2019

Teacher recruitment and retention

In January 2019, the DfE launched its Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy [1], which outlines the following four priorities:

- Priority 1 focuses on helping leaders to create supportive school structures; the new school inspection framework will have an active focus on tackling teacher workload.
- Priority 2 aims to improve support for teachers at an early stage in their careers, including the introduction from September 2021, of an Early Career Framework [2] providing a two year package of structured support.
- Priority 3 intends to ensure that a career in teaching remains attractive to teachers as their careers and lives develop, for example, by developing specialist qualifications to support clearer non-leadership career pathways.
- Priority 4 focuses on simplifying the process of becoming a teacher, including the introduction of a new one-stop application service for ITT.

Also see section on ‘Improving teacher qualifications and career progression’.

Further information on teacher supply and retention, including the 2019 recruitment and retention strategy, is available in this February 2019 House of Commons Library briefing [3] (CBP-7222).

Reception baseline assessment

In April 2016, the Government announced [4] that reception baseline assessment (pupils aged 4-5) would not be used as the starting point to measure pupil progress at the end of Key Stage 2 (age 11). Pupil progress is now measured from the end of Key Stage 1 (age 7).

The purpose of the reception [5] baseline assessment is to provide an on-entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of key stage 2 [add link to glossary term] can be created.

The reception baseline is not intended to:

- provide on-going formative information for practitioners
- be used in any way to measure performance in the early years, evaluate pre-school settings or hold early years practitioners to account
- provide detailed diagnostic information about pupils’ areas for development
The Reception baseline is designed as a suitable assessment to be taken by pupils during their first half term in reception Reception – check this] (the academic year in which they turn 5).

The time required to administer the reception baseline is approximately 20 minutes per pupil. The assessment consists of practical tasks, using physical resources, and an online scoring system for the practitioner to complete as the pupil engages with the tasks. It assesses maths and literacy, communication and language.

To be introduced in 2020/21 with a pilot in autumn 2019. See the section on 'Reform of assessment in primary education'.

Baseline assessments had been introduced in 2015 as part of a package of reforms to the system of primary school assessment and accountability.

2018

Reducing teacher workload

The Government’s policy paper on Reducing Teacher Workload [6] has been updated in 2018, to include:

- results of a follow-up [7] to the 2016 Teacher Workload Survey
- published reports from school research projects [8] on reducing teacher workload
- a workload reduction toolkit [9] to help schools manage the workloads of their teachers effectively
- its response [10] to the teacher workload advisory group report on removing unnecessary workload associated with data management. The Government accepted all the recommendations in full.

In November 2018, the Government published guidance [11] on addressing workload in initial teacher education. This contains principles, considerations and examples of practical support to help ITE providers reduce the workload faced by trainee teachers and their school partners.

These publications follow the publication in February 2017 of a range of materials on teacher workload and what the Government is doing to reduce it:

- a brief report outlining the findings of the Teacher Workload Survey [12] 2016, covering the time worked within and outside school hours and the duties performed by teachers
- the interim report of the Teachers Working Longer Review [13], covering the health and deployment implications of teachers working longer as a result of the increase in normal pension age
- a downloadable poster and pamphlet [14] summarising the principles and recommendations of the independent review groups on teacher workload
- a reissue of the DfE Protocol [15], which commits the Department for Education to giving schools a minimum lead-in time for significant changes to policy in accountability, curriculum and qualifications
- guidance documents to support schools: Flexible working in schools [16] and Staffing and employment: advice for schools [17].

Children and young people’s mental health provision

On 25 July 2018, the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education issued
their response [18] to the consultation on ‘Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper’.

The proposals in the consultation, which ran from 4 December 2017 to 2 March 2018, included:

- creating a new mental health workforce of community-based mental health support teams
- every school and college to be encouraged to appoint a designated lead for mental health
- a new four-week waiting time for National Health Service (NHS) children and young people’s mental health services to be piloted in some areas.

The Government’s response [18] confirmed that it would trial all three elements in new trailblazer areas, identifying the first wave to be operational by the end of 2019, and rolling out the new approach to a fifth to a quarter of the country by the end of 2022/23. In December 2018, the DfE announced [19] new mental health support teams will be based in and near schools and colleges in 25 areas and will start giving support in 2019.

The House of Commons Library published a briefing [20](CPB-7196) on this topic in January 2019.

**Health Education to become compulsory**

Health Education is to become compulsory from September 2020.


The statutory guidance is intended to come into force in September 2020, with schools able to implement the changes from September 2019 if they wish.

The House of Commons Library published a briefing [27] (CPB-7303) on the topic in August 2018.

**Schools that work for everyone consultation**

In May 2018, the Government issued its response [28] to the consultation ‘Schools that Work for Everyone’, held from September to December 2016.

The consultation had sought views on a range of measures including removing existing restrictions on admissions criteria for new schools. The government’s response included the following points:

1. Universities and independent schools with the capacity and capability to sponsor an academy [29] or establish a free school [30] would be strongly encouraged to do so.
2. Universities and independent schools that do not have the capacity and capability to sponsor an academy or free school would be expected to support state schools through sustainable and reciprocal partnerships in the area of teaching, curriculum, leadership or other targeted partnership activity.
3. Legislation preventing the creation of new selective schools would remain in place.
4. The Government and the Grammar School Heads Association (GSHA) [31] have agreed a formal Memorandum of Understanding setting out action to taken to widen access to selective schools
and to provide support to non-selective schools.

5. The Government would continue to support the expansion of existing good or outstanding selective schools through the new Selective Schools Expansion Fund (SSEF) [32]. Selective schools wishing to expand would be required to demonstrate they are working with non-selective schools in their local area to have a positive impact beyond the school gates, that there is a need for additional places, and that they are committed to increasing access for disadvantaged pupils. In December 2018 the government announced [33] the first 16 schools to benefit from the SSEF.

6. The 50% cap on faith-based admissions in new faith free schools [30] would be retained.

School accountability

The Department for Education (DfE) issued Principles for a clear and simple school accountability system [35] on 3 May 2018. These are high-level principles for how the accountability system for educational performance will operate and how the different organisations involved fit within it. DfE recognises that within a system of accountability school leaders need clarity and transparency on:

- when they will and will not be subject to action as a result of the accountability system.
- the consequences of the accountability system.
- the roles of different actors - at present, school leaders can feel accountable to multiple masters, with different demands placed on them.

Other principles included are that DfE:

- will not pursue forced conversions to academy status other than in instances of school failure as judged by Ofsted, the inspectorate.
- will identify schools that are underperforming and would benefit from an offer of support. Such schools will be identified based on transparent and objective criteria, and a clear threshold will be set that will trigger such support.

DfE will work with the sector to refine the principles, before holding a consultation [36] on the detailed proposals, probably in the autumn.

More information on school inspections can be found here [37].

Select Committee inquiry into Fourth Industrial Revolution

On 1 May 2018, the House of Commons Education Committee began an inquiry [38] into the challenges posed, and opportunities presented, by the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is characterised by the emergence of a range of new technologies including artificial intelligence, robotics and the internet of things. The changes are likely to have a major impact on both productivity and the labour market, with low and medium skilled jobs most at risk.

The inquiry will examine how best to prepare young people to take advantage of future opportunities by looking at the suitability of the school curriculum. It will also look at the role of lifelong learning and how best to help people climb the ladder of opportunity in the future.

The Committee received written evidence [39] on:

- the interaction between the Government’s industrial, skills and digital strategies.
- the suitability of the current curriculum to prepare young people for the Fourth Industrial
the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution on the delivery of teaching and learning in schools and colleges
the role of lifelong learning in re-skilling the current workforce
place-based strategies for education and skills provision
the challenges and opportunities of the Fourth Industrial Revolution for improving social justice and productivity.

Home learning environment

In November 2018, the Department for Education issued guidance on improving the home learning environment. This includes a behaviour change model setting out an approach that organisations can use to inform their activities and ensure that the advice given to families is consistent and based on evidence.

Elective home education

In March 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) issued a call for evidence on greater oversight of children whose parents elect to educate them at home, along with a consultation on revised guidance documents.

The call for evidence concerned:

- registration of children educated at home
- monitoring of home education provision
- support for home-educating families.

Views were also invited on draft versions of two DfE guidance documents about elective home education, one designed for local authorities and one for parents.

The consultation ran from 10 April to 2 July 2018. A government response is awaited.

Oversight of out of school education settings

On 10 April 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) issued a report on a call for evidence on out of school education settings, which had run from 26 November 2015 to 11 January 2016.

DfE had proposed a regulatory system for out of school settings, by which is meant any institution providing tuition, training or instruction to children and young people aged under 19 in England that is not a school, college, 16-19 academy or registered childcare provider. The regulatory system would have included:

- a requirement on relevant settings to register
- power for a body to inspect settings
- power to impose sanctions where settings were failing to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

In its response, DfE has decided not to proceed with this model, which might have placed unnecessary regulatory burdens on settings and limited parents’ choices on how to educate their children. The Government had already announced in March 2018, as part of its Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paperr (see item below), its intention to strengthen existing capacity to
identify and tackle concerns in out-of-school settings. This would be done by supporting and working with a number of local authorities to demonstrate the benefits of multi-agency working, sharing best practice on different ways of working together and intervening using existing legal powers in settings of concern.

Alongside this approach, DfE intends to develop the evidence base for designing and rolling out a national approach, as well as identifying any gaps in existing powers, which would require future legislation. DfE also intends to consult on a voluntary code of practice to set out clear standards for providers.

**Supporting children at risk of exclusion**

In March 2018, the Secretary of State for Education announced proposals to improve education for children with additional needs and the experiences of children in alternative provision.

Children educated in alternative provision are less likely to achieve good GCSE grades and are less likely to be in education, employment or training post-16.

The proposals outlined include:

- an externally led review of exclusions to look at how the use and levels of exclusions vary from school to school, focusing on those children who are more likely to be excluded
- a ‘roadmap’ setting out how the Government will transform alternative provision to make sure these education settings provide high-quality teaching and an education that meets the individual needs of young people in their care
- an Alternative Provision Innovation Fund to test and develop projects that support children back into mainstream or special schools, and also support young people as they move from alternative provision in to training or further education at post-16
- a call for evidence on how to improve educational outcomes for children in need of additional help or protection, including children in care.

The review will consider the exclusion of groups of pupils that are identified in the national data as more likely to be excluded. These include those ethnic groups highlighted in the Ethnicity Facts and Figures website; pupils who are eligible for free school meals, or have been eligible for free school meals in the last six years; pupils with special educational needs; looked after children; and children in need (as defined under s17 of the Children Act 1989).

The call for evidence ran until 1 July 2018.

**Incentives for ex-service personal to retrain as teachers**

The Department for Education (DfE) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) have jointly announced a bursary scheme to encourage ex-service personnel to retrain as teachers. The scheme became operational from September 2018 and replaces the previous Troops to Teachers scheme, which will end in 2019.

The bursary will be paid in the final two years of a three-year course. To be eligible applicants:

- must be undergraduates
- need to have left full time employment in the British Army, Royal Air Force or Royal Navy in the past five years
- must be interested in studying and qualified to study the priority subjects of secondary maths,
Integrated Communities Strategy

The Government began a consultation on 14 March 2018 on its Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper: Building stronger, more united communities [57].

The strategy outlines the Government’s vision for building strong integrated communities, and the actions proposed to deliver this. Proposals regarding education include:

- working with local school admission authorities in Integration Areas (local authority areas selected to trial a new localised approach) to support increased diversity in schools’ intake and promote integration, developing a range of model admissions arrangements, including ones based on varied catchment areas that include diverse residential areas
- increasing further the expectations on new free schools regarding integration and ensuring that the potential impact on the intake of neighbouring schools is thoroughly assessed before a new school is approved
- continuing to fund the Linking Network [58] programme to develop and expand twinning of schools of different backgrounds
- continuing to fund and work with the National Citizen Service [59] and others to increase programme take-up in the Integration Areas
- establishing a new Innovation Fund to test innovative new approaches to promoting meaningful social mixing between young people through sport, culture, volunteering and other youth activities
- publishing guidance which sets out how the Government, Ofsted, the inspectorate, and local authorities can work collaboratively to help ensure children attending unregistered independent schools and out of school settings are safe and are receiving a suitable education.

The consultation ran until 5 June 2018. The Government response [57] to the consultation was published in February 2019 along with the Integrated Communities Action Plan [60]. The action plan confirms the actions the Government will take as a result of the consultation to deliver stronger, integrated communities.

NAO study into conversion of maintained schools to academies

In February 2018, the National Audit Office (NAO) [61] reported [62] on its study into the conversion of maintained schools [63] to academies [29]. The report recommended that the Department for Education (DfE) should:

- articulate its vision for the school system..
- reinforce and consistently apply tests of financial risk and due diligence to all academies and trustees.
- improve how it shares knowledge and expertise with the Education and Skills Funding Agency.
- take more effective action to speed up the process of converting inadequate schools.

Trials of multiplication tables check in Year 4

The School Standards Minister announced [64] in February 2018 that trials were to begin of the multiplication tables check. The on-screen check will take about five minutes and enable teachers to monitor a child’s progress in a consistent and reliable way. A national sample of schools has been selected to participate in the trials, to ensure that the check is robust, accessible and minimises any
additional burden on schools as a new assessment.

This trial comes ahead of the national voluntary rollout of the multiplication tables check for all Year 4 pupils (aged 8/9) from June 2019, before it becomes mandatory in June 2020.

Plans to introduce this check were announced in 2017, as part of the Government’s response to its primary assessment consultation.

**Increasing the number of students studying advanced maths**

In February 2018, the School Standards Minister and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury announced the Advanced Maths Premium, a new fund to help schools and colleges increase the number of students studying maths after GCSE.

The premium is also aimed at supporting institutions to increase the number of girls and those from disadvantaged backgrounds taking advanced maths qualifications.

**Tests for prospective teachers**

In February 2018, the Schools Standards Minister announced changes to the arrangements for professional skills tests for aspiring teachers, which they must pass in order to begin initial teacher training.

More rigorous professional skills tests were introduced in 2012 for prospective teachers to assess the core skills that would be necessary for them to fulfil their professional role in schools, rather than the subject knowledge needed for teaching. This was to ensure that all teachers were competent in numeracy and literacy, regardless of their specialism.

The measures announced, which are aimed at reducing unnecessary administrative and financial barriers, are:

- prospective teachers may now attempt the test three times, before incurring any costs, rather than one as previously
- the lock-out period that previously prevented candidates from re-taking tests for two years if they had been unsuccessful in two resits, has been removed.

**Support for disadvantaged children - eligibility criteria**

Changes to the eligibility criteria for entitlements for disadvantaged children became necessary with the national rollout of Universal Credit, a single payment for people who are looking for work or who are on a low income, and which replaces six existing benefits.

The three entitlements concerned are:

1. the early years pupil premium, additional funding for early years settings to improve the education they provide for disadvantaged three and four-year-olds
2. free school meals for disadvantaged school-aged children
3. the free early education entitlement for two-year-olds, which offers children from less advantaged backgrounds 15 hours a week, or 570 hours a year, of free early years education.

In February 2018, the Government issued its response to two consultations on the entitlements. The first consultation was on eligibility for the early years pupil premium and for free school meals, which had run from 16 November 2017 to 11 January 2018 and the second was on eligibility for
the free early years entitlement, which had run from 4 December 2017 to 15 January 2018.

For all three entitlements, the Government is introducing income thresholds to determine eligibility. Transitional arrangements to protect those who were eligible under the previous criteria are set out in the response document.

2017

Improving teacher qualifications and career progression

The Department for Education (DfE) held a consultation [71] between 15 December 2017 and 9 March 2018 on strengthening Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and improving career progression for teachers.

The proposals for a strengthened QTS included:

- an extended induction period with QTS awarded at the end
- development of a structured early career framework (ECF) setting out what all teachers need to know and areas for development
- stronger mentoring provision for new teachers.

Proposals to support career development for teachers once they have gained QTS included:

- expansion of professional qualifications to include specialisms to promote specialist career pathways
- a range of options to help embed a culture of continuing professional development
- a pilot fund for work-related sabbaticals.

In May 2018, the DfE published [72] its response to the consultation and details of the next steps to be taken. These include:

- publishing details about the ECF
- publishing mentor standards for newly qualified teacher mentors, based on the existing ITT mentor standards
- taking forward proposals to develop specialist qualifications
- developing criteria for the teacher sabbaticals pilot.

National plan for social mobility

The Government's national plan to improve social mobility through education, Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential [73], was published in December 2017.

The plan has a single overarching ambition ‘No community left behind’. This involves tackling regional variations in disadvantage through targeting initiatives and resources at those areas most in need of support. The plan sets out a broad place-based approach, supported by more intensive targeting of areas with entrenched challenges through the ‘Opportunity Areas’ [74] programme.
A further four ambitions cover the key life stages of education:

- Closing the word gap: boosting access to high quality early language and literacy both in the classroom and at home, ensuring more disadvantaged children leave school having mastered the basics of literacy that many take for granted.
- Closing the attainment gap: raising standards for every pupil, supporting teachers early in their career as well as getting more great teachers in areas where there remain significant challenges.
- Real choice at post-16: creating world-class technical education, backed by a half a billion pounds in investment, and increasing the options for all young people regardless of their background.
- Rewarding careers for all: boosting skills and confidence to make the leap from education into work, raising career aspirations. Building a new type of partnership with businesses to improve advice, information and experiences for young people.

Other priorities identified are supporting looked after children (those in the care of local authorities), implementing changes in the special educational needs system and improving provision for the mental health of children and young people.

**All-age careers strategy**

In December 2017, the Department for Education published a new all-age careers strategy, aimed at improving the quality of careers provision, *Careers strategy: making the most of everyone’s skills and talents* [75].

Measures in the strategy include:

- trialling careers activities in primary schools to engage children from an early age, focusing on some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country through the Government’s ‘Opportunity Areas’ [74]’ programme
- requiring all schools and colleges to have a dedicated careers leader
- placing an expectation on secondary schools to provide pupils with at least one meaningful interaction with businesses every year, with a particular focus on employers from science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM industries)
- developing 20 careers hubs in disadvantaged areas, led by the Careers and Enterprise Company [76], to link schools, colleges, universities and local businesses.

Updated statutory guidance [77] was issued in October 2018.

In April 2018, the Careers and Enterprise Company issued its implementation plan [78] for the careers strategy.

In October 2018, the House of Commons Library issued a background briefing [79] (CBP-7236) on careers guidance in schools, colleges and universities.

**Select committees’ inquiry into children and young people’s mental health provision**

The House of Commons Education and Health Committees launched a joint inquiry in December 2017 into children and young people’s mental health provision, following publication of the Green Paper, *Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision* [18] on 4 December 2017.
The Committees examined the proposed scope and implementation of the Green Paper and issued its report expressing concerns about these and the timescales involved on 9 May 2018. The Government issued its response in July 2018.

The House of Commons Library issued a background briefing (CPB-7196) on this area of policy in August 2018.

**Teacher Development Premium**

In the Autumn Budget in November 2017 (section 5.8), the Government announced a Teacher Development Premium.

The Government will invest £42 million (€ 48.8*) to pilot the premium. It will test the impact of a £1,000 (€1162.8)* budget for high-quality professional development for teachers working in areas that have fallen behind. This will support the government’s ambition to address regional productivity disparities through reducing the regional skills gap.

*Exchange rate used: €1 = £0.86, ECB, 14 March 2019.

**National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) functions move to DfE and new Teacher Regulation Agency**

In November 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that it would be assuming teacher recruitment functions. Staff at the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) and the DfE would combine into one team to help better align efforts to attract high-calibre candidates into the profession and support teachers at every stage of their career. The NCTL was to be abolished.

The functions which were to be transferred included:

- ensuring that enough high-quality trainees enter teacher training to meet the needs of the sector
- managing the allocation of teacher training places and related funding to schools and universities who provide teacher training
- recognising teachers’ professional ability for the award of qualified teacher status (QTS)
- helping schools and their partners develop and deliver high-quality continuing professional development and leadership training.

Regulation of the teaching profession, including misconduct hearings, would continue to be handled by an executive agency of the DfE. Led by existing teams at the NCTL, the Teaching Regulation Agency began to operate from April 2018. Further information is available in its corporate plan for 2018 to 2021.

**Reform of assessment in primary education**

In September 2017, the Secretary of State for Education announced changes to the system for assessing children in primary education. The plan, which aims to ensure a proportionate system of assessment which reduces the burden on teachers and schools, includes measures to:

- improve the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile, which assesses children’s readiness to start school at the end of their early education
- bring forward the starting point for school progress measures during primary education, by
introducing a new teacher-mediated baseline assessment in the reception [5] year (ages 4–5) from 2020/21

- make both national curriculum tests and statutory teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 (ages 6–7) non-statutory as soon as the reception baseline assessment has become fully established, if possible from 2022/23
- remove the requirement, from 2018/19, for schools to submit teacher assessment data for reading and maths to the Government at the end of Key Stage 2 [91] (ages 10–11), as these subjects are already assessed through statutory tests
- introduce a multiplication tables check at the end of Year 4 (ages 8–9) from 2019/20.

The announcement followed a consultation [92], which had been held from 30 March to 22 June 2017.

In April 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) provided an update [93] on progress with primary assessment reform. This stated that school-level progress measures for primary schools, showing the progress made from the baseline assessment at reception, would be first published in the summer of 2027. Children who reach the end of Key Stage 2 in 2027 will be the first cohort to have been subject to statutory baseline assessment in the reception class. The update also confirmed that the existing Key Stage 1 assessments would become non-statutory from 2022/23.

DfE also confirmed that the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) [94] had been chosen as the preferred supplier to design and deliver the new reception baseline assessment including the trial and pilot phases and the first two years of statutory assessment. This new baseline assessment is being introduced in response to concerns about the previous multi-supplier model used for the optional baseline assessments in the 2015 to 2016 academic year (see subheading on Reception baseline assessment below).

**Select Committee inquiry into alternative provision**

The House of Commons Education Committee began an inquiry [95] into alternative provision [44] in September 2017. The Committee was concerned to establish whether the young people educated through alternative provisions, who include some of the most disadvantaged, are receiving the best possible support. It invited written submissions by 1 November 2017 on the following topics:

- routes into alternative provision
- the quality of teaching in alternative provision
- educational outcomes and destinations of students
- safety, accommodation, and provision of resources for students
- in-school alternatives to external alternative provision
- regulation of independent providers.

In October 2018, the Government published its response [96] to the Committee’s report. In addition, the Government published two research reports, [97] Investigative research into alternative provision and [98] Alternative provision market analysis.

**National Funding Formula implementation**

In September 2017, the Secretary of State for Education announced [100] final details of the implementation of new national funding formulae for schools, high needs and the central school services block. High needs funding is for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities who need extra support. The central school services block is funding that local authorities use to provide services for all schools.
The National Funding Formula is intended to:

- maximise pupil-led funding, so that the lowest funded schools have their needs properly recognised
- protect funding for disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs
- ensure stability by providing for some gains for all schools, alongside rapid gains for those that are underfunded.

A [policy document](#) sets out the background to and principles of the new national funding formulae. A November 2017 [House of Commons Briefing](#) paper (CBP-8106) looks at the implementation of the National Funding Formula for schools.

Transitional arrangements are in place for 2018-19 and 2019-20. The Department for Education has issued provisional allocations for [2018-19](#) and [2019-2020](#).

**Smith review of 16-18 maths education**

The report of Professor Sir Adrian Smith’s [review](#) of maths education for 16- to 18-year-olds in England was published in July 2017. The report includes analysis and recommendations to increase participation and improve maths education. It is structured under four broad headings:

- the appropriate range of 16-18 maths pathways needed
- the factors that encourage or discourage individual students to participate
- levels of attainment and progression
- capacity to deliver, both in terms of provision of courses and teaching capability.

The report was published alongside a government response outlining plans to support the report’s recommendations.

Professor Sir Adrian Smith was asked by the Government to undertake the review in March 2016, prompted by two related issues: first, the increasing importance of mathematical and quantitative skills to the future workforce; and secondly, by comparison with competitor economies, the low percentage of students in England continuing maths post-16.

**Implementing the EBacc school performance measure**

In its July 2017 response to a [consultation](#) on how to ensure that at least 90 per cent of pupils take [GCSEs](#) in the [EBacc](#) subjects, the Government stated its ambition that studying the EBacc should become the expectation for the vast majority of pupils.

More precisely, it established the expectation that 75 per cent of Year 10 pupils (age 14-15) in publicly funded mainstream schools should be starting to study EBacc GCSE courses nationally by 2022 (taking their exams in 2024), rising to 90 per cent by 2025 (taking their exams in 2027).

First introduced in 2010, the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is a school performance measure which tracks how many pupils achieve a higher grade pass in the [core academic subjects](#) in GCSE examinations taken at age 16. In 2017, 38.2 per cent of pupils in publicly funded schools entered the EBacc and 23.7 per cent achieved it (using the measure of grades 4 or above in English and maths GCSEs and grades C or above in unreformed subject areas).

The House of Commons Library [briefing](#) SN06045, published in September 2017, sets out the history and purpose of the EBacc, and the Government’s future plans.
Select Committee inquiry into recruitment and retention of teachers

In April 2017, the Government issued a response to the February 2017 report of the House of Commons Education Committee inquiry into the recruitment and retention of teachers. The report covered a range of issues relating to teacher recruitment and retention, highlighting concerns over teacher workload, the status of teachers, shortcomings in the Department for Education’s teacher supply data, and the ability of teachers to undertake high quality continuing professional development (CPD).

In its response, the Government made the following points:

- teachers in England are competitively paid and tend to progress through the pay ranges twice as quickly as the OECD average
- teacher numbers have kept pace with the growth in the pupil population
- the Department for Education has made good progress recruiting more new teachers to train in priority subjects
- overall teacher retention rates have remained broadly stable for the past 20 years
- significant challenges remain. For example, analysis suggests that one in five of all new physics and maths graduates in UK universities in a particular year would need to train as teachers if the recruitment targets were to be met in those subjects
- teacher recruitment and retention vary significantly, not only between different subjects but also between regions and at school level
- challenges, such as raising the status of the profession and ensuring that teaching remains an attractive career, are determined by a complex combination of factors, not all of which can be influenced by government, school leaders or teachers themselves.

Select Committee inquiry into free school programme

The inquiry by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee into the Government’s free school programme reported in April 2017.

The Committee reported that it was not convinced that meeting targets for new free schools represents best use of limited funds.

Select Committee inquiry into assessment in primary education

In April 2017, the report of the House of Commons Education Select Committee inquiry into the assessment of primary school pupils was published. The inquiry followed reforms, implemented in 2016, as new National Curriculum assessments were rolled out, ‘expected standards’ were raised, and National Curriculum ‘levels’ were no longer used to measure the progress and attainment of pupils. The inquiry covered:

- the purpose of primary assessment and how well the current system met this
- the advantages and disadvantages of assessing pupils at primary school
- how the most recent reforms affected teaching and learning
- the logistics and delivery of National Curriculum tests (commonly known as SATs)
- the training and support needed for teachers and senior leaders to design and implement effective assessment systems
- the next steps following the most recent reforms to primary assessment.

The report of the inquiry concluded that the close link between primary assessment and school accountability creates a high-stakes system which can negatively impact children’s teaching and
learning. It also found that the implementation of the new system of assessment in 2016 had not been overseen effectively.


Sex and relationships education to become compulsory

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 [21], passed in April 2017, introduces statutory:

- relationships education in primary schools
- relationships and sex education (RSE) in secondary schools
- personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) in all schools (see the subheading 'Health education to become compulsory').

A policy statement [116] published in March 2017 explains these new requirements and the background to them. In November 2017, the Secretary of State [117] for Education announced the appointment of an adviser [118] to the Government on improving RSE in schools.

On 19 July 2018, the DfE opened a consultation [119] on draft statutory guidance and regulations for the implementation of the reformed RSE. The announcement [23] on the reforms included the introduction of statutory health education alongside statutory RSE.

The Government response [119] to the December 2017 call for evidence was published alongside the consultation. The consultation closed on 7 November 2018. Following consideration of the consultation responses, the Government will put forward regulations and final draft guidance for debate in 2019. The final statutory guidance will be published once the regulations have been passed.

The House of Commons Library issued a briefing [120] (SN06103) in August 2018, outlining the legislation and guidance in place, as well as the reforms which will become compulsory in September 2020, although schools may choose to implement them from September 2019.

Assessment of pupils working below standard of tests

In March 2017, the Government launched a consultation on the recommendations of the Rochford Review [121] on the assessment of Key Stage [91] 1 and 2 pupils (ages 5–11) working below the standard of National Curriculum tests. The review, which reported in October 2016, recommended:

- removing the statutory requirement to use performance scales (P scales) to assess pupils with special educational needs (SEN) [122] and disabilities who are working below the standard
- making permanent the interim pre-key stage standards which the Review developed for use with pupils working below the standard of National Curriculum tests, and using these for all pupils capable of subject-specific learning
- assessing pupils’ development in all four areas of need outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years [123] – cognition and learning; communication and interaction; social, emotional and mental health; sensory and/or physical
- having a narrower focus for statutory assessment for pupils who are not capable of engaging in subject-specific learning. Their statutory assessment should be limited to the area of cognition and learning.

The consultation closed on 22 June and the Department for Education’s response [124] was published
on 14 September 2017.

On 24 May 2018, the School Standards Minister announced that pre-key stage standards had been developed with teachers and a range of other education experts to support pupils working below the standard of National Curriculum tests. Pre-key stage standards for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have been published by the Standards and Testing Agency.

**Clarification of changes to GCSE grading**

In March 2017, the Secretary of State for Education provided clarification of changes to the system of grading GCSE, examinations typically taken at the end of Key Stage 4, at age 16. A grade 4 and above in the reformed system (graded from 9 to 1) would equate to a grade C and above in the former system. This is a key threshold as it represents the level commonly accepted for entry purposes by employers and further and higher education providers. This is also the level that pupils must achieve in order not to be required to continue studying English and maths post-16. However, a distinction would be made between a grade 4 as a ‘standard pass’ and a grade 5 as a ‘strong pass’. Both would be reported in school accountability measures, with the ‘strong pass’ forming one of the benchmarks used to measure the performance of schools.

**Independent review of behaviour in schools**

In March 2017, the Government published the report of an independent review providing practical guidance to teachers on how to tackle bad behaviour in the classroom. *Creating a Culture: How School Leaders Can Optimise Behaviour* identified a number of common features found in schools where behaviour is good, including:

- committed, highly visible school leaders
- effectively communicated expectations, understood clearly by all members of the school
- highly consistent working practices throughout the school
- a clear understanding of the school’s culture and values.

The report recommended a number of actions for the Department for Education (DfE). These include:

- providing funding for schools to create internal ‘inclusion’ units that can offer targeted early specialist intervention to pupils
- using a national, standardised method for capturing data on school behaviour
- training school leaders in behavioural strategies
- providing guidance for schools on how to manage and support the most challenging students.

The Government’s response outlined how its policy actions would address each recommendation.

**Encouraging healthy lifestyles**

In February 2017, the Government announced that schools would receive funding under a new Healthy Pupils Capital Programme to help pupils benefit from healthier, more active lifestyles. The programme will build on the Government’s plans for schools to provide a longer school day, by enabling them to provide new facilities or improve existing ones and so make it easier for them to offer a range of extra-curricular activities. Funding for the programme will come from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy and will first be available to schools in the 2018/19 financial year.

An update on funding for the programme was issued on 17 July 2017.
Reducing teacher workload

In February 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) published a range of materials on teacher workload and what it is doing to reduce it. These included:

- A brief report outlining the findings of the Teacher Workload Survey 2016, covering the time worked within and outside school hours and the duties performed by teachers.
- The interim report of the Teachers Working Longer Review, covering the health and deployment implications of teachers working longer as a result of the increase in normal pension age.
- An updated policy paper on Reducing Teacher Workload, which outlines future commitments to help reduce teacher workload, including an offer of targeted support for schools.
- A downloadable poster and pamphlet, endorsed by the teaching unions and Ofsted (the inspectorate), which summarise the principles and recommendations of the independent review groups on teacher workload.
- A reissue of the DfE Protocol, which commits DfE to giving schools a minimum lead-in time for significant changes to policy in accountability, curriculum and qualifications.
- Guidance documents to support schools: Flexible working in schools and Staffing and employment: advice for schools.

The Reducing Teacher Workload policy paper was updated in March 2018 to include the results of a follow-up to the 2016 Teacher Workload Survey and the published reports from school research projects on reducing teacher workload. It was further updated in July 2018 to include the announcement of a workload reduction toolkit to help schools manage the workloads of their teachers effectively.

The House of Commons Library issued a briefing (CBP-7222) on teacher recruitment and retention in June 2018.

Wellbeing and mental health at school

In January 2017, the Government announced that all secondary schools would be offered free training in mental health support so that staff can better identify the signs of mental health problems that young people might face. The intention is that every secondary school will have a member of staff trained in mental health by the end of 2019. Mental health training for teachers and staff will be rolled out to a third of secondary schools in 2017 (around 1200 schools), with the remaining two-thirds offered this training in the following two years.

The Government also asked the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to lead a review of child and adolescent mental health services to inform a new strategy on mental health services for young people. In December 2016, the House of Commons Select Committee for health began an inquiry into the role of education in promoting emotional wellbeing in children and young people, and preventing the development of mental health problems. The Committee subsequently invited the Committee for Education to join the inquiry. The joint report was published sooner than expected on 2 May 2017 and the inquiry was closed following the unexpected decision to hold a general election on 8 June 2017.

Designating local leaders of education

Local leaders of education (LLEs) provide a range of school-to-school support and coaching and mentoring for headteachers. Since the role began in 2008, LLEs have been designated by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). NCTL announced in January 2017 that, as part of its
move towards a more devolved and school-led system, it would pass the freedom to recruit and designate LLEs to teaching schools. (Teaching schools work to provide high-quality training and development and support to other schools in their local area.)

The change follows a pilot run by NCTL in 2014/15 in which teaching school alliances managed the LLE programme. NCTL would continue to designate national leaders of education and their national support schools.

In April 2018, the NCTL and its functions split between the Department for Education and a new body the Teaching Regulation Agency. The Department for Education has announced that following the 25th tranche of national leaders of education designation in May 2018, it was working with the Teaching Schools Council (TSC) to ensure the quality of system leadership remained as high as possible and that during this time it would not be opening the next designation round.

Opportunity Areas

In January 2017, the Secretary of State for Education announced the expansion of the ‘Opportunity Areas’ programme to a further six areas in England, in addition to the six designated as such in October 2016.

Opportunity Areas are areas which have been identified as the most challenged in terms of social mobility in the Social Mobility Index, a tool published by the Social Mobility Commission. The Index provides a comparison of the chances children have of doing well in adult life, according to where they grow up.

Increased government funding is available in the 12 Opportunity Areas to support local education providers and communities to address their biggest challenges, and to develop local partnerships between early years providers, schools, colleges, universities, businesses, charities and local authorities, to ensure that all local children have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The areas also have priority access to other government support including the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund, which is focused on supporting the development of teachers and school leaders in challenging areas.

In addition, a ‘research school’ will be established in each of the Opportunity Areas under a new £3.5 million (€4.01 million*) programme operated by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). Research schools will use their own expertise and experiences to provide strong leadership and guidance to schools in each Opportunity Area, with the aim of supporting their colleagues to use research to improve pupil outcomes.

In October 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) published delivery plans for 6 of the 12 designated Opportunity Areas. To support delivery of the programme, the DfE also published an ad hoc statistical release presenting further breakdowns of educational outcome statistics by local authority district level and by pupil groups relating to socio-economic background.

Delivery plans for the remaining six opportunity areas were published in January 2018.

*Exchange rate used: €1 = £0.87, ECB, 13 March 2017.

2016
Comparability of general education qualifications

Although GCSE [45] and A Level [149] qualifications continue to share common features across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, recent reforms have introduced some differences. In November 2016, the qualifications regulators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland jointly published information [150] summarising the similarities and differences. Differences include:

- the grading scale for GCSEs
- the relationship between AS [151] and A Levels
- subject content
- assessment methods.

For general information about qualifications in a comparable format, see the Qualification Information Profiles (QIPs) [152] provided by UCAS [153], which coordinates student applications to higher education.

Mainstreaming of ‘maths mastery’ approach

The Government announced in July 2016 that over 8000 primary schools – half of all those in England – were to receive support to adopt the ‘maths mastery’ approach which, as this press release [154] indicates, is used by a number of highly-performing systems including Shanghai, Singapore and Hong Kong. This builds upon the pilot ‘maths hubs’ introduced in 2014. The approach involves whole-class teaching supported by high quality textbooks and aims to build a deep understanding of the structure of maths. The Government is providing funding across the four years 2016-2020, with the aim of training an initial 700 teachers to support schools in maths mastery, release classroom teachers to attend training, and provide textbooks.

Expert group recommendations on initial teacher training

In July 2016, the Department for Education (DfE) [52] announced [155] the publication of reports on different aspects of initial teacher training from three expert groups, together with its response to their recommendations. The expert groups were established in response to the Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training [156].

In its response to the report on behaviour management [155] content for initial teacher training, the Government endorsed the recommended behaviour management approaches but stated that it does not wish to make them mandatory.

In its response to the report on national standards [155] for school-based initial teacher training mentors, the Government welcomed the new standards (which cover personal qualities, teaching, professionalism, self-development and working in partnership) and encouraged their adoption by initial teacher training (ITT) providers.

The report on a framework of core content [155] for initial teacher training (ITT) recommended its use as one of the key measures of quality when allocating ITT places in future. It also recommended that the DfE should clarify the expectations and entitlement to effective continuing professional development (CPD) for all new teachers in the early years of their career.

Also in July 2016, the DfE published a Standard for teachers’ professional development [157], describing effective practice in professional development for teachers, together with guidance.
National Funding Formula

The Secretary of State for Education issued a written statement in July 2016 in which she confirmed the Government’s commitment to a National Funding Formula, and that its introduction would be delayed by a year, to be phased in from 2018/19.

At present, government funding is distributed onwards to schools by local authorities using local funding formulae, which give different weights to different factors. Consequently, the average amount of funding per pupil that schools receive can vary considerably.

Two linked consultations were held during March and April 2016. One concerned the proposals for the National Funding Formula and the other explored the specific issue of funding for high needs (i.e. funding for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities who need extra support at school or college or in an alternative provision setting).

In May 2016, the Government announced that the new National Funding Formula would include a package of measures to support small rural schools. Over 1200 such schools will receive specific targeted support, or ‘sparsity funding’. Currently, more than 700 of these schools do not receive such top-up funding through their local authority.

Academy programme

In May 2016, the Government announced plans to legislate for the conversion to academy status of all schools within a local authority in two specific circumstances:

- where it was clear that the local authority could no longer viably support its remaining schools because a critical mass of schools in that area had converted
- where the local authority consistently fails to meet a minimum performance threshold across its schools and is judged incapable of bringing about meaningful school improvement.

Underperforming schools would continue to be required to convert to academy status, but conversion would not be compulsory in the case of schools judged to be ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted, the inspectorate.

These plans constituted a change to plans announced in the White Paper Educational Excellence Everywhere (March 2016) to convert all schools.

Guidance on wraparound and holiday childcare

Guidance was published in May 2016 to help schools understand how to respond to requests from parents and childcare providers about wraparound and holiday childcare - childcare that is provided by schools outside of normal school hours.

Reception baseline assessment

In April 2016, the Government announced that reception baseline assessment (pupils aged 4-5) would not be used as the starting point to measure pupil progress at the end of Key Stage 2 (age 11). This decision was made following a comparability study that concluded that the three different baseline assessments from which schools could choose were not sufficiently comparable to create a fair starting point from which to measure pupils’ progress. Pupil progress is now measured from the end of Key Stage 1 (age 7).
Baseline assessments had been introduced in 2015 as part of a package of reforms to the system of primary school assessment and accountability.

**National Reference Tests**

Ofqual, the qualifications regulator, is introducing new National Reference Tests (NRTs) in English language and maths from March 2017. The purpose of the tests is to provide evidence on changes in performance standards over time. Ofqual will use the information obtained over several years to support the awarding of GCSEs by strengthening the grade setting process.

The tests will be taken by samples of pupils in Year 11 (ISCED 3, ages 15–16) in the March prior to taking their GCSE examinations (in May/June).

The Government has also introduced legislation, the Education (National Curriculum) (Key Stage 4 Assessment Arrangements) (England) Order 2016, making it mandatory for the selected schools to take part in the tests.

**Schools causing concern**

At the end of March 2016, the Department for Education (DfE) issued revised statutory guidance explaining the responsibilities of local authorities and regional schools commissioners (RSCs) relating to schools causing concern.

The guidance took effect from 18 April 2016, when the majority of the new and strengthened intervention powers introduced by the Education and Adoption Act 2016 commenced.

The guidance was further revised in November 2018.

**Educational Excellence Everywhere White Paper**

In March 2016, the Department for Education published Educational Excellence Everywhere, a White Paper building on and extending the Government’s reforms to schools in England. Plans included converting all schools to academy status by 2022; replacing qualified teacher status (QTS) with a stronger accreditation; reforming the role of local authorities with respect to education; and introducing a new National Funding Formula for schools.

**Education and Adoption Act 2016**

In March 2016, the Education and Adoption Act 2016 was given Royal Assent. The Act introduced new and strengthened powers of intervention for schools in England that are causing concern. This includes provision for all maintained schools rated ‘inadequate’ by Ofsted to be converted into academies, and for both maintained schools and academies identified as ‘coasting’ to be given a notice to improve. The definition of a coasting school will be made by regulation. Coasting schools will be required to produce a clear plan for improvement with the support of a team of expert headteachers. Schools failing to produce such a plan will be eligible for intervention by the relevant Regional Schools Commissioner, and may be given new leadership.

**Measures for preventing student radicalisation**

In January 2016, new measures aimed at preventing student radicalisation were introduced by the Department for Education (DfE). These included the widening of Ofsted (the inspectorate)’s investigations into (illegal) unregistered schools; a tougher approach to prosecuting unregistered
schools; and the launch of a consultation on registering children who go missing from school.

Article last reviewed March 2019.

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