



# The Schools White Paper

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The Schools White Paper 'Opportunity for All: Strong Schools with Great Teachers for Your Child', the first White Paper on the subject for six years, was published on Monday 28th of March. The goal of the policy document produced by the Government is 'to introduce and implement standards that will improve children's education, deliver the right support if they fall behind and give them the tools to lead a happy, fulfilled and successful life.' It has been noted that the Schools White Paper is a blueprint, and should be considered alongside the Government's wider policy programme. This includes: the Special Education Needs and Disabilities Review (published 29th of March 2022); the Levelling Up White Paper (published 2nd February 2022); the Skills for Jobs White Paper (published 21st January 2021); and the Independent Care Review (the Case for Change was published in June 2021).

The Schools White Paper has the potential to reshape the structure of England's education system. It states that by 2030 'all children will benefit from being taught in a school in, or in the process of joining, a strong multi-academy trust'. The ambition is that, as already outlined in the government's Levelling Up White Paper, 90 per cent of children should achieve expected standards in reading, writing and maths in key stage 2. The policy document also emphasises the importance of building and sharing evidence as well as collaboration between teachers, schools and wider children's services. To achieve that, the paper pledges at least £100m to put the Education Endowment Foundation on a long-term footing so they can continue to evaluate and spread best practice across the country.

The Government's key policies also include turning Oak National Academy into a new arm's-length curriculum body, providing free online curriculum resources for teachers. In addition, there is a strong focus on school standards, requiring schools to offer a minimum school week of 32.5 hours by September 2023, as well as introducing a new 'parent pledge', instructing schools to provide evidence-based support if a child falls behind in English or maths, notifying the parents about their progress. Significantly, Ofsted will inspect every school by 2025, including the backlog of 'outstanding' schools that have not been inspected for many years. The White Paper will also increase Ofsted's powers to inspect schools that are operating illegally without registration and all new ITT providers by 2024.

The Schools White Paper has received mixed feedback and it has been described as 'of variable quality'. On one hand, Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the Commons Education Select Committee, welcomed the four key components of teacher development, improving curriculum standards (focusing on literacy and numeracy), parental engagement and uniformity of school hours. John Jolly, Chief Executive of Parentkind, hailed the new 'parent pledge' emphasising parents' voice in their child's education. Dame Rachel de Souza, the Children's Commissioner, stressed the importance of supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged children,

mental health training and being inclusive of children with special needs. However, on the other hand, Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said the Schools White Paper was 'mechanistic and lacking in ambition despite containing some helpful and promising measures'. Similarly, Paul Whiteman, General Secretary of the NAHT school leaders' union, noted that additional funding is needed to achieve the Government's ambitious plans. Leora Cruddas, Chief Executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, expressed her concerns about trusts being set up by councils, arguing that they should meet the same regulatory standards as other trusts.

Overall, the Schools White Paper includes a series of bold proposals focusing on a knowledge-rich curriculum, improving school standards, teaching training and development and parental engagement. Many of them are long-term ambitions expected to be achieved by 2030. This presents an opportunity for key sectoral stakeholders, including school leaders, emerging trusts, and businesses which want to expand their offering and contribute to this crucial transformation of our education system. We now know the destination, but the path we undertake to get there will shape the future outcomes for pupils across the country.

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1. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1063602/Opportunity\\_for\\_all\\_strong\\_schools\\_with\\_great\\_teachers\\_for\\_your\\_child\\_\\_print\\_version\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063602/Opportunity_for_all_strong_schools_with_great_teachers_for_your_child__print_version_.pdf)
  2. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-the-schools-white-paper-could-do-better-zpqbowgmt>
  3. [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-white-paper-delivers-real-action-to-level-up-education?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm\\_source=4454ca69-db62-45ea-ac8c-c18e9146e278&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-white-paper-delivers-real-action-to-level-up-education?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=4454ca69-db62-45ea-ac8c-c18e9146e278&utm_content=daily)
  4. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/dfes-parent-pledge-policy-gimmick-say-heads>