



Lord Nash

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

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Dear Academy Trust Chair,

Educational Excellence Everywhere

I am writing about our [Schools White Paper, *Educational Excellence Everywhere*](#), which has been published today.

Since 2010, our education reforms, underpinned by the hard work of teachers and leaders, have tackled the failures of the past and made a remarkable difference to education in this country.

However, the education we offer our children does not yet consistently compare well with education in other leading countries in the world. The excellence our reforms has unlocked in some parts of our schools system have not yet spread across the whole country. There remain underperforming areas, where unacceptably low standards persist. These areas lack sufficient high quality teachers, leaders, governors and academy sponsors to improve.

The White Paper sets out our vision of educational excellence *everywhere* and a future facing education system, based on learning from the best systems around the world. We want to extend and embed the last Parliament's reforms to provide a world class education for all children, wherever they live and whatever their circumstances. It is about taking pride in the huge steps that schools, teachers and children have made over the last five years, but also setting our sights on the future. Through the reforms in the White Paper, we will give the best generation of teachers ever the same freedom as other professions like law and medicine. We will give every school the freedoms that come with being an academy, and give weaker schools the support they need to make the most of those freedoms. At the same time, we will equip parents with the information they need to play an active role in their child's education.

This White Paper is not about another big idea to be imposed on schools. Instead, it sets out how we will give schools, school leaders, and the education profession the power, incentives and accountability to give every child an excellent education. It outlines the underpinning infrastructure of a school-led system, which rewards innovation, spreads excellence and is intolerant of failure.

We believe that the fastest and most sustainable way for schools to improve is for government to trust this country's most effective education leaders, giving them

freedom and power, and holding them to account for unapologetically high standards for every child. The system we envisage will respond to performance: extending the reach of the most successful leaders and acting promptly by intervening where performance is not good enough. But it will also do more to set up school leaders for success, ensuring they have the necessary tools to seize the opportunities provided by greater autonomy and ensuring that support is available for them to draw on when needed. This model underpins every one of the reforms set out in this White Paper.

This approach seeks to take our self-improving school-led system to the next level: building capacity and setting up schools to use their freedoms effectively. We are providing not just autonomy, but supported autonomy, as the best approach to improve education everywhere. Our ambitious approach represents our best chance of achieving the educational excellence that every child and young person deserves.

The key elements of our approach are:

- an education system that ensures teachers get the respect they deserve and that we have consistently excellent teaching in our classrooms, including replacing the current 'Qualified Teacher Status' (QTS) with a stronger, more challenging accreditation based on a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom, as judged by great schools;
- support for existing leaders and help to develop the outstanding leaders of the future through improved infrastructure and leadership training, world-class qualifications and attracting the best leaders to challenging areas, including through the new National Teaching Service;
- a dynamic school-led system where every school is an academy and where pupils, parents and communities are empowered to have a more significant voice in schools, and more schools working together in multi-academy trusts (MATs);
- preventing underperformance through improvement, scaffolding and support where it is needed, including transferring responsibility for school improvement from local authorities to school and system leaders. There will also be a new focus on achieving excellence in areas where too few children have access to a good school and there are not yet enough high quality teachers, school and system leaders, governors and sponsors;
- high expectations and a world-leading curriculum for all, so that all children receive an education that equips them with the knowledge and character traits necessary to succeed in 21st century Britain;
- fair, stretching accountability that focusses on tackling underperformance; rewarding schools on the basis of the progress their pupils make and incentivising strong leaders to take over underperforming schools; and
- the right resources in the right hands: investing every penny where it can do the most good – through new, fair, national funding formulae for schools, improved effectiveness of the pupil premium and making the best possible use of resources.

As academy trusts, you are central to the vision set out in this White Paper. In particular the White Paper sets out that by the end of 2020 all schools will be academies or in the process of becoming academies; and that by the end of 2022, local authorities will no longer maintain schools.

This vision is about building on the success of the academy system of which you already are a part. We want all schools to be in strong structures, putting our best leaders in charge of more schools.

To achieve this vision, we will continue to encourage high performing maintained schools to put forward applications to become academies. And we are implementing measures in the new Education and Adoption Act which received Royal Assent yesterday so that all inadequate schools become sponsored academies and coasting schools are tackled for the first time.

We expect that most schools will be part of MATs, providing significant benefits including staffing and leadership opportunities, more efficient back office arrangements that free up more funding for the classroom, more robust governance and the opportunity to develop excellent practice and curriculum in a way that can also reduce workload.

We hope that as existing academy trusts you will consider what part you can play as the system evolves, be this through collaborating with, or supporting, others becoming academies.

The White Paper sets out a series of ways that we will support academy trusts. In particular we will provide a range of resources and support to help MATs grow sustainably. We will develop tailored information and leadership training and provide greater opportunities for MATs to involve business expertise. We want to ensure the accountability system is not a disincentive to taking on the leadership of a more challenging school, so we will work with Ofsted to introduce 'improvement periods' that allow time for improvement when a school is taken over as part of a planned intervention. And we have committed to engaging with you in developing a long term legal framework for academies which is fit for purpose, protecting and promoting autonomy, alongside ensuring robust and proportionate accountability.

The White Paper also powerfully puts MATs at the centre of these ambitious reforms, whether that is through school improvement, leadership development or teacher training and development. I look forward to discussing these changes, and other aspects of the White Paper, with you and working together to ensure we deliver educational excellence everywhere for all children.

Yours sincerely,



JOHN NASH