

# Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21<sup>st</sup> century schools system

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/21stcenturyschoolssystem/>

## Introduction

In summary, this is the Labour government's blueprint for schools. Much of it brings together existing policies like the provision of extended school services, but it also articulates a broad vision for schools.

The government aims for a 21<sup>st</sup> century schools system to prepare all children and young people to make a success of their lives. Changes in the economy and society, with fewer jobs for those with low skills, have made improving general educational success and breaking the link between deprivation and low educational attainment even more important. Therefore, the overarching goals of this white paper are to ensure every young person achieves high standards, stays in education or training until the age of 18, and in doing this, to narrow the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils.

*“We want every child to succeed, and we will never give up on any child.” (para. 1.1)*

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## Contents of ‘Your child, your schools, our future’

The white paper looks at:

- a) The school experience to which all children, young people and families will be entitled – these comprise the **Pupil Guarantee**, and the **Parent Guarantee** [\*see detail below]. Each entitlement will be underwritten by legislation, which means they should be enforceable;
- b) How all schools will work in partnerships, including with children's services. Examples include working with other schools to extend curriculum choice at secondary level, or sharing multi-agency teams between schools;
- c) How every school will improve through school-to-school support, accountability and intervention when needed. This includes the introduction of a School Report Card. A **School Report Card Prospectus** has been published alongside the White Paper, and can be found at:  
<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00664-2009&>

Although these proposals are still in development, the government is recommending that schools be scored on six areas: pupil progress, pupil attainment, pupil well-being, pupils' perceptions, parents' perceptions, and narrowing gaps in pupil performance. They plan to pilot school report cards from September 2010;

- d) How every school and school leader will be supported through the right roles for local and national government;
  - e) How to ensure a highly skilled workforce.
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## Home school agreements (para.2.6-2.11)

When applying for schools for their child, all parents will receive a copy of the school's behaviour policy as it will appear in their home school agreement. In applying for a place,

every parent will have to agree to adhere to these rules. However, signing a home school agreement will not be a condition of admission – but, once a child is in school, the parents will be expected to sign the home school agreement each year. Legislation will allow schools to support applications to the courts for Parenting Contracts or Parenting Orders by citing a parent's unwillingness to sign or support the home school agreement.

### **National framework for early intervention (para.2.26-2.30)**

The government is planning to develop a national framework for early intervention that will set out clear systems, roles and responsibilities for universal services, multi-agency teams, and specialist services. As a universal service, schools provide a gateway to targeted and more specialist services. Schools may have on site a multi-agency team that can provide that targeted support. When appropriate, the teams can refer on a child or young person to specialist services.

Although the paper doesn't specify this, it's clear that the government is linking the early intervention framework with a more general use of the Common Assessment Framework in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of assessments.

### **Pupil health and well-being (para.2.33-2.34)**

The National Healthy Schools Programme is being revised. New developments include School Health Teams based around school nursing services – guidance will be published later this year. The Targeted Mental Health in Schools Project should help schools work with other local agencies to make sure that mental health services are more accessible to children and young people.

### **Workforce (para.6.25-6.35)**

The paper has a brief section on plans for the wider school – and children's –workforce. The government's ambition is for everyone in the children's workforce to be qualified to NVQ Level 3, or working towards a Level 3 qualification. It proposes to: develop and set out clear principles and guidance for the recruitment and deployment of the wider workforce in the 21<sup>st</sup> century school system; ask the Training and Development Agency to draw up a strategy for the professional development of the children's workforce in schools; look at bringing together teacher training and development with other professionals working in schools; and create a more diverse support staff including young apprentices.

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### **Pupil Guarantee**

The 21st Century School Pupil Guarantee will ensure that there are high aspirations for all pupils and that each and every pupil is given the opportunity to do the best they possibly can and succeed in school and in adult life.

To make this happen:

- a. every pupil will go to a school where there is good behaviour, strong discipline, order and safety;
- b. every pupil will go to a school where they are taught a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum including skills for learning and life;
- c. every pupil will go to a school where they are taught in a way that meets their needs, where their

- d. progress is regularly checked and where additional needs are spotted early and quickly addressed;
- e. every pupil will go to a school where they take part in sport and cultural activities; and every pupil will go to a school that promotes their health and well-being, where they have the chance to express their views and where they and their families are welcomed and valued.

## **1. Good behaviour, strong discipline, order and safety**

### **Schools are already expected to:**

- have effective policies in place to promote good behaviour and discipline;
- have effective policies in place to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying;
- involve pupils in developing and reviewing the school behaviour policy;
- engage with parents when a pupil fails to attend school regularly, persistently misbehaves, or is excluded; and
- maintain a safe environment and take measures, where appropriate, to keep weapons out of school.

### **The new Pupil Guarantee will now also ensure:**

- that pupils know what behaviour is expected of them and the consequences of misbehaving, from September 2009;
- that all pupils have the opportunity to have their say about standards of behaviour in their school, from spring 2010; and
- that pupils who need support for their behaviour outside the ordinary classroom have access to high quality learning opportunities.

## **2. Taught a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum including skills for learning and life**

### **Schools are already expected to:**

- provide a balanced and broad-based curriculum which gives opportunities to learn and achieve and which prepares all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life, and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development.

### **The new Pupil Guarantee will now also ensure:**

- that the curriculum is tailored to every child's needs so that, from September 2011, every primary pupil receives the support they need to secure good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, learn another language and about the humanities, science, technology and the arts, such as learning to play a musical instrument;
- that every 11-14 year-old enjoys relevant and challenging learning in all subjects and develops their personal, learning and thinking skills so that they have strong foundations to make their 14-19 choices. This will be phased in by September 2010;
- that every learner from 14-19 has the choice of learning route and qualifications from Apprenticeships, Diplomas, the Foundation Learning Tier and GCSEs/A-Levels; this will ensure that they have the opportunity to gain functional skills and increase opportunities to progress to higher education. This will be phased in by 2013;
- that every pupil understands they have, and are encouraged to take up, the opportunity to study at least two science GCSEs and, by September 2014, those who would benefit from a more stretching science curriculum have the opportunity to study triple science GCSE (physics, chemistry and biology);
- that every pupil aged 14-19 has the opportunity to undertake community service and high-quality work-related learning, by September 2009; and

- that every young person is participating in education or training up to the age of 17 from 2013 and up to the age of 18 from 2015.

### **3. Taught in a way that meets their needs, where progress is regularly checked, and where additional needs are spotted early and quickly addressed**

#### **Schools are already expected to:**

- ensure teachers are appropriately qualified and receive training so that they can teach well;
- encourage teachers to tailor their teaching to the needs of each individual pupil;
- have teachers who are trained to effectively assess and monitor each pupil's progress; and
- work with the National Strategies, the Every Child a Chance Trust and those local authorities delivering Every Child a Reader (ECAR) and Every Child Counts (ECC) to identify and support Key Stage 1 pupils who are significantly falling behind in literacy and numeracy.

#### **The new Pupil Guarantee will now also ensure:**

- that every secondary school pupil, from September 2010, receives personalised support from a Personal Tutor who knows them well, has an overview of their progress, and ensures any learning needs or issues are quickly addressed;
- all secondary school pupils have access to high-quality careers education and information, advice and guidance so they can make informed choices about learning, work and lifestyles and are well supported during transitions;
- that every pupil goes to a school that identifies their additional needs quickly and is linked up to health and other specialist services, so they can access the help they need swiftly and easily;
- that every pupil, aged seven to eleven who has fallen behind national expectations and is not making good progress, receives one-to-one tuition in English or mathematics to get them back on track, from September 2010;
- that every pupil beginning secondary school behind national expectations in English and mathematics receives one-to-one or small group tuition and their learning is assessed through a progress check, which is reported to parents, from September 2010;
- that every pupil identified as gifted and talented receives written confirmation by their school of the extra challenge and support they will receive, by September 2010; and
- that every pupil has an opportunity to have a say on how well their school is doing and how it can be improved.

### **4. Take part in sport and cultural activities**

#### **Schools are already expected to:**

- deliver two hours high-quality PE and sport as part of School Sport Partnerships; and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

#### **The new Pupil Guarantee will now also ensure:**

- that every 5-16 year-old has access to five hours, and every 16-19 year-old has access to three hours, of high-quality PE and sport per week, in and out of school, by September 2009;
- that every pupil should have access to regular competitive sport, coaching to improve their skills and enjoyment, a choice of different sports, pathways to club and elite sport, and opportunities to lead and volunteer in sport;

- that through partnerships between schools and other external providers (such as libraries, museums, and performing arts organisations), every pupil should have access to high-quality cultural activities in and out-of-school, with an aspiration that, over time, this will reach five hours a week for all;
- that every primary school pupil should have access to childcare in response to the local pattern of demand, by September 2010; and
- that every pupil should have access to activities out-of-school hours, which may include study support, play/recreation, sport, music clubs, arts and crafts and other special interest clubs, and business and enterprise activities, by September 2010. And every young person should have access to a range of positive activities in their local area.

## **5. Health and well-being is promoted**

### **Schools are already expected to:**

- promote the five Every Child Matters outcomes of: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being.

### **The new Pupil Guarantee will now also ensure:**

- that every pupil receives personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) from September 2011;<sup>24</sup> and
  - that every pupil should go to a Healthy School that promotes healthy eating, an active lifestyle and emotional health and well-being.
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## **Parent Guarantee**

The 21st Century School Parent Guarantee will ensure that every child goes to a school that has high aspirations for them and is given the opportunity to do the best they possibly can to succeed in school and in adult life.

In addition, the Parent Guarantee will ensure that schools work with mothers, fathers and other carers as full partners in their child's learning and wider development.

To make this happen:

- a. every parent will have opportunities, information and support to exercise choice with and on behalf of their child;
- b. every parent will have a Home School Agreement outlining their rights and responsibilities for their child's schooling;
- c. every parent will have the opportunity, information and support they need to be involved and engaged in their child's learning and development; and
- d. every parent will have access to extended services including support and advice on parenting.

### **1. Have opportunities, information and support to exercise choice with and on behalf of their child**

**Parents can already:**

- have confidence that the Admissions Code will ensure that there is a fair process in place to allocate a school place to their child;
- get help and support from choice advisers;
- have their views on extended services, behaviour, the curriculum and travel listened to and acted upon by the school;
- have their views listened to by Ofsted during school inspections and in decisions about when to inspect;
- be confident that the Government will take action where schools or local authorities are not delivering a high-quality education;
- access information on school policies including on SEN and usually covering behaviour and uniform expectations; and
- become involved in school governance.

**The new Parent Guarantee will also ensure:**

- parents get a package of information on every school in which they are interested that includes the School Report Card, giving information on school performance, and its prospectus, giving information on its policies, including expectations of behaviour;
- parents get high-quality information and advice on the career and subject choices open to their child as outlined in the forthcoming Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy;
- parents will be asked for their views on how the school is doing and their views will be included on the School Report Card; and
- local authorities will seek and listen to parents' views on the quality of the schools in their local area.

**2. Have a Home School Agreement outlining their rights and responsibilities for their child's schooling**

**Schools are already expected to:**

- have a Home School Agreement that outlines the school's and family's responsibilities.

**The new Parent Guarantee will also ensure:**

- that the new Home School Agreement will make clear to every parent their particular responsibilities, especially around the behaviour of their child;
- schools will understand that they have new and stronger powers to enforce the new Home School Agreement where parents are not fulfilling their responsibilities around behaviour; and
- that all parents understand the expectations of them and their child and the consequences of not acting to support the school in addressing their child's behaviour issues.

**3. Have the opportunity, information and support they need to be involved and engaged in their child's learning and development**

**Schools are already expected to:**

- provide parents with annual reports on their children's progress; and provide parents with access to their children's school record when requested.

**The new Parent Guarantee will also ensure:**

- parents can contact and meet a member of staff who knows their child well – a named Personal Tutor in secondary schools or their child’s teacher in primary schools;
- all parents understand their child’s individual learning and development priorities and their child’s particular needs;
- all parents understand their responsibilities to help their child progress and develop and understand how to support them;
- parents have information on their child’s behaviour, attendance, SEN, progress and attainment online in secondary schools by 2010 and in primary schools by 2012;
- parents receive information about catch-up support for pupils starting secondary school behind national expectations plus information on their child’s progress, including the results of a new progress check during year 7; and
- parents receive written confirmation of the extra challenge and support their child will receive if they are identified as gifted and talented and a clear understanding of what they should do to help them.

#### **4. Have access to extended services including support and advice on parenting**

##### **Schools are already expected to:**

- Work with local authorities to offer support for parents, including Parent Support Advisers or other similar professionals who work with parents who need additional support.

##### **The new Parent Guarantee will also ensure:**

- that parents have access to a range of extended services by 2010 including: information and support on parenting skills and advice on parenting issues; childcare; activities; and opportunities to enhance their own learning and to learn with their child; and
- that parents’ views of the additional needs of their child are taken into account when the child joins the school and if problems occur.