



Schools

achieving success

1. Introduction

- 1.1** In the modern world, only by ensuring that everyone receives a high quality education will we ensure opportunity for all, social justice, social cohesion and rising prosperity. That is why education has been our top priority since 1997. In that time, a lot has been achieved in our schools - but we know we have more to do.

2. Reform in progress

Primary schools and teachers have achieved a great deal - we will continue to work with teachers to implement our strategies

- 2.1** The transformation under way in primary schools is a tribute to the skills and dedication of all who work in our schools. Children now leave school more literate and numerate than ever before. Between 1996 and 2000, the percentage of 11-year-olds achieving the standards expected of their age rose from 57% to 75% in English and from 54% to 72% in mathematics.

- 2.2** Though we know that many tough challenges remain, not least to address existing inequalities, we will see through what we have begun. There will be no change of direction. We will continue to invest consistently in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, ensuring that they are firmly embedded to the benefit of all children. And we will invest in widening opportunities, giving children more chances to learn music, sports and a foreign language.

There have been improvements in secondary schools, too - the task now is transformation

- 2.3** There is no denying the real challenge that secondary schools and teachers face. Nonetheless, secondary schools have improved.

Between 1996 and 2000, the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C grade GCSEs rose by almost 5 percentage points to 49.2%. There are far fewer unsatisfactory lessons - Ofsted deemed 16% unsatisfactory in 1995/96 but this had been reduced to 6% by 2000.

- 2.4** But progress needs to be accelerated. Over many years, there has been little progress in test results for 14-year-olds. The proportion of children staying on in education after 16 is low by international standards. There are very significant achievement gaps: boys lag behind girls and there is a wide variation in performance between social and ethnic groups.
- 2.5** The next phase of reform must transform secondary education, building on the firm foundations now provided at primary school. We will work with schools and teachers, providing resources and support so that they can do what they know is needed. We will free the best schools to innovate and to lead the way for others. Our mission is to provide an education service that will give all children the opportunity to achieve their potential.

3. *Achieving high standards for all - supporting teaching and learning*

- 3.1** Our agenda is driven by our belief in the need to raise standards. The quality of teaching and learning lies at the heart of school improvement.

A strategy has been developed in partnership with teachers to raise standards for 11-14-year-olds - we will implement it nationally

3.2 There has been growing concern about the slow progress that children make between the ages of 11 and 14 (Key Stage 3). For too many, it is a time of falling motivation and rising disaffection. The success of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in primary schools means that we are now well placed to tackle this problem.

3.3 We have therefore worked with teachers to develop a strategy based on experience in some of our best schools that over time will improve teaching and learning in all subjects. It has been piloted extensively, and having learned the lessons of the pilots, we will implement it nationally. We have set demanding targets for improvement:

- By 2007, 85% of 14-year-olds should achieve Level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and ICT and 80% in science.
- As a milestone towards that target, 75% to achieve Level 5 in English, mathematics and ICT and 70% in science by 2004.
- As a minimum performance target, by 2004 no LEA will have fewer than 65% achieving Level 5 or above in English or mathematics or fewer than 60% in science.

3.4 To reinforce the need to meet these targets, we want to move to publish results for 14-year-olds. Alongside national results, we will publish new measures showing how much progress children make between the ages of 11 and 14 - putting the national results in context by showing how much value each school adds to its pupils' results.

Meeting the needs of all children

- 3.5** It is critical that all our programmes to improve teaching and learning should support all children, of whatever ability or background, to do the best that they can. The enormous potential of ICT and the much larger number of adults in schools means that it is becoming possible for each child's education to be delivered in a way and at a pace that suits them.

We will help schools to meet the needs of gifted and talented children

- 3.6** Too often in the past, the most able children did not receive the support they needed. We have made progress in tackling this problem - there are programmes for gifted and talented pupils in over 1,000 secondary schools. We will now establish a new Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth. From September 2002, it will pilot an extensive national programme for our most able pupils culminating in a first round of summer schools from summer 2003. And in all our programmes, we will make provision for our most able pupils to progress at a faster pace.

We will help schools to meet the needs of children with special educational needs

- 3.7** Equally important is to support effectively children with special educational needs. We will build on the progress we have made by putting in place a new strategy for children with special needs. It will make best practice information, effective teaching strategies and practical materials widely available. It will make certain that schools are held accountable effectively for the achievements of every child, and improve monitoring arrangements, by developing a framework for measuring school and LEA effectiveness in this area. In addition, we will ensure that education, health and other

professionals work together to serve children with special needs effectively.

ICT can play a major role in meeting individual needs and aspirations

- 3.8** Over the six years from 1998-2004, we will have invested a total of £1.8 billion in ICT in schools. Increasingly, this means that schools have the equipment to use ICT to tailor education much more directly to the needs of each individual. In our *Curriculum Online* consultation paper, we set out our vision of making digital materials available across the curriculum, for all subjects and age groups, catering for children of all abilities. These materials will contribute to teachers' lesson planning and support homework and family learning. By continuing our investment, we shall move towards achieving this vision.

We will raise standards for pupils from ethnic minorities

- 3.9** There are encouraging signs that some ethnic minority pupils are benefiting from action to raise standards. The recent Youth Cohort Study shows considerable improvement in performance at GCSE for many. However, some of our ethnic minority children are still not achieving as well as they could. The causes are complex but must be tackled.
- 3.10** The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant worth £450 million over three years will be evaluated and targeted to do more to reduce the gap in performance. We will develop training for school leaders in addressing underachievement, monitor the progress of ethnic minority pupils and make sure that LEAs set demanding targets to close the achievement gap. We will support teachers to help

children who arrive in school unable to speak English and seek to recruit more teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Supporting schools in promoting good behaviour and tackling disruption

3.11 We cannot expect to attract and retain good teachers and achieve high standards unless schools are well-ordered places. The poor behaviour of a few is a growing problem for teachers, an added source of pressure and a distraction from their focus on teaching.

3.12 Supporting teachers' efforts to address bad behaviour is a major part of our secondary school transformation strategy. Government can play its part by:

- Supporting early intervention. In particular, we will continue to expand the numbers of Learning Support Units, which tackle behaviour problems within schools so that pupils can be reintegrated into mainstream classes.

- Providing training for teachers and other adults in schools in managing behaviour, working with parents and with other services including the Health Service.

- Encouraging parents to take responsibility for their children's behaviour. For the few cases where parents make things difficult by not supporting schools, we propose to extend the use of Parenting Orders. We will also consult on extending them to cases where the parent's rather than the child's behaviour is the problem.

- Making sure heads can exclude pupils who are violent or persistently disruptive. Having met our target of reducing the number of exclusions, we will not set further targets. We will make sure that the interests of the wider school community are properly reflected in exclusion appeal hearings. And we will make sure that from September 2002, LEAs provide full-time education for all excluded children.

Education with character

3.13 Critical though effective academic education is to children's life

chances, it is not the only important part of schooling. We want schools to play their part in developing rounded individuals who are well prepared for adult life. To support schools to do this, we will:

- Encourage children's active participation in decisions that affect them. Ofsted will seek out the views of a school's pupils as part of its inspection.
- Introduce citizenship into the National Curriculum from September 2002, promoting political literacy, social and moral responsibility and community involvement.
- Extend opportunities for children to be involved in out-of-school activities, including implementing our commitments that every pupil should have two hours of PE or sport and that every child should have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument.

4. Meeting individual talents and aspirations at 14-19

- 4.1** If all young people are to be equipped to play a full part in society and the economy, we must pay particular attention to education for 14-19-year-olds. Too many young people still gain low or no qualifications and leave learning for good at 16. Vocational education has been persistently undervalued, and too many have been failed by the system.
- 4.2** We have begun to change this. The Key Stage 3 strategy will provide a solid grounding. The introduction of new GCSEs in vocational subjects will begin in September 2002 and a £38 million programme of work-related learning will benefit some 40,000 14-16-year-olds. Modern Apprenticeships are being upgraded and we are establishing the Connexions Service to provide advice and support for young people.
- 4.3** Now, though, we want to open up a wider debate about how we improve education for our 14-19-year-olds, supporting more effectively each individual's aptitudes. We need to build a consensus about the best way forward and the necessary pace of change and plan to set out further proposals in a consultation paper.

Creating the key components of a 14-19 phase

- 4.4** Some of the main elements of a programme of action are clear.
- First, we must recognise achievement in both academic and vocational subjects. We have suggested developing an overarching award to do this.

- Second, we need to create space in the 14-16 curriculum to allow students to pursue their talents and aspirations while maintaining a strong focus on the basics.
- Third, we need to make high quality, widely recognised vocational options available to students of all abilities, so that young people with an aptitude and preference for vocational learning achieve the qualifications and recognition they deserve.

4.5 In addition, we will look in detail at whether there are structural barriers to a coherent 14-19 phase, including organisation, funding and inspection. More detailed ideas and proposals will be set out in the forthcoming consultation paper.

5. *Excellence, innovation and diversity*

5.1 If education is to be genuinely tailored to the individual, we must develop the strengths of every school, and help schools to learn and work together. We want to free the energies, talents and professional creativity of heads and teachers and invite them to work with us to lead a programme of innovation and transformation.

We will develop and extend the specialist and Beacon school programmes

5.2 We know that many schools already have their own sense of mission and ethos of which staff, pupils and parents are proud. We want to make sure that every school is like that. The diverse system we want to build will be one where schools differ markedly from each other but where all are equally excellent in giving their students a broad curriculum and the opportunity to achieve high standards.

5.3 Following the comments we have received on the *Building on Success* Green Paper, we want to clarify and extend our proposals for specialist schools:

- There will not be a two tier system. Over time, all schools that are ready will be able to achieve specialist status; we will expand the programme rapidly to 1,000 schools by 2003 and 1,500 by 2005. There will be 400 Beacon schools by 2005. In paragraph 5.11 we set out our proposals to help schools to work towards a new status.

- All maintained specialist schools must abide by the same curriculum legislation as other schools and by the Code of Practice on Admissions. That will not change.

- We confirm that we will introduce new specialisms in science; engineering; and business and enterprise. We will add a further specialism: mathematics and computing. We will make sure that schools can combine specialisms where that makes sense and that schools can work together to develop a Centre of Excellence.

- We will base our policies for the next phase of school improvement and curriculum development on what successful schools do. We will develop advanced Beacon, specialist and training schools in partnership with existing successful schools to lead the next wave of education reform.

Learning from innovation

5.4 We know that there is much good practice in our schools. The challenge is to help good schools and teachers to spread it to all schools. We want to ensure that we promote innovation, and help schools to learn from one another even more effectively.

The best schools will earn greater autonomy

- 5.5** We propose to free the best secondary schools from constraints which stand in the way of yet higher standards. We will legislate to allow them to opt out of parts of the National Curriculum, for example to lead the development of thinking about Key Stage 4. And we will allow them flexibility over some elements of teachers' pay and conditions, for example to allow schools to agree a more flexible working day or year. Important elements of pay and conditions will remain common to all teachers.

We will introduce an innovation unit to support schools to develop and spread new ideas

- 5.6** We will establish a schools innovation unit to initiate and support new ways for schools to do their job more effectively. The unit will be a network of leading education practitioners, including a number of our most innovative serving heads and teachers, and will actively seek out, develop and disseminate new ideas.

Bringing in new partners and providers

- 5.7** We believe that allowing new partners to work with schools can raise standards further by stimulating new thinking, particularly in tackling some of the most intractable unresolved problems. We want to make it possible for schools to establish new partnerships, with public, private and voluntary sector bodies, which could, for example, provide strong management support. We will keep appropriate safeguards and clear lines of accountability in place.

- 5.8** In order to encourage further the involvement of new promoters, we propose that where an LEA identifies a need for a new school, it should advertise this fact widely so that any interested party will be able to publish proposals. The Secretary of State will decide between the proposals.
- 5.9** Faith schools also play an important role in the diversity of the state education system. Over the last four years, we have increased the range of faith groups involved in the sector, and we wish to welcome more faith schools where there is clear local agreement.

Implementing diversity

- 5.10** Only if we can build on the commitment and enthusiasm of all those who work in schools will we succeed in implementing a truly diverse secondary system. We know that diversity cannot and should not be imposed. But we do want to give schools new opportunities to play a wider role in the school system. We will publish a 'prospectus' of the options and establish an advice unit to support schools wishing to take on one of the roles.
- 5.11** We want all schools to identify a role to which they aspire - as a specialist or training school, for example. Where schools do not yet fully meet the criteria, but can demonstrate real commitment, we will recognise them as 'working towards' a role. This 'working towards' status will give them a clear idea of what they need to do, provide a target date and offer support to help them to achieve their aims.

6. *Decisive intervention to ensure high standards*

- 6.1** Two clear principles underpin our approach to LEA and school performance. We will balance challenge with support and continue to intervene decisively where necessary.

Supporting schools facing challenging circumstances

- 6.2** We have set 'floor targets' - minimum performance levels to be achieved by all schools. By 2004 at least 20% of students in every school should achieve 5 A*-C grade GCSEs, and by 2006, at least 25%. Often, schools that do not achieve this level are situated in challenging areas and draw their pupils from communities where education is not given a high priority.
- 6.3** We have put in place a programme of challenge and support to help all schools not yet achieving this level to drive up standards. They will receive additional funding and access to advice.
- 6.4** In return, these schools must make sustainable improvements. Ofsted is monitoring the progress they are making and will help them to focus on the key issues.
- 6.5** We also want to support children in disadvantaged areas through our new pupil learning credits, which will enable schools to provide additional opportunities for their pupils. Schools will have considerable flexibility in how they use the credits. For example, they could be used to fund educational visits; offer extra tuition in the arts; supply books for pupils to read in the home; or provide specialist sports coaching.

Tackling school failure

- 6.6** Each year, some schools are judged by Ofsted to be failing their pupils. Seven hundred and seventy-eight have been turned round in the last four years, and a further 138 closed where a better alternative existed for the pupils. The average time to turn a school round has been reduced from 25 to 18 months. And fewer schools are now being identified as failing. There has been huge progress, but despite everything that has been tried, some problems remain.
- 6.7** We will introduce new ways to tackle these difficulties. Where a governing body is part of the problem, we will take a power to replace it with a new, more focused 'Interim Executive Board' during the turn around. And we will make it easier for good schools to support failing schools.
- 6.8** We will also introduce new ways for external partners to support the weakest schools. As the LEA draws up its action plan, it will invite proposals from other bodies to support the school to turn around. It may choose not to incorporate an external partner's proposal in its plan, but the Secretary of State will have a power to require a partner to be involved if necessary. Where an external partner is involved, there will be a performance agreement between the partner, the LEA and the governing body describing the contribution each will make to the school.
- 6.9** Our purpose is to make sure that we do whatever is necessary to offer children whose school is failing the quality of education which is their right.

7. Valuing and supporting teachers in schools

- 7.1** Those who work in schools have, of course, been central to what has been achieved so far in raising standards. We recognise and are grateful for the huge contribution they have made.
- 7.2** There remains a great deal to do to implement in full our strategy for modernising the teaching profession, but there has been considerable progress. Partly as a result, there are more teachers employed in the classroom than at any time since 1984 - an increase of more than 12,000 since 1998.
- 7.3** We recognise, though, that some major issues remain unresolved. Many heads and teachers work long hours. They feel that they have inadequate time to prepare lessons, review pupil progress or undertake professional development. And despite the extra teachers in the classroom, there remain shortages of competent teachers in some parts of the country and some subjects.

Reducing workload

- 7.4** A major independent study of teachers' working practices and workload began at the end of May. It is investigating the full range of teachers' and headteachers' jobs in 100 schools across England and Wales. The full report is due in November, but it produced some initial findings in August, which we have taken into account.

We will examine the potential for providing more time for preparation, development and management

- 7.5** It is clear that a teacher's job is changing, partly due to the new emphasis on pupil-level target-setting. We believe that this approach is key to raising standards, as teachers strive to meet

the needs of each child. But it does make significant demands. We believe that teachers need more time to plan, train and prepare, so that they can be as effective as possible in the classroom.

We have increased resources and will help schools develop greater flexibility

7.6 We have already pledged to recruit 10,000 more teachers, 20,000 support staff and 1,000 more trained bursars (who will help to release school leaders to concentrate on the quality of learning and teaching in the school) by 2006. Used carefully and imaginatively, these offer a good foundation for further progress.

7.7 But schools also need freedom to rethink the teacher's role. Qualified teachers need to be allowed to concentrate on using their professional skills to raise standards, delegating other tasks to support staff where this is practicable. We will therefore legislate to give schools more freedom to innovate - sharing good teachers, for example.

7.8 The increase in the continuing development opportunities available to teachers is making a significant contribution to raising standards. In the light of the final workload study results, we will consider making proposals on supporting professional development.

We will test the impact of innovative approaches

7.9 The initial findings of the workload study have identified a range of other ideas with considerable scope for reducing the workload of teachers. We propose to run pilots in 2002/03, in consultation with teacher representatives and employers, developing and evaluating models for improvement, which - if successful - could support change more widely.

Improving continuing professional development and support

7.10 We want to build on our widely welcomed investment in professional development, which can make a significant impact in raising standards. Our strategy includes:

- Early professional development programmes for teachers in their second and third years of teaching.
- Professional development bursaries of £500 or £700 for individual teachers.
- Placement and exchange opportunities for teachers.

7.11 We will continue to support the National College for School Leadership to make sure that all school leaders can learn from innovative practice and draw on others' experience.

8. *Modernising our structures*

8.1 Central to achieving higher standards is the confident, well-managed school, setting its own targets and accountable for its performance. Within the framework of accountability we have established, we want schools to have as much freedom as possible.

Deregulating the system

8.2 We want to reduce and simplify regulations that schools find burdensome. For example, we will make it easier for governors to provide childcare and loosen legislative constraints so that schools can more easily share resources and expertise, for example sharing an excellent team of subject teachers.

Reforming governance

8.3 We want to build on the freely given time and commitment of the 370,000 school governors, whose advice and support are invaluable to the smooth running of schools. We will improve training and extend our efforts to improve the supply of effective governors, for example through the One-Stop Shop currently operating in Excellence in Cities areas. We have been working with representatives of governors and others to develop proposals to modernise the existing legislative requirements on school governance. Our detailed consultation paper includes proposals to give greater flexibility to all schools.

Serving families and communities

8.4 Parents are, of course, key in their children's learning. It is critical that the school system involves and responds to them and we have given them a more effective voice, by increasing the number of parent governors and creating representation on local authority committees dealing with education. However, we know that some parents may be unsure about how to help their children. Our *Learning Journey* guides to the curriculum, which were made freely available to all parents, have proved highly popular, with over four and a half million copies distributed. We are committed to keeping parents informed through, for example, *Parents+Schools* magazine and the Parents' Website (www.dfes.gov.uk/parents).

8.5 Most schools already provide some before or after-school study support; some provide space for sports or arts activities, community groups or Internet access; others host other services such as health services, childcare or adult education. We shall legislate to make sure that there are no barriers to schools developing these

innovative approaches. We will establish pilots to test out such 'extended schools' and generate good practice.

Modernising school buildings

- 8.6** We need to make sure that schools have the funds they need to do their job. In particular, schools need investment to repair, refurbish and modernise their buildings. We have increased capital investment in schools from £683 million in 1996-97 to £2.2 billion this year - a three-fold increase. By 2003-04 the level of investment will have increased to £3.5 billion. All schools have already benefited from this increased capital investment.

Modernising the revenue funding system

- 8.7** Over the past four years the Government has delivered very significant real terms increases in the revenue funding that schools receive - £540 per pupil on average. We are also freeing up revenue funding systems so that schools have almost complete discretion over the use of grants they receive through the Standards Fund. In parallel, we are taking steps to deliver a fairer and more transparent approach to general education funding.

9. *Legislative proposals*

- 9.1** We plan to legislate in the first session of this Parliament to achieve these goals. Taken together, our proposals constitute a major reform of our education system, driving up standards for all, enhancing the diversity of secondary education and increasing its ability to respond to the talents and aspirations of each individual student. We want to use this opportunity to undertake a wider reform of education law, to deregulate the system, and increase the ability of schools to innovate and to respond to innovation.
- 9.2** The Bill will cover both England and Wales. Many of the provisions will be enabling in character and in accordance with the principles of the devolution settlement, the National Assembly for Wales will have discretion as to the extent of their application to Wales. The policy objectives set out in this White Paper are those for England, and the National Assembly will be consulting shortly on how the Bill's provisions might be applied in Wales.

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