

The Schools System Draft Structural Reform Plan

July 2010

Structural Reform Plans

Structural Reform Plans are the key tool of the Coalition Government for making departments accountable for the implementation of the reforms set out in the Coalition Agreement. They replace the old, top-down systems of targets and central micromanagement.

The reforms set out in each department's SRP are designed to turn government on its head, taking power away from Whitehall and putting it into the hands of people and communities. Once these reforms are in place, people themselves will have the power to improve our country and our public services, through the mechanisms of local democratic accountability, competition, choice, and social action.

The reform plans set out in this document are consistent with and form part of the Department's contribution to the Spending Review. All departmental spending is subject to the Spending Review.

We have adopted a cautious view of the timescales for delivering all legislative measures due to the unpredictability of pressures on Parliamentary time.

Departmental Priorities (1 / 2)

Overall approach to reform

This coalition government is determined to make opportunity more equal.

Over the past ten years, the gulf in achievement between the rich and the poor has widened and the attainment gap between fee-paying schools and state schools has doubled.

We need to reform our education system if we are to reverse the decline in the performance of our education system relative to our international competitors and to ensure that every pupil gets a better chance.

This is a comprehensive plan to make our state education system the best in the world and it is informed by the features that are common to the education systems where there is the best absolute performance and the highest levels of equity.

Greater autonomy for schools

In many of the most successful education systems in the world, individual schools are given a high level of autonomy. It is head teachers and teachers, not bureaucrats and politicians, who inspire pupils and drive school improvement.

In addition to the existing Academies programme which will continue to drive faster and deeper improvements in deprived and disadvantaged areas, we will now also invite all schools to apply for the kind of autonomy that has served schools in America, Canada, Sweden and Finland so well.

Many schools have so far registered their interest in becoming an Academy. Every school acquiring Academy freedoms will also be expected to help at least one faltering or coasting school to improve, so that the strong partner with the weak in a determined and concerted effort to improve education for all.

Improved parental choice

For too long, too many parents have been denied the choice of a good local school, with an antiquated admissions system that has relegated the poorest children to a second-rate education, while richer families have bought their way to a higher quality education.

As well as improving standards in all schools, we will also capitalise on the passion of parents, teachers and charities who want to make a difference by making it easier for them to set up and run their own schools. Hundreds of groups who are determined to help the poorest children do better and want more freedom to allow them to do so have already expressed an interest in starting great new schools and we have invited them to put forward their plans to set up new Schools.

Departmental Priorities (2/2)

Just like the successful charter schools in the US, these schools will have the freedom to innovate, respond directly to parents' needs and create a new generation of great state schools with small class sizes, high quality teaching and strong discipline.

More support for the poorest

At the heart of our Coalition's programme for government is a commitment to spend more on the education of the poorest children. Our pupil premium is designed to tackle deep-rooted disadvantage by taking additional money from outside the schools budget to ensure those teaching the poorest children get the resources they need to deliver smaller class sizes, more one-to-one or small group tuition, longer school days and more extra-curricular activities.

Whole system improvement

Nothing matters more in education than attracting the best people into teaching and making sure that every minute in the classroom is spent with children benefiting from the best possible instruction. We will attract more great teachers into the classroom by expanding Teach First and further enhancing the prestige and esteem of the teaching profession.

The biggest single barrier to good people starting, or staying, in education is poor pupil behaviour. We will focus relentlessly on improving behaviour by ensuring that parents accept their responsibilities, teachers have the discretion they need to get on with the job, and pupils respect adult authority at all times.

We will also provide sharper, more intelligent accountability that focuses on underperformance by reforming Ofsted.

We will introduce simpler revenue and capital funding systems to give better value for money and to tackle disadvantage and raise standards.

Finally, we will reform the curriculum so that it reflects the best collective wisdom we have about how children learn, what they should know and how quickly they can grow in knowledge.

We will publish a White Paper in the autumn setting out further details of these reforms.

The Schools System Structural Reform Plan is the first part of a comprehensive plan for supporting children and young people that will be published by the Department for Education. In the coming months we will also set out how we will ensure all children have the fairest start in life, working closely alongside the Ministerial Taskforce on Childhood and Families.

1. Independent state schools (1 / 2)

Driving change with a new generation of independently-run state schools

ACTIONS	Start	End
1.1 Allow all schools to apply for Academy status		
i. Legislate to allow conversion	May 2010	
ii. Establish application process	May 2010	
iii. Invite applications from outstanding schools	May 2010	
iv. Approve applications from outstanding schools	July 2010	
v. Sign first funding agreements with successful schools	Aug 2010	
vi. Calculate budgets and transfer assets to first tranche of schools	Aug 2010	
vii. First schools convert to Academy status	Sep 2010	
viii. Open applications to wider group of schools	Nov 2010	
1.2 Enable the takeover by an experienced education provider of underperforming schools		
i. Sign funding agreements with sponsors taking over schools in academic year 2010/11	May 2010	Sep 2010
ii. Identify new sponsors for underperforming schools that will convert in 2011/12	May 2010	Aug 2011
iii. Match new sponsors with underperforming schools	May 2010	
iv. Sign funding agreements, calculate budgets and transfer assets to new sponsors	May 2011	
MILESTONES		
A. First Education Bill introduced	May 2010	
B. First wave of outstanding schools become Academies	Autumn 2010	
C. First underperforming schools reopen as Academies	Autumn 2010	
D. White Paper setting out full education plans published	Oct 2010	
E. Second Education Bill introduced	Nov 2010	

1. Independent state schools (2/2)

Driving change with a new generation of independently-run state schools

ACTIONS	Start	End
v. Convert next tranche of underperforming schools to Academy status	Sep 2011	
vi. Repeat process for academic year 2012/13	Sep 2011	Sep 2012
1.3 Make it easier for new providers to open new Schools		
i. Agree arrangements for pre-application support	Jun 2010	
ii. Establish criteria for approving a new School	Jun 2010	
iii. Open application process	Jun 2010	
iv. Amend planning guidance to increase number of potential sites for new schools	Jun 2010	Jan 2011
v. Establish a revenue funding model for new school development	Jun 2010	Aug 2011
vi. Revise school building guidance	Aug 2010	Jan 2011
vii. DfE to work with first tranche of new Schools	Aug 2010	Sep 2011
viii. Begin approving the opening of the first new Schools	Nov 2010	Jul 2011
ix. Open the first new Schools	Sep 2011	
MILESTONES		
F. DfE begin work with first pathfinder new Schools	Aug 2010	
G. First new Schools to open	Sep 2011	

