

White Paper News

10 October 2016

Briefing on the government's White Paper "Educational excellence everywhere"

A time for reflection..... locally and nationally

Since the last edition of White Paper News, perhaps predictably the only certainty has been continuing uncertainty. And that will continue for a while longer.

There have been further announcements:

- the Wood Review to look at the future role of the Local Authority particularly in relation to education and the powers and levers that will be needed to enable local authorities to exercise the anticipated "significant" responsibilities that will remain with them
- the somewhat unexpected Green Paper "Schools that work for everyone" that proposes a significant increase in "grammar school" places, new roles for FE and independent providers and an ability for new free faith schools to admit on the basis of 100% faith. Predictably the Green Paper has provoked considerable national and local debate.
- the Secretary of State, appearing before the Education Select Committee, made pointed statements around parent governors and their continuing existence, about the government's continued commitment to a fully academised system over time and a prioritising of schools where attainment levels need to be raised, and about the role in the "education eco-system" that local authorities will continue to have.

"I do want to see all schools over time become academies, but I think our focus has to be on the schools that are struggling and not doing well enough for children at the moment. Our hope and expectation is that schools will want to steadily take advantage of the benefits that academies can bring, but our focus will be on those schools where we feel that standards need to be raised and they need to do a better job of delivering attainment and progress for children".
(Secretary of State)

So it is as we had anticipated; such far-reaching changes to the structure and underpinning of education in England cannot successfully be approached simplistically. One approach cannot fit all and eventually pragmatism breaks out, compromises are reached and a fundamentally richer and more interesting picture emerges.

Below is a timeline of the various announcements that have come since the White Paper "Educational excellence everywhere". We find it useful in keeping our heads around the shifts in thinking. We hope you will also appreciate it.

May

- **Government "u turn"/slight diversion** - good and outstanding schools will not be compelled to convert
- **Queen's Speech** - legislative programme includes "Education for All Bill"

July

- **"Wood Review"** - chaired by Alan Wood to consider Role of LA, particularly in Education and powers and necessary levers. Timing: September to December 2016

September

- **Green Paper: "Schools that work for Everyone" consultation to 12 December.** Proposals include: Grammar Schools, university sponsorship, new free schools to select up to 100% by faith, independent schools to support state schools. "All will ultimately benefit from the freedoms academisation brings". North Yorkshire Education Partnership to debate and respond to consultation at November meeting.
- Wilshaw: "the idea that poor children will benefit from grammar schools is "tosh" and "nonsense" ..."
- Morgan: "at best a distraction from crucial reforms ... at worst risk actively undermining six years of progressive education reform"
- **Justine Greening at Education Select Committee:**
Parent Governors removal "I do not think we should proceed with that".
Will prioritise "converting schools where attainment levels need to be raised". Repeated commitment to fully academised system
"LAs have a role ... in schools eco system - important we clarify that as soon as possible"

Spring 2017

- **Education for All Bill anticipated.**

A crucial few weeks ahead

You will see that there are two really significant consultations over the next few weeks; the consultation on the Green Paper “Schools that work for everyone” which closes on 12 December, and the Wood Review of the role of the local authority in relation to education. Taken together these will without doubt inform the draft Education for All Bill that is anticipated in the Spring.

The Education Partnership will be debating “Schools that work for everyone” in November and we will be putting in a response to the consultation. We are encouraging everyone to respond and would be interested in seeing responses you may be making.

It is important to remember that until that Bill has been through all the legislative processes and has been enacted, there will be no certainty. Nevertheless continued uncertainty can be disruptive, so over the summer we have continued to develop thinking about what might emerge in the next few months/years.

Advice for governing bodies

At the heart of local and national thinking is a view that schools are better working in partnerships rather than alone, and that school led school improvement is the way forward. In this, the outcomes of the North Yorkshire Schools’ Commission and the principles behind the White Paper are absolutely in line.

The Local Authority view remains, strongly, that the form of those partnerships, whether a formal federation, a collaboration or a multi-academy trust should be a matter for local decision by school governing bodies and not through externally driven ideology from whatever source. Attached to this newsletter is new advice for North Yorkshire governing bodies: **Joining or creating a formal partnership, federation or multi-academy trust**. Incorporating “further reading”, key questions to consider and an updated audit tool, we hope you will find it useful. The guidance can also be [downloaded from CYPInfo](#) as part of a suite of guidance documents on models of school organisation. In addition HR colleagues are finalising new guidance and toolkits on Shared Leadership which will also be available online shortly.

Development of a North Yorkshire Learning Trust

We have been giving a lot of thought to the potential development of a North Yorkshire Learning Trust and there will be more about this in the next edition.

The Secretary of State’s comment about the important role of local authorities in the education system is welcome and interesting. We want to develop something that supports the collective

moral purpose and vision that emerged from the North Yorkshire Schools' Commission and which will transcend mere structural differences.

We want to be able to provide connectivity, and opportunity for schools and colleges beyond that which they will have through MAT arrangements or local collaborations/partnerships. We want to give schools and colleges the ability to influence key strategic agendas as they develop; for instance school place planning, FE/HE, skills, housing and the economy.

We are still looking (as are other authorities) into the potential for any such partnerships to also develop into academy sponsors. As yet though there is no clarity about that from the DfE.

More to follow on this idea next time and following further discussion with our Education Partnership in November.

So there is much to debate and formally consult upon - a clear need for us to continue to communicate and work well together. There continues to be some really very interesting and creative developments of great local potential and an opportunity to create a strategic partnership of real influence in England's largest county.

Interesting times indeed.....

As ever, comments on this would be welcome and we are very happy to meet with individuals or groups of schools/ governors to discuss any aspect. Please contact any of the people below.

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