

Education White Paper: Opportunity for All

To: Children and Young People Committee

Meeting Date: 17 May 2022

From: Service Director Education

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: To provide an overview to the Committee on the Education White Paper: Opportunity for All. The White Paper sets out the Government's aspiration for Education reform.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

Note and comment on the report, and request any further information on the areas outlined.

Voting: Not applicable. For noting only.

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1. Background

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the recently published Education White Paper: Opportunity for All. The paper is a vision for Education which stretches to 2030 and outlines the Government's intention for Education reform. At this stage, this is a discussion document, although legislation is expected to follow as part of the Queen's Speech and further consultation on elements of the Reform agenda.
- 1.2 At this stage, there is limited detail in the paper, so it is difficult to be specific on the impact either on education settings or the Local Authority of these changes.

2. Education White Paper: Opportunity for All

- 2.1 The Government's Education White Paper: Opportunity for All launched on 28 March 2022. The full White Paper can be [found here](#). It is the first Education White Paper since 2016 and outlines objectives for outcomes and the route the Government intends to drive this aspiration. There are significant overlaps with the Green Paper on SEND reform.

There are two key, hugely ambitious objectives:

- The White Paper restates the target the Government had already set in its 'Levelling up' paper for 90% of children by 2030 leaving primary school with the expected standard in reading, writing and maths - up from 65% currently.
 - The White Paper now sets out a new 'ambition' to increase the national GCSE average grade in both English language and in maths from 4.5 in 2019 to 5 by 2030.
- 2.2 The White Paper covers four chapters, and the summary of the recommendations are outlined below. In each of the chapters, the impact on Cambridgeshire is considered.
 - 2.3 Chapter 1: An excellent teacher for every child
 1. Consultation on a new leadership level National Professional Qualification for SENCOs, which would replace the National Award in SEN Coordination as the mandatory qualification for all new SENCOs.
 2. New scholarship to attract the most talented language graduates and a new Initial Teacher Training course to support more engineers to teach physics.
 3. A new digital service will recognise teaching qualifications "from all over the world".
 4. [500,000 teacher training and development opportunities](#) by 2024, establishing a flagship Institute of Teaching, and teacher trainers being recredited.
 5. To raise teacher starting salaries to £30k by 2023.
 6. £3k retention payments for maths and science teachers in disadvantaged areas.
 7. A new relocation premium to help teachers from around the world with visas and other expenses and bursaries for international trainees.
 8. Ofsted will also inspect all Initial Teacher Training providers by July 2024, and then every three years after that.

- 2.4 Cambridgeshire view – These are all sensible measures but there is a need to understand the financial impact and the implementation process of any change. There is little change proposed for the development of teachers in primary schools and leadership retention is

emerging as a key issue and is not included in the proposals. Recruitment and retention remains a key concern.

2.5 Chapter 2: Delivering high standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance

1. A new literacy and numeracy test for a sample of year 9 pupils to “estimate performance at a national level”. This will “consist of a short series of digital activities undertaken by a small number of children in school”.
2. Legislation to increase Ofsted’s powers to inspect schools that are operating illegally without registration.
3. An expectation that all mainstream schools run a 32.5-hour week by September 2023. Ofsted will check up on schools where it has concerns over education quality and their hours are below the minimum. Special schools are excluded from these arrangements.
 - *From September 2022, all state-funded schools are expected to publish their opening times on their school website (but not optional before or after school activities). Publication of school hours should present the compulsory time a school is open from the official start of the school day (i.e. morning registration) to the official end to the compulsory school day (i.e. official home time) including breaks, but not optional before or after school activities.*
 - *From Spring 2023, all state-funded schools are expected to submit the length of their school week via the spring collection of the school census.*
 - *By September 2023 at the latest, all state-funded, mainstream schools will be expected to provide a compulsory school week of at least 32.5 hours.*
5. A new network of modern foreign language hubs from 2023, and more effective professional development for language teachers.
6. Updated plans to support sport and music education will be published this year, and a new cultural education plan will come out in 2023.
7. A new careers programme for primary schools in areas of disadvantage and improved professional development for teachers and leaders on careers education.
8. Turn Oak National Academy into a new arms-length curriculum body, offering free, adaptable digital curriculum resources and video lessons, free for all teachers.
9. It commits to no changes to the national curriculum “for the remainder of the Parliament”, and GCSEs and A-levels to remain in place, returning to pre-pandemic grading in 2023.
10. Legislation to “modernise” rules on recording attendance, with a new “national data solution” which will provide a blueprint for other parts of the system.
11. There’s also the requirement for schools to publish a clear policy on attendance.
12. Legislation will be made for [a register for children not in school](#).

2.6 Cambridgeshire View – despite introducing another level of testing, the reintroduction of a Key Stage 3 assessment will ensure no child gets left behind in their secondary education. The changes to attendance roles and responsibilities is welcome and removing the ‘grey’ areas from the system is a positive step forward. The register for children not in school is welcomed but further details over the role and expectations on Local Authorities will be needed to allow sufficient time to develop these arrangements. We welcome the continuation of sports and music funding as well as a review of cultural education – the wider curriculum cannot be lost at the expense of rising accountability measures for the core subjects.

2.7 Chapter 3: Target support for every child who needs it

1. Ofsted will hold schools to account for the new “parent pledge” – that “any child that falls behind” in English and maths should receive “timely and evidence-based support to enable them to reach their full potential”. Government has “pledged” to make sure schools communicate this to parents.
2. New guidance on providing catch-up “targeted support”, keeping parents updated and effective assessment for children who have fallen behind will be published in partnership with Ofsted.
3. Tutoring to become a “core academic option in the pupil premium menu” with a “vibrant tutoring market” from 2024. Schools will be expected to use their core budgets, including pupil premium, to pay for support.
4. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) will be funded with at least £100 million so it can “continue its crucial work to build the evidence base” for “at least the next decade”.
5. £55 million for the Accelerator Fund to “develop and scale-up the best-evidence literacy and numeracy interventions”.

2.8 Cambridgeshire View – We believe most schools communicate effectively to parents on pupil progress and the parent pledge will cement existing practice. The national roll out of the tuition programme has been problematic but we welcome the ongoing commitment to school-based provision. We are monitoring take up following the Secretary of State’s recent announcement that details on the use of tuition will be published nationally and passed to Ofsted to follow up with those not engaging. A briefing is being held on 16 May for school leaders. The Education Endowment Foundation’s impact has been positive, and we welcome further investment into evidence-based practice to support the core subject areas.

2.9 Chapter 4: A stronger and fairer system

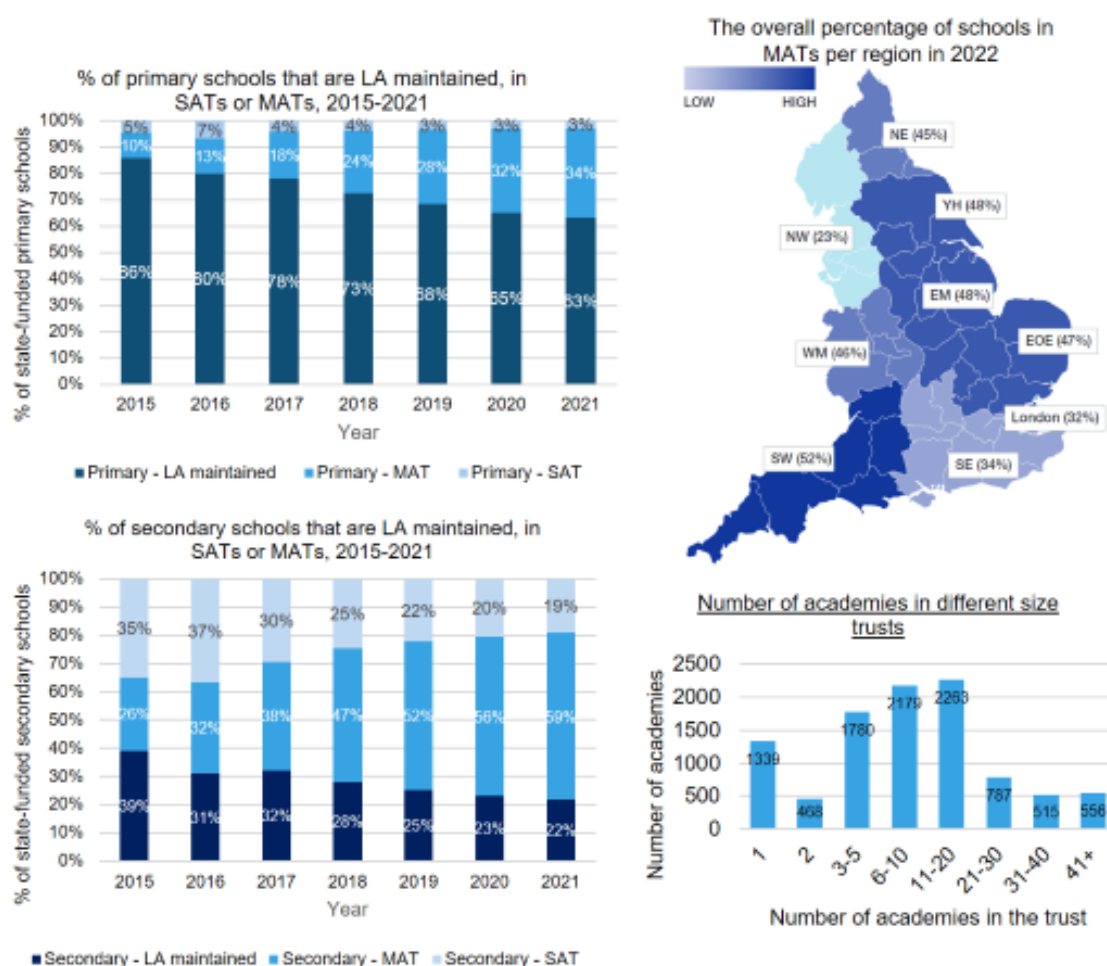
2.10 This chapter covers system reform and structures within education. It is covered under 3 key areas – Academies, Local Authority and Reform –

2.11 Academies

1. A target for all schools to be in strong multi-academy trusts or have “plans to join or form one” by 2030. There are currently 10,000 academies nationally consisting of three quarters of secondary schools and a third of primary schools. In Cambridgeshire, all our secondary schools are academies and around 40% of primary schools.
2. The DfE will “expect” most trusts to work towards serving at least 10 schools or 7,500 pupils.
3. The proportion of schools a trust can run in a particular area will be capped, though no cap will be imposed on trust size overall.
4. A review in May to consider new intervention powers over academy trusts if they fail to meet new statutory standards for being “strong” MATs.
5. Clearer expectations for trusts over providing high-quality, inclusive education, school improvement, financial management, parental engagement and workforce deployment, training and retention.
6. New statutory duties to work collaboratively with other trusts, councils and public bodies, and follow the admissions code.

7. Top slicing of individual school budgets faces new “transparency measures”.
8. In “exceptional circumstances”, good schools may be able to request to move trusts.
9. A three-year £86 million pot is earmarked for trust capacity funding, with extra “financial support” for dioceses to launch trusts following a pilot. This is alongside a new CEO development scheme will be open to executive heads and senior trust staff.
10. The DfE will “consider” bids for high-quality standalone trust free schools, but “avoid converting schools as standalone academies”. There are still a number of standalone academies in Cambridgeshire from earlier iterations of the programme.
11. Legislation will protect faith schools’ “statutory freedoms and protections” on conversion, will “ensure” selective schools are “secure” in MATs.
12. Plans will be developed for all trusts to have “local governance arrangements for their schools”.

The current academisation position can be seen below –



2.12 Local Authorities

1. Councils will have powers to require trusts to admit children, and to object to schools’ published admissions numbers. We will take responsibility for in-year admissions where this has previously been a choice of Trusts to take on this responsibility. A number of Cambridgeshire Trusts have done this.

2. There will be a “new statutory framework” to put children’s needs first and reform over-subscription rules.
3. Councils will be able to launch MATs “where too few strong trusts exist” or where more good schools need to work together to support lower performing schools. The minister will have powers to mass convert all of a council’s schools at their request.
4. A new system of proactive assurance with Local Safeguarding Partnerships commissioning safeguarding audits every three years. This will “help ensure that all schools’ policies are consistent with local safeguarding arrangements and the academy trust standards”.

2.13 Reform

1. A consultation to move schools with two consecutive Ofsted judgments below “good” into strong trusts. It proposes new powers to force “coasting” maintained and academy schools (those with two consecutive Ofsted ratings below “good”) to convert or change trusts. This consultation is open and can be [found here](#). It runs until 23 May 2022.
2. A £40 million fund is promised for 24 “priority” areas among the 55 disadvantaged “education investment areas” to address particular needs, such as literacy, numeracy or absence. These areas will also be targeted for establishing new “academically focused” 16-19 free schools. Cambridgeshire is included in this group by virtue of its previous status as an Opportunity Area. East Cambs and Fenland are a ‘Priority Area’ while the rest of Cambridgeshire is an ‘Education Investment Area’ (EIA). The specific details are limited but we are aware of the following government support -
 - Schools in the EIA will be eligible for a levelling up premium, worth up to £3k a year for 5 years for maths, physics, chemistry and computer teachers working in disadvantaged schools.
 - Extending the Connecting the Classrooms (CtC) programme with £150m to support schools reaching the minimum Wi-Fi Standards.
 - Priority will also be given for other DfE programmes including free schools.

- 2.14 Cambridgeshire View – We remain committed to our family of schools remaining maintained (or as a collective if required). Our aspiration remains keeping schools at the heart of the community with local accountability and governance. Individual schools should always consider what is best for the children in a structural change – in the short, medium and long term. It is a role for governors to decide their future. We held a briefing for maintained schools on 27 April to cover the White Paper and there was strong support for consideration of a Local Authority led Multi Academy Trust. There is little detail at this stage.

National Funding Formula

- 2.15 At the time of publishing the White Paper, the DfE have also published their plans for the national funding arrangements in response to the [recent consultation](#). This will move all formulas towards the national in a phased approach. They will also consult on the tricky areas of funding e.g. split sites, premises, PFI and exceptional funding. More details are expected in the second half of the summer term.

Next Steps

2.16 The proposals outlined in the White Paper lack the full clarity at this stage. The following actions are proposed as next steps -

- A further paper is brought to the CYP committee on the considerations for the formation of a Local Authority MAT(s) once the details of these arrangements are known.
- Officers work with the DfE, Diocesan bodies, Governors and the Cambridgeshire CEO forum to consider a proposal for the future academy landscape across the county and how it might operate. This will include consideration of small schools in the county.
- The Regional School Commissioner is invited to the Committee to provide further clarity on the key aspects of the White Paper. It would be useful if members of the committee could collate their views prior to this meeting.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

- Schools and early years settings are at the heart of communities. Ensuring they meet community needs is critical. Small schools are a key part of our education offer in the County and we need to ensure that this vital access is maintained where there is a positive education offer available to pupils.

3.2 A good quality of life for everyone

- Providing high quality education should enhance the skills of the local workforce and provide essential childcare services for working parents or those seeking to return to work. Schools and early years and childcare services are providers of local employment.

3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

- The White Paper sets high expectations for the stage at which children leave their school. We are fully committed to meeting these expectations, working with all schools in Cambridgeshire.

3.4 Protecting and caring for those who need us

- Education is the major universal service the council provides as all children are required to access education. School and early years settings play a critical role in safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and families. The role of the Local Children's Safeguarding Board will be strengthened by the White Paper and it is positive that there will be a register established for those children not in an education setting.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category at this stage.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas:

There are no significant implications within this category.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes
Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?
Name of Procurement Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law?
Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?
Name of Officer: Simon Cobby

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Jonathan Lewis

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?
No implications.

5. Source documents guidance

5.1 [Government White Paper](#)