

Chairs network meeting 12th May 2022

Meeting notes

Schools white paper: Opportunity for all

The latest schools' white paper, 'Opportunity for all: Strong schools with great teachers for your child' set out the government's vision for education, which includes:

- a range of programmes for teacher development and recruitment
- additional support for schools to secure the fundamentals of behaviour, attendance, and wellbeing for all
- various interventions to target support to those who need it most
- introducing a fully trust-led system with a singular regulatory body**

The Department for Education (DfE) will be consulting a range of views on different proposals outlined in the paper.

To support the proposals of the white paper, the DfE will be consulting on:

- moving schools that have received two consecutive below 'good' judgements from Ofsted into strong trusts to tackle underperformance
- the exceptional circumstances in which a good school could request that the regulator agrees to the school moving to a stronger trust
- a statutory framework to govern children's movements so that all placement decisions – including alternative provision – are always made in the best interest of the child
- a new backstop power for local authorities to direct trusts
- allowing local authority-maintained specialist providers to move into either specialist-only or mixed trusts, based on individual and local circumstances
- a new leadership level NPQ for SENCOs, replacing the National Award in SEN Coordination as the mandatory qualification for all new SENCOs

** DfE report "[The case for a fully trust – lead system](#)" (March 2022)

Governing boards should discuss the white paper as a topic on an upcoming meeting agenda and may wish to contribute to future DfE consultations.

SEND Review: Right support, Right place, Right time Green paper

The 2022 green paper sets out the government's proposals to ensure that every child and [young](#) person has their needs identified quickly and met more consistently.

This includes:

- establishing a single national special educational needs and disability (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) system that sets clear standards for the provision that children and young people should expect to receive
- strengthened accountabilities and investment that will help to deliver real change for children, young people, and their families
- creating a single national system that has high aspirations and ambitions for children and young people with SEND and those in AP, which is financially sustainable

Governing boards should discuss the white paper as a topic on an upcoming meeting agenda and may wish to contribute to the consultation. Link to consultation [here](#)

The consultation closes at 11.45pm on 22nd July 2022

Governing board meetings

The DfE position is:

- Governing boards can now meet face-to-face if it is safe to do so
- It is suggested that that people wear face coverings in crowded and enclosed spaces where they might come into contact with people they do not normally meet.
- Schools will need to continue to monitor their own risk assessments and update as necessary
- However, we would encourage boards to consider lessons learned during the pandemic to inform their future meetings.

School-led tutoring: guidance and tracker tool

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) helps support disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils from year 1 to year 11 to catch-up on missed education due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

School-led tutoring is one route of the NTP. State-funded schools and academy trusts, with pupils eligible for pupil premium, receive a ring-fenced grant to source their own tutoring provision to support catch-up.

This guidance is for school leaders, school staff and governing boards in eligible schools and academy trusts, as well as local authorities.

The school-led tutoring grant in academic year 2021 to 2022 will be calculated based on the number of pupils eligible for pupil premium.

For 2021 to 2022, the grant provided has been calculated to cover 75% of the cost of tuition, based on an average cost of £18 per hour and a pupil receiving a package of 15 hours of tuition, totalling £202.50 per pupil.

From the £18 average hourly cost, DfE will provide a maximum of £13.50 per hour for tutoring. Schools and academy trusts are expected to contribute the remaining £4.50 from other budgets such as the recovery premium or pupil premium

New tutoring “league tables” will be published this autumn, it has been confirmed by DfE, and will also be shared with Ofsted

Please ask your leadership team for an update.

Working together to improve school attendance, from September 2022

Improving school attendance begins at board level, therefore all academy trust boards, and governing bodies of maintained schools should take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with school leaders to set whole school attendance cultures. This should include:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents.
- Recognising that attendance improvement does not happen in isolation and therefore ensuring it is prioritised in wider improvement strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding. This may include having a link governor or trustee that focusses on attendance.

Improving attendance requires constant focus, and effective whole school approaches require regular ongoing support, guidance, and challenge. We therefore expect all trusts and governing bodies to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school’s ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Multi-academy trust boards and governing bodies of federations are also expected to:

- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools. Whilst it is expected that all trusts and governing bodies will provide support covering these areas, the approach to delivering it should be proportionate to the size of the group of schools and type of school(s) within it.

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance can be found [here](#).

Additionally, subject to new legislation providing the Secretary of State the power to set a single national framework for issuing fixed penalty notices in respect of absence, removing the existing duty (under the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended) and subsequent burden for each local authority to draw up a code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

Education recovery support

This guidance is intended to support governors and trustees to have effective discussions about education recovery plans within their school or trust. The governing board is the decision-making body of the school or academy trust, accountable and responsible for the school or academies in the trust. It is therefore vital that governors and trustees play an active role in providing support and challenge as schools and trusts continue to deliver education and help pupils recover from the impact of COVID-19.

Guidance and questions for governors and trustees:

Overall education recovery plans

- what is the school or trust's assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on pupils' progress, attainment, and wellbeing?
- how is the school or trust planning to access and use additional funding provided as part of the government's education recovery support package?
- how will this impact educational outcomes? How is the board monitoring activity and impact across groups?
- do school leaders have credible plans for addressing underperformance or less than expected progress?

Recovery premium

- has the [EEF's \(Education Endowment Foundation\) pupil premium guide](#) and the department's guidance on [recovery premium funding](#) and effective use of [pupil premium](#) been used to determine how to use pupil premium and recovery premium to support disadvantaged pupils?
- how has the school or trust diagnosed individual pupil's needs, for use of pupil premium and recovery premium, and has it referred to a range of the best evidence, such as that in the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit?
- what is the school's rationale for the breakdown of pupil premium and recovery premium spending across the three EEF tiers of teaching, targeted academic support, and wider strategies?
- has the school or trust (for each academy) published an updated strategy for use of pupil premium and recovery premium using the mandatory DfE template?

Tutoring in schools

- how is school-led tutoring funding being used to allow pupils to access appropriate tutoring support? Does it meet the [conditions of funding](#)?
- is the school or trust accessing subsidised tuition through the [Tuition Partners](#)?
- is the school eligible for an [Academic Mentor](#), available through the National Tutoring Programme and, if so, has the school engaged one?
- how is the school identifying which pupils will most benefit from tutoring support?
- how is the board monitoring the impact of tutoring on pupils?

Role of governing body in school food

The governing board are responsible for the provision of school food. As a governor you play a crucial role in creating and embedding a great school food culture.

It is the statutory responsibility of the governing board and trustees to ensure the [School Food Standards](#) are being met and [Ofsted](#) are putting a much greater focus on how schools are creating a culture and ethos of healthy eating.

A great school food culture improves children's health and academic performance. Increasing the take-up of school meals is also better for your school's finances. A half-empty dining hall – like a half-empty restaurant – is certain to lose money.

Getting more families to choose school meals requires a cultural change within your school. It means:

- providing tasty food that looks good and is nutritious
- creating a positive dining experience
- getting the price right
- allowing children to eat with their friends
- and instilling a love of cooking and growing

The headteacher can lead this transformation but they also need support from their governors and leadership team.

The Department for Education recommends that all governors “work with the senior leadership team to develop a whole school food policy that sets out the school's approach to its provision of food, food education (including practical cooking), the role of the catering team as part of the wider school team and the school's strategy to increase the take-up of school lunches.

Food is a great way for your school to engage with and support your local community. You might:

- reach out to community members to help your school set up cooking and gardening clubs
- share an allotment with local families

- invite community members in for lunch or to sell produce at school events

Other initiatives and programmes, to help schools transform food culture and promote healthy lifestyles, are showcased at [What Works Well](#).

Your school has a unique role to help children learn and develop good healthy eating habits for life, creating happier, healthier adults of the future.

Ensure clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction

You should:

- ensure that school food is included within the remit of one of the governing body's committees as part of the school's wider health and wellbeing strategy
- ask the senior leadership team to develop and review a whole school food policy which includes a healthy packed lunch, vending and drinks policy
- check what continuing professional development training is in place for all teachers and support staff to support their knowledge of health and wellbeing
- see how the lunchtime experience contributes to the culture and ethos of the school when making a school visit
- have a member of the governing body attend school council and School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) meetings
- ask the SNAG and school council to provide feedback on the quality and enjoyment of school food and overall lunchtime experience

Hold the headteacher to account and support leadership

You should:

- work through the questions in the School Food Plan's practical guidance with your school leaders, creating a culture and ethos of healthy eating
- check with the headteacher and catering manager that standards are being met across the whole school day
- ask how your catering staff are supported and integrated into school life
- ensure there is enough timetabling, space, and practical resources (equipment, ingredients)
- find out how the school budget and charging policy makes provision so all pupils can access ingredients and resources for cooking

Oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure money is well spent

You should:

- obtain and review meal take up data each term

- work with your senior leadership team to identify trends and issues and create a plan for increasing take up
- establish what action you could take to improve the quality and take up of meals
- ask the senior leadership team and business manager to review the current Pupil Premium sign-up system and look at good practice to help maximise registrations. You can read the [Free school meals guidance](#)
- ask the senior leadership team and business manager to conduct a review of the current catering contract and ensure the specification is appropriate and that the terms are being met – where they are not being met, establish what improvement action will be taken

The contract specification should include the School Food Standards, Professional Standards, food quality and lunchtime experience.

Ofsted has today published a new strategy for the next 5 years (2022 to 2027)

This includes:

- accelerate the inspection cycle so that all schools are inspected by July 2025
- allow more time for professional dialogue and evidence-gathering by increasing the proportion of longer inspections in education

April 2022 saw the Inspection Handbooks updated to remove the requirement for Local Authorities, proprietors, and Academy Trusts to prepare a Statement of Action specifically for Ofsted. Although Statements of Action will continue to be required by law, from the 18th April Ofsted will no longer be reviewing these Statements on receipt. Whilst Ofsted will acknowledge receipt of the Statement, it will not be evaluated by an inspector at that time, and Ofsted will not reject or endorse any Statements. Instead, the Statement will form part of the evidence base for the first monitoring visit of that school, along with the school's own improvement plan.

Summary of changes: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-8-school-inspection-handbook-eif/summary-of-changes>

Section 8 handbook: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-8-school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook-section-8>

Section 5 handbook: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook>

Academy -ESFA Updates – 4th May 2022

Information: Pupil Premium

We have now published the updated [allocations for PE and sport premium 2021 to 2022](#) for the period April 2022 to August 2022.

Information: wellbeing support for school leaders

School leaders can access free wellbeing support through the charity Education Support. The Department for Education (DfE) funded scheme provides free one-to-one counselling, one-to-one supervision, and peer support to school leaders, helping those at deputy head level and above with their wellbeing. [Find out how school leaders can access wellbeing support.](#)

Trust budget surplus

Data published by the Department for Education shows 97.4 per cent of trusts reported having surplus cash or breaking even in their most recent accounts.

The average trust had £1.48 million in reserves, up by more than a quarter from £1.15 million in 2019-20.

The latest document shows the average trust's reserves amounted to 12.9 per cent of their income in the year to 31 August 2021, up from 11.4 per cent the previous year.

The net £3.94 billion combined reserves trusts enjoyed marked a sharp improvement on the £3.13 billion recorded in 2019-20, which included only the initial phase of the pandemic.

Part of the growth in reserves could also reflect academies' growth, with a 3.9 per cent jump in academy numbers during the year. Trust numbers fell by 2.4 per cent, as the average trust grew in size from managing 3.5 schools to 3.7.

Data for [maintained schools published in December](#) showed a similar picture, with Covid fuelling an unlikely turnaround in their finances.

The average-maintained school's revenue balance jumped from £110,690 in 2019-20 to £160,490 this year.

Updated guidance on what governing boards and school leaders should expect from each other

The latest edition of the guidance jointly produced by the national professional organisations, which covers what governing boards and school leaders should expect from each other has been published. In a departure from the previous five editions, there are now two separate versions: one for governing boards and headteachers in single schools and federations and another for multi academy trust boards and CEOs. Both versions are focused on ensuring relationships between school leaders and governing boards are as effective as possible, and improve outcomes for children and young people, through:

- Respecting respective roles
- Working together to set a strategy
- Stakeholder engagement
- Ensuring your school/trust is a great place to work
- Making governance effective
- Ways of working

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