

Schools White Paper & SEND Reform Consultation Briefing

Headline messages and the case for change

- Build a genuinely inclusive education system
- Redesign SEND pathways around early intervention and outcomes
- Rebalance investment towards prevention and family support
- Respond to rapid technological change, including AI
- Position schools as public services and community anchors
- Strengthen evidence-based teaching and the importance of continued learning at home
- Tackle attendance, behaviour, disadvantage and narrow the attainment gap
- Stabilise and support the workforce and rebuild parental confidence

Chapter 1: Our children's future

- Wraparound services to be accessible, joined up, and evidence-driven
- New models of local partnership and shared accountability around outcomes
- Investment in Best Start Family Hubs, including £200m over three years for SEND practitioners
- Hubs as a single access points for health, family support, and early learning

Chapter 2: Narrow to broad

Early Years

- Rebuild family services and strengthen quality of early years, prioritising core knowledge and skills
- Invest in providers through a new Inclusive Early Years Fund.
- Childcare and Early Education Review
- Expand the Reading Ambition CPD Programme
- Establish RISE Reception Networks to share best practice
- Strengthen early years to schools' transitions
- LAs to ensure sufficient, high quality local provision

Primary/Secondary

- Strengthen Progress 8 and introduce Year 8 reading test
- Expand English and Math's Hubs and launch a RISE KS3 Alliance
- Introduce new enrichment benchmarks and accountability
- Review the admissions code for greater transparency
- Improve transitions into post-16 pathways
- Create a Level 1 prep for GCSE qualification for learner below grade 3
- Update 16-18 English and Math's progress measures

Chapter 3: Sidelined to included

- High standards and inclusion seen as equally important
- Sidelined: white working class, SEND, CiC, and those not reaching their full potential
- Summer 2026 consultation to improve funding fairness
- Two place-based missions (NE and Coastal) to trial new collaborative models
- Building an evidence base around use of pupil premium
- £3.7bn by 2030 for accessible buildings and to create 50,000 special school places by establishing inclusion bases in mainstream settings

Chapter 4: Withdrawn to engaging

- New pupil engagement framework; by 2029 all schools will monitor pupils' sense of belonging and engagement
- Expansion of Families First, attendance mentoring, new Attendance and Behaviour hubs and specialist advisors for LAs with high absence rates
- New duty on LAs to notify schools, health visitors and GPs of children in temporary accommodation
- Proposals to better use school spaces for health services in partnership with DHSC and NHSE
- Reintegration Support Partnerships after suspensions and new guidance on completing suspensions in schools
- Race Equality Unit to research rise in racist abuse in schools

Chapter 5: Support and investment in high-quality staff

- Recruitment and training of 6,500 new expert teachers
- Improving maternity pay for teachers, with plans to extend to support and college staff
- Strengthening teacher development through a £200 million SEND focused CPD programme
- Introducing a new mentoring and coaching offer for headteachers
- Launching a pilot programme to improve headteacher retention

Chapter 6: Collaboration between schools and with other partners

- Requirement for all schools to be part of a trust; enable LAs to establish new trusts
- Strengthen partnerships between trusts, schools, LAs, and health
- New Trust Standards
- Local governance: annual parental forums, local representations, co-operative trust models to be updated
- LAs to maintain a central role
- New statutory duties via the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill: EHE registers, kinship care, family-decision making, CiC and the extended Virtual School Head role

Chapter 7: Enabling innovation and ambition

- Self-improving schools system where collaboration and sharing best practice are core
- Expand RISE programmes and create a digital one stop shop for evidence-led school improvement
- Introduce AI tools, assistive technology and a digitised National Curriculum framework

- Universal offer of high quality teaching and support from early years to 25 – commonly occurring need to be met in mainstream
- Three new layers of support – Targeted, Targeted Plus, and Specialist
- Individual support plans (ISPs) will outline day to day educational provision
- Nationally designed Specialist Provision Packages (SPPs) will guide eligibility for EHCPs and provision available to meet needs
- Where required, EHCPs will set out statutory entitlement as per SPPs, supported by ISP describing day to day provision

SEND Reform

- Tribunals will remain a route to redress regarding specialist provision, hearing appeals regarding thresholds for specialist provision and settings. The Tribunal will not be able to name a placement for a child.
- Reform AP – outreach into mainstream, time limited placements and longer-term placements where needed
- New funding arrangements – schools and settings to have direct responsibility for an inclusive mainstream fund
- Via local groupings, schools to pool a minimum level of funding to support less common needs fairly across the grouping
- Transitional arrangements post legislation
- Oversight and scrutiny of implementation of reforms via Children's Commissioner

SEND Reform: Putting Children and Young People First

Figure 6: Layers of support

