underperforming pupil groups are likely to benefit the most from this new focus.

**Every parent and pupil should be able to choose a good school that meets their needs**

67. The Academies programme is central to our approach to school standards, especially in tackling the most significant areas of underperformance and deprivation. Pupils in our most disadvantaged communities have historically been failed by weak and underperforming schools: the data show that pupils eligible for FSM in primary schools and secondary schools are, respectively, 1.66 and 1.41 times more likely than wealthier pupils to be in a school rated as inadequate by Ofsted. So by accelerating the pace at which the worst-performing schools are converted into Academies, we will improve the quality of teaching available to many of our poorer children quickly.
68. Academies were originally established to raise standards by breaking the cycle of underperformance and low expectations in such areas. But we will no longer allow the narrow ambition of the Academies programme under the previous government to limit its success. We will remove the artificial ceiling of 400 Academies so that over time all schools, including for the first time primaries and special schools, will have the right to access Academy status, spreading the clear benefits of additional autonomy across the school system.
69. As a group, Academies have been posting improvements in standards. Many have turned around some of the worst-performing secondary schools in the country. Schools which had become sink schools with chronically low aspirations, poor behaviour and a culture of failure are now centres of excellence and engines of social mobility. At the end of key stage four, average attainment in Academies has been improving at a faster rate than

both the national average, and when compared to schools in similar circumstances.

70. Specifically, Department for Education figures show that the 63 Academies that had been open for long enough to have results in both 2008 and 2009, have seen an increase of twice the national average in the percentage of pupils at the end of key stage four gaining five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE and equivalents including English and mathematics. Comparing the 101 Academies which have results in 2009 to their predecessor schools in 2001, the new schools have doubled the percentage of pupils achieving the same measure, going from 26.3 per cent in 2001, to 65.2 per cent in 2009. Academies, such as Burlington Danes on London's White City estate, have secured incredible improvements of 15 to 25 per cent in a single year.
71. Existing Academies already have a higher intake of pupils from minority ethnic communities than the national average, reflecting the communities in which they serve. And in the same 63 Academies as above, there has been a large improvement in the proportion of ethnic minority pupils gaining five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, when compared to the national average. We expect Academies to continue improving the attainment of pupils from all ethnic backgrounds.
72. Existing Academies also educate a higher proportion of pupils with SEN than schools nationally and these pupils have made significant increases in their attainment levels over the last year. We are proud that the Academies Act 2010 extends the option of Academy status to special schools, allowing for the best specialist provision to expand and improve, as well as offering the chance to transform the lowest-performing. We believe this will deliver significant benefits for pupils with Special Educational Needs across the school system.
73. Expanding the Academies programme to all schools, starting with outstanding schools, will not - as some may claim - divert Academies and their resources from the original purpose of tackling underperformance in deprived areas. We categorically would not be going down this road if it would in any way undermine the progress we need to make in our weakest or most challenging schools. In fact, the Academies programme has a history of stronger schools helping weaker ones and we have already made clear our intention to encourage and expand such collaboration.
74. That is why in return for Academy status, every school converting into an Academy that has been judged by Ofsted to be outstanding or good with outstanding features has committed to supporting at least one weaker school. This has already provided an additional pool of excellent sponsors who are available to accelerate transformation of the weakest schools in some of our most disadvantaged communities. Far from fracturing the culture of collaboration which has driven school improvement over the last decade, we are confident that this new system will strengthen the bond between schools and lead to a step-change in system-led leadership.

75. We have already seen encouraging examples of this kind of collaboration. We want to encourage more schools like Tollbar Academy in North East Lincolnshire, which recently gained Academy status alongside the neighbouring Cleethorpes Academy. It was thanks to the energy and expertise of the staff and head teacher at Tollbar that both schools were guided to a successful conversion in September 2010.
76. As with Academies, the aim of the Free Schools programme is to drive an improvement in standards for all children. Free Schools will encourage private and voluntary bodies including charities, teachers and parents - many of whom have a particular focus on improving educational opportunities for pupils from particular ethnic or disadvantaged groups, or those with SEN – to open new schools in response to demand. Already, the Department for Education has moved two proposals for schools specifically intending to tackle disadvantage in Bedford and Bradford to the next stage of the application process.
77. Evidence from similar policies abroad suggests that Free Schools can be amazing engines of social mobility. In the US, 'Charter Schools' are self-governing, independent of any local school district and free of most regulations, allowing them to be more flexible in delivery than public schools. Like our own Free Schools, they are generally established by educators, parents, community groups or private organisations with an express purpose or philosophy.
78. Charter School results certainly do vary in the US, but that is because education is devolved and each state has a different school system. However, under the best state education systems – the ones from which we have learnt - academic research shows that the setting up of new Charter Schools can greatly improve school standards for all children. In New York, for instance, Charter Schools have dramatically closed the gap between the performance of students in inner city neighbourhoods and those from the wealthiest suburbs, sending increasing numbers of children from ghetto areas to elite universities. It is for this reason that President Obama has insisted that there be more great Charter Schools.
79. One of the most successful chains of Charter Schools is the Knowledge Is Power Programme schools (KIPP). From a student body of which over 80 per cent are on free or reduced price meals and almost all are from ethnic minorities, more than 85 per cent of KIPP students have gone on to college nationally. KIPP schools were set up in the early 1990s by teachers from Teach for America, a programme to get elite teachers into schools in poorer areas. Today, they educate more than 26,000 pupils in 99 different schools.
80. In England, programmes similar to Teach for America, such as Teach First, Future Leaders and Teaching Leaders, already exist and we are expanding them with the precise aim of recruiting and developing the best teachers and leaders for the most disadvantaged areas in this country. We expect many of the fantastic teachers from these programmes to have an important impact on our own Free School programme - a number are already planning new schools. They, as with other proposers, will be further encouraged to

establish Free Schools in disadvantaged areas by the extra funding this would allow them through the Pupil Premium.

81. In Sweden, 'Free Schools' are independent from government control and can be set up by a variety of individuals and organisations including groups of parents, private sector corporations and non-profit or voluntary organisations. There is a whole body of evidence pointing to the positive effects of the Free Schools model in Sweden, not least that, according to official statistics pupils in Swedish Free Schools gain higher average point scores than those from state schools, and at a lower cost. Several studies have also clearly shown that the introduction of Free Schools has had a positive effect on standards across the Swedish system. For instance, a 2003 study found that a ten per cent increase in the number of children attending Free Schools led to a six per cent increase in performance in standardised ninth-grade mathematics tests.
82. One 2003 study has claimed that Free Schools have increased social segregation in Sweden. But there is no solid empirical basis to this claim, resting as it does on anecdotal evidence from municipalities (the Swedish equivalent to local authorities). On the other hand, recent research using OECD data clearly shows that Sweden has one of the most equitable schools systems of any country in the developed world, with comparatively low levels of social segregation.
83. Academies, including Free Schools, are bound by equalities legislation in the same way as all other schools. Academies are also required, through their funding agreement with the Secretary of State, to act in accordance with the School Admissions Code and the Appeals Code which governs parental appeals. The statutory framework is intended to ensure that the school admissions system is fair to all children regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, ability or family background. The School Admissions Code has the force of law, and prohibits admission authorities - schools or local authorities - from setting policies which disadvantage children from a particular social or racial group, or those with SEN.
84. We will simplify the Admissions Code so that it is easier for schools and parents to understand and act upon, while maintaining fairness as the Code's guiding principle. We will retain the principles and priorities of the current Code, and Looked After Children and pupils with a statement of SEN which names a particular school (including Academies and Free Schools) will continue to be guaranteed a place at the school of their first choice. In order to promote fair access to high performing schools, we will also consult on whether we should allow Academies and Free Schools to choose to prioritise children from disadvantaged backgrounds in their oversubscription criteria if they wish.

**Local authorities will protect and promote the interests of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils**

85. We want local authorities to be champions of pupils and parents as we drive responsibility and decision-making towards schools and local areas more

strongly. At the moment there are countless targets, onerous inspection regimes and a stultifying culture of compliance, with a proliferation of ring-fences, an overkill of regulations and a burgeoning thicket of guidance. All of these centrally-driven interventions have made government less local.

86. We plan to strip away these stifling bureaucratic burdens and offer local authorities the space they need to be more daring and imaginative in how they provide services and deploy resources to the benefit of every child in their area. In particular, local authorities will be free to develop new and innovative ways of supporting the vulnerable.
87. In a more autonomous school system with a diversity of paths for schools to take, local authorities have a unique role to play as guardians of social justice and promoters of educational excellence on behalf of local children and parents. They will need to encourage a supply of good places in the system to meet every child's needs, including through the development of Academies and Free Schools which reflect the local community. We very much welcome the already increasing number of local authorities proposing the development of new Academies and the expansion of existing ones, making links directly with sponsors.
88. For the immediate future, the majority of schools will remain as local authority maintained schools and their funding will be routed through local authorities. But we anticipate that, as Academy status becomes the norm, local authorities will increasingly move to a strategic commissioning and oversight role.
89. We expect local authorities will continue to play a vital part in promoting equality in our school system, linked to their wider role in relation to children's services. They will be acting as local agents of change, championing parents' choice and the needs of the most vulnerable, so that all schools are held to account for the highest of standards. They will use their democratic mandate to reflect and articulate the concerns of their local communities and have clear accountability, facilitated by a transparency of data and planning, to ensure that high standards are offered to all children and young people in their locality. This is underpinned by their continuing legal duty to promote "the fulfilment by every child concerned of his educational potential".
90. Local authorities will be freed to decide how best to support school improvement in their area, challenging individual schools to improve, encouraging great schools to share their expertise and taking rapid action to address underperforming schools. We will expect local authorities to monitor schools' performance and use their intervention powers to act early and effectively to secure improvement in maintained schools, particularly where these schools are not meeting the needs of specific groups of pupils, including those with disabilities or from underperforming ethnic backgrounds.
91. Where both attainment and pupil progress are low and where schools lack capacity to improve themselves, we would encourage local authorities to

consider conversion to Academy status. We are delighted that so many local authorities are already doing this as they recognise how much Academies can improve performance, especially for disadvantaged children. Where local authorities have concerns about the performance of existing Academies or Free Schools which cannot be resolved locally, they will be able to raise them with the Secretary of State.

92. The coordination of admissions by local authorities has been of significant benefit to parents and has continued in those which have a high proportion of Academies. They will continue to coordinate admissions arrangements for all schools to ensure fair access for all, but we will strip out bureaucratic requirements to allow local authorities to make the process as fair and simple as possible for parents and pupils.

93. The local authority role as a convenor of local services also means that they are best placed to act as the champion for vulnerable pupils in their area. In particular, they will continue to ensure that disabled children and those with SEN can access high quality provision that meets their needs, and they will continue to be responsible for funding provision for pupils with statements of SEN. We will give local authorities more freedom to develop their own plans to support vulnerable children in their education and they will be free to develop new and innovative approaches in how to provide services and to deploy resources.

94. Their roles in relation to broader children's services will continue. They will continue to act as the corporate parent for Looked After Children – with a key role in improving their educational attainment. They will similarly continue to secure the provision of education for young people in custody. Their broad responsibilities for safeguarding children will, of course continue – developing in the light of the findings of the review being undertaken by Professor Eileen Munro.

95. As with every area of government, we recognise that local authorities will be facing pressures on their resources. Funding for vulnerable pupils - such as those with highly complex SEN needs and those being educated outside of mainstream education - should be handled outside of any national funding formula. We will bring together funding for this relatively small number of children and young people with complex needs so that suitable provision can be sought and paid for in a locality.

96. The forthcoming Special Educational Needs and Disability Green Paper will set out options on the future of high cost pupil funding – including exploring questions of how to increase transparency of funding and parental control of budgets, regional collaboration and alignment of pre- and post-16 funding.

**Other than attainment, behaviour and exclusions remain our greatest concern in promoting equality**

97. Disruption affects teachers' ability to teach. Most pupils do not want to have their concentration disturbed or lessons interrupted, and parents want to send their children to school knowing that every lesson will be a good one.

Research shows up to 50 minutes teaching can be lost per teacher per day due to behaviour issues. This is time no pupil, especially those who are underperforming, can afford to lose.

98. We also know that a third of teachers identify pupil behaviour and discipline as one of the main demotivating factors they experience at work. Two thirds agree that negative behaviour is driving them and their colleagues out of the profession, as well as being a major barrier to attracting talented potential recruits to teaching. We will never get more talented people into the classroom and we will never give disadvantaged children the inspiration they need unless we can solve the problem of bad behaviour and disruption in the classroom. We cannot allow poor behaviour to deprive schools and their pupils of good teachers and good teaching.
99. A sharper focus on discipline will improve school ethos and raise the attainment of all. We are on the side of teachers and we will not be deflected from laying down lines which the badly behaved must not cross. The reforms outlined in the White Paper will do this by returning the powers teachers and heads need inside and outside of the classroom, whilst stripping away the rules that far too often prevent them from maintaining order and promoting good behaviour. With extended powers to search and confiscate, strengthened guidance on restraint and the removal of the 24 hour notice for detention, teachers will have the power and confidence to deal with troublemakers and prevent bad behaviour from escalating.
100. No professional sees exclusion from school as a positive outcome for a child or young person. We want these reforms to encourage schools to intervene early on and focus on supporting those pupils whose behaviour problems are likely to escalate and put them at risk of permanent exclusion. Exclusion should always be a last resort for a head teacher because we know that exclusion from school damages a young person's life chances. Excluded pupils are, for instance, more likely to commit a crime or become addicted to drugs.
101. We also know that pupils from certain backgrounds are more likely to be excluded than others. The data show that children who are eligible for free school meals are around 3 times more likely to receive either a permanent or fixed period exclusion than children from wealthier backgrounds. Boys are also 3.5 times more likely to be permanently excluded than girls. Pupils with SEN account for 72 per cent of all exclusions. Certain ethnic groups appear to be disproportionately represented among excluded children. In 2006, the government published a report specifically highlighting the disproportionate number of Black Caribbean boys excluded, noting that they were 2.6 times more likely to be excluded than White British boys, even after controlling for FSM and SEN.
102. Exclusion from school does not mean exclusion from education, but at present the attainment of pupils in alternative provision is extremely low. At present, those unable to attend a mainstream school receive their education in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRUs). While a significant proportion of PRUs are judged outstanding by Ofsted, in 2010 only 3.1 per cent of pupils in PRUs

and hospital schools achieved five or more A\*-C grade GCSEs; and some go on to cause serious problems for themselves and their communities. This represents a worrying and unacceptable failure to deliver the best for children and young people disproportionately affected by exclusion.

103. Over time, we think there is a strong case for organising exclusion and alternative provision differently. We want to make it clear that head teachers have the authority to exclude pupils where there is no other option. But we want to balance this authority with clear responsibility for both the quality of the education their excluded pupils receive and what they achieve.

104. So we plan to trial a new approach. Schools will be free to exclude any pupil they wish. But they will then be responsible for finding and funding alternative provision themselves. In line with our plans to give schools greater autonomy and more control of funding, we will explore shifting the money for alternative provision from local authorities to schools, so schools can purchase for themselves the alternative provision they think will best suit disruptive children. They could either collaborate with other schools to provide suitable places, or buy them from the local authority, the voluntary sector or local colleges.

105. In order to ensure the decision to exclude is never abused, schools will be held accountable for the pupils they exclude. The academic performance of excluded children would count in the school performance tables. This would create a strong incentive for schools to avoid exclusion where possible, and ensure that where it does happen it is appropriate and pupils receive good quality alternative provision.

106. We believe this change of approach could see significantly improved outcomes for some of our most vulnerable children. However, we recognise that this is a big step. So we will begin by working with local authorities and head teachers to test the approach, identify issues and barriers, develop solutions, and ensure that the incentives work effectively.

107. Certainly in the short to medium term, we would need local authorities to retain a duty to ensure that sufficient provision is available, and to take responsibility for quality assurance. Over time, we hope to see responsibility pass more and more to schools themselves. We will work closely with schools and local authorities as we trial and implement these reforms.

108. An important part of making this new system work is ensuring that local authorities and schools have the ability to improve alternative provision in their area, and a range of reforms will help them to do so.

109. Autonomy within the state sector is linked with improving quality, but PRUs are not currently benefiting from this as they are much more closely linked with local authorities than schools. So existing PRUs will be given greater freedoms over finance and staffing, allowing them to innovate and better meet the needs of the young people they serve. Those that wish to will be given the opportunity to convert to Academy status, and we will encourage the best PRUs to expand. We will also remove barriers to voluntary

organisations entering the market, to ensure that those organisations with a proven track record in turning young lives around are given the opportunity to educate excluded pupils.

110. We are confident that these measures will promote a diversity of alternative provision for excluded pupils and other vulnerable young people who are not in mainstream schools, such as teenage mothers and recently arrived young asylum seekers. This will include Free School alternative provision and professionally-run voluntary sector providers sitting alongside high-performing PRUs, all with greater freedom to innovate. This approach will be better able to offer tailored provision and meet the needs of young people in the sector.

111. Ofsted are currently undertaking a study of alternative provision. In light of their findings we will consider how best to ensure high quality provision. It may be that a quality mark for alternative provision will be effective or that tighter regulation may be needed.

112. All pupils should be able to learn in safety, but we know that bullying is a significant problem for many children and young people: this is unacceptable. In a recent study, pupils who reported being bullied during a three year period did substantially worse in their GCSEs than those who reported no bullying. Government cannot address this problem directly because it is head teachers, not the Department for Education, who set the culture in schools. So it is essential that head teachers should put the expectations and processes in place to make sure that bullying will be identified and swiftly addressed. The role Government can play is to provide head teachers with easy access to the highest quality tools for the job and ensure that they are appropriately held to account.

113. We are clear that a school's anti-bullying approach must not be blind to race, gender, sexuality, faith or disability. A head teacher who is effective in handling bullying ought to know whether there is a particular prevalence of any types of prejudice-based bullying in the school, and be shaping his or her approach in response to make sure any such incidents are taken especially seriously.

### **Monitoring impact**

114. We will continue to monitor schools' performance in terms of overall standards and narrowing the gap between rich and poor pupils through data published annually, which will also allow us to monitor the impact of our new approach to tackling school underperformance. In addition, we will monitor other data about the performance of the system – including, for example, information about the academic qualifications of new teachers and about the number of head teacher vacancies. Within the next few years this data will start to give us indications about the impact of the White Paper's policies, and we will also be able to draw on Ofsted thematic reports into specific issues within the school system. In this way, we will add to the wealth of international evidence and understand how the system can improve even further in future.

115. We will carry out formal review of the legislative policy in 3-5 years as part of the post-implementation review of the forthcoming Education Bill.

116. We have planned separate reviews of specific areas of the White Paper, including:

- a. Free Schools and Academies
- b. Bureaucracy and reducing prescription
- c. New approach to exclusions
- d. Education Endowment Fund.

117. Measures to increase the transparency of school-level data and the publication of the Department for Education's Business Plan will make more information publicly accessible to support our aim of increased democratic accountability.

You can download this booklet online at: <http://publications.education.gov.uk/>

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