

Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system

Department for Children, Schools and Families

A briefing paper from the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)

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1. Introduction

In March 2009, NCVYS responded to Government's consultation on its plans to create a 21st century schools system¹. This was followed in June 2009, by the Department for Children, Schools and Families' (DCSF) White Paper *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system*². The White Paper sets out Government's vision for 'every child to enjoy their childhood, to achieve their full potential and turn 18 with the knowledge, skills and qualifications that will give them the best chance of success in adult life in the 21st century'.

This briefing paper summarises the White Paper, but first highlights potential issues for the voluntary and community youth sector arising from the document.

2. Potential issues for the voluntary and community youth sector (VCYS)

The White Paper makes little reference to the voluntary and community youth sector (VCYS), however as school is a crucial part of the majority of young people's lives and with the continued move towards integrated youth services, it is important that the VCYS is aware of developments in this area.

¹ NCVYS response to DCSF's 21st century schools consultation is available via: <http://www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=273>

² DCSF (2009) *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system*, and supporting information, is available via: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/21stcenturyschoolssystem/>

Children's Trusts will play a stronger role in implementing the local school offer. It is important that the VCYS is represented on Children's Trusts so that it is linked in to the development of local education services and can input around extended school provision and alternative education service options. The White Paper highlights the importance of the needs of each individual young person and we are pleased to see the continued commitment to personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). However, a stronger emphasis on developing children and young people's wellbeing through schools and local partners is particularly important in the implementation of proposals within the Paper.

VCYS organisations have a long history of tailoring services to the individual needs of children and young people. LAs should learn from, and work in partnership with, VCYS organisations that have experience in developing and supporting young people from a variety of backgrounds. For example, the extended services model provides one option for schools and the VCYS to work in partnership to deliver community services and other local partnerships should help build provision further.

Government's youth workforce development programme considers the introduction for a licence to practice for youth workers. NCVYS has produced several briefings and position statements on this, and has proposed an alternative volunteer accreditation scheme³. NCVYS is interested to see that the White Paper proposes a licence to practice for teachers. VCYS organisations may wish to follow the development of this proposal as it may signify an over-all step change in the accreditation of all people that work with children and young people.

3. Building a 21st century schools system summary

This section provides a summary of the White Paper, highlighting key, relevant points for the VCYS.

3.1 Chapter 1 – Our (Government's) ambition for every child: an education that prepares them for the challenges of the 21st century

This chapter sets out Government's ambition for an education system that equips all children with the best chance of success in adult life. It introduces Government's new Pupil Guarantee, setting out new entitlements to personalised support for every child, matched by a Parent Guarantee for every parent⁴.

3.2 Chapter 2 – In every school: excellent teaching and the extra help each child needs

This chapter considers how Government will ensure that there is excellent teaching and support for individual children's needs.

Government wants every pupil to go to a school where there is good behaviour, strong discipline, order and safety. Government will act on recommendations in Alan Steer's behaviour review⁵ and introduce new Home School Agreements.

Government wants every pupil to go to a school where they are taught a broad balanced and flexible curriculum including skills for learning and life. A new secondary curriculum will be introduced by 2010, followed by a primary curriculum will be introduced from 2011. From the age of 14, young people will have an entitlement to study a choice from any of the new Diplomas by 2013, and the choice of an Apprenticeship place from the age of 16.

Each child will have a personal tutor and any primary pupils falling behind in Key Stage 2 will have an entitlement to 10 hours of one-to-one tuition. Those who are behind at the start of secondary school will have one-to-one or small group catch-up tuition in Year 7. A 'progress check' will be developed

³ Further information on NCVYS's proposal for a volunteer accreditation scheme and other workforce papers are available via: <http://www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=270>

⁴ Information on the Pupil and Parent Guarantees is available via: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/21stcenturyschoolssystem/>

⁵ Steer (2009) *Review of Pupil Behaviour* is available via: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance/about/Sir_AlanSteer_Behaviour_Review.cfm

for these pupils. By 2010 in secondary schools and 2012 in primary schools, schools will report online in 'real time' to parents about progress.

Government wants every child to go to a school where they take part in sport and cultural activities and where the school promotes their health and wellbeing.

The Pupil and Parent Guarantees will be underpinned by legislation and implemented across the country in the coming years.

3.3 Chapter 3 – Every school working in partnerships: because no school can do it alone

This chapter looks at how schools and local services will work in partnership.

Government expects schools to work with other schools and wider children's services to offer more and provide better value for money; this will include partnerships as part of the Children's Trust. Working in partnership will ensure that every local area will be able to offer a choice of every one of the new Diplomas to 14-19 year olds. Schools that wish to pool funds and resources will be able to do so.

Government will accelerate the development of Academies to 200 by September 2009, with a further 100 in 2010, and Trust schools. Government will develop a system for accrediting good education providers who wish to run groups of schools – Accredited Schools Groups – so that the best schools and school leaders can share practice. Government will extend local authorities' (LAs) powers to intervene in cases of failure and make £20 million available over two years to support accredited providers to develop their capacity and take on underperforming schools.

New Children's Trust Boards will include representatives from schools. Government has established a co-location fund worth £200 million and announced 101 projects in which LAs and their partners are co-locating services such as youth centres and other community facilities. Government will fund a leadership and partnership national support programme to support schools to manage change. Ofsted will introduce a revised grade for partnership working and carry out more co-ordinated inspections for federations of schools.

3.4 Chapter 4 – Every school improving: strong accountability and rapid intervention when it is needed

This chapter sets out Government's new more tailored approach for improving schools.

Government will reform the role of School Improvement Partner (SIP) so that SIPs are responsible not only for monitoring and challenge, but have a wider role of brokering support. Government will expect LAs to work through SIPs to support schools. It will also reform SIP training and quality assurance in support of the new role.

The school accountability system will now focus more on how each child is progressing and developing. A new School Report Card (SRC⁶) will be developed for every school, providing a rounded assessment of schools performance and enable parents and the public to make more informed judgements about the effectiveness of each school. Where SRCs show low or declining performance, Ofsted may inspect more frequently. LAs will use the SRC and Ofsted reports to produce overall school improvement assessment.

3.5 Chapter 5 – Every school and school leader supported: the right roles for local and central government

This chapter sets out Government's view of the roles for local and central government in supporting schools and their leaders.

⁶ A prospectus for the new School Report Card is available via:
<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00664-2009>

Government has launched a review of the distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from 2011 and will bring forward proposals in early 2010. Government will ask the Implementation Review Unit, an independent panel of heads, teachers and school manager, to undertake a review of how Government's policies are being implemented with a view to removing barriers to delivery.

The Paper highlights that LAs will need to use their commissioning role to ensure delivery of high-quality school places and children's services that deliver the Pupil Guarantee, effective early intervention and wider support for children, young people and families. LAs will also have a new requirement on them to gather parent's view on the school choices available in their area and to publish a local plan for improvement if a high number of parents are dissatisfied.

DCSF Children and Learner Teams, based in regional Government Offices, are to lead and co-ordinate strategic support and challenge to LAs and Children's Trusts on behalf of DCSF. DCSF will develop a new system of support for LAs and Children's Trusts and continue to intervene in LAs which are underperforming.

3.6 Chapter 6 – In every school: a well-led and highly skilled workforce

This chapter considers how Government will support the school workforce.

There are already new leadership roles developing, including head teachers becoming 'consultant leaders' or 'executive heads' who provide strategic leadership across a number of schools operating in partnership. A new Masters in Teaching and Learning will be introduced and Government intends to introduce a new renewable 'licence to teach' linked to a new professional development entitlement for teachers. Government will also establish new and stronger expectations for the development of support staff.

Government wants to strengthen the role of school governors by enshrining in law governing bodies' fundamental duties to children, young people and the wider community. Training for governors will also be developed. SIPs will provide information and advice to the governing body about the school's performance.

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