

# 21st Century Schools: A World-Class Education for Every Child

## A School Report Card: consultation document

### Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 3 March 2009

Your comments must reach us by that date.

department for  
**children, schools and families**

**THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online or offline response facility available on the Department for Children, Schools and Families e-consultation website (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations>).**

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

**Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.**

Name Gerry Rogers, Policy Manager,  
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Address: 190 High Holborn; London WC1V 7QH

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the Public Communications Unit on:

Telephone: 0870 000 2288

e-mail: [info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 0870 000 2288

e-mail: [consultation.unit@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

Please tick **ONE** of the following boxes which best describes you:

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary School
<input type="checkbox"/> Special School	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Years Provider	<input type="checkbox"/> Director of Children's Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Governor	<input type="checkbox"/> Child/Young Person
<input type="checkbox"/> Union/Professional Body	<input type="checkbox"/> Local/National Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary/Community Sector
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other		

Please Specify:

Awarding Body.

**Questions 1 - 11 relate to '21st Century Schools; A World-Class Education for Every Child'**

1 Do you support the overall vision of a 21st century school system in paragraphs 2.1 - 2.12?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

Edexcel broadly supports the overall vision outlined herein.

2 Is there anything missing from the vision for a 21st century schools system?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

There are a number of points missing from the understanding of current 14-19 provision of education.

Firstly, this consultation fails to reflect the majority contribution of colleges (both Sixth Form and CTE) during the 16-19 phase which exceeds that of schools by approximately 60% to 40%. Moreover, c. 200,000 Key Stage 4 students per year for many years through programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh award receive a passing, clearly secondary, mention in this consultation (2.9) among 'collaborative partnerships' which is seriously underestimated. This consultation should more accurately address '21<sup>st</sup> Century education up to 19, than '21<sup>st</sup> Century schools'.

Secondly this vision misses the comparable status of employment and training options open to young people after education until age 18 (2.5) Recent legislation relates to compulsory participation in any of these, and the Nuffield Review 'Engaging Youth Enquiry' finds that many young people prefer a more flexible environment most conducive to their development. Their experience of life at school is one of the

Thirdly section 2.8 misses the uneven track record of academies which have yet to demonstrate a return on investment proportional to their increased funding per learner, compared to other schools. Moreover a number of schools have refused to join Behaviour Partnerships or to accept the full range of learners and have indicated an unwillingness to work in partnership which goes against the current drive towards partnership working.

Finally paragraph 2.12 misses the significant variation in funding per learner between different types of schools, specialist schools compared to comprehensives, or between schools and colleges. Comparative judgments must be based on like for like funding per head, if they are to be meaningful. Blanket judgments about whether or not they meet the National Challenge must take account of significant differences in funding. This is not a credible

3 How can we support stronger partnership with parents for the purposes of teaching and learning and wider school activities (paragraphs 3.4-3.11)?

Comments:

There is strong evidence that relationships and communication with parents, for whom English is an additional language, can be facilitated by the use of outreach workers fluent in community languages who engage effectively with community networks outside schools. Explanation to parents of processes such as admissions is widely regarded as confusing and unclear, and remains a barrier to active participation by those sections of the community who struggle with literacy.

Moreover, researching and inviting the contribution of parents towards the whole range of learner welfare and development can significantly enhance the capability of schools, as for example in the development of employer links.

Furthermore, many children now live in complex families where parental links are unstable and irregular or where a number of adults are involved in childrens' lives in different ways eg siblings sharing different parents. It is important that staff are resourced effectively through professional development which takes account of these key social trends.

Finally, it is important to address explicitly the poorer quality of education experienced by 'looked-after' children in local authority care and those attending Young Offenders' Institutions and Pupil Referral Units. Ofsted report that this has fallen dramatically short of that provided to learners in mainstream schools.

4 Do you agree with the description in paragraph 3.17 of an effective system for early intervention?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

Yes. School liaison staff might also usefully receive training in developing links with communities which are sometimes judged 'hard to reach' but who experience childrens' services as 'hard to access', as is the case with Bengali and Traveller communities.

5 What additional support is needed to enable schools to extend their role in developing sustainable and cohesive communities (paragraphs 3.20-3.24)?

Comments:

The ambitions and strategies outlined in this section are laudable. One essential element of schools 'working with' local communities is an explicit recognition on the part of school leaders of the range of learning and expertise which local communities bring to the relationship, so that there is a genuine two-way exchange, contributing to mutual respect.

6 a) Which do you think would be a more effective partnership model?

a single partnership which delivers as far as possible across a range of collaborative activity

a number of fluid partnerships which form and change to deliver different activities

Comments:

The development of genuine partnership working in a multi-agency context is enormously time-consuming and is potentially undermined each time there is a change of leadership in a key partner, as has proved the case in the Kingswood 14-19 Partnership quoted in DCSF case studies and learning visits. For this reason a model which is as comprehensive and stable as possible once set up, is easier to maintain. Fluid partnerships which form and change to provide different activities will significantly increase the time and effort required for effective liaison, co-ordination and administration, adding to the burdens on staff who are already enormously stretched, as illustrated by the difficulties in recruiting headteachers.

6 b) How best can the performance/impact of partnerships of schools and other services be recognised and monitored (paragraphs 3.25-3.34)?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single School Report Card	<input type="checkbox"/> Ofsted inspection of schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Inspection of local areas
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please comment)		

Comments:

The performance and impact of schools may be well illustrated via the use of a single school report card which collects all relevant information from Ofsted reports, local authority inspections, Joint Area Reviews, parent and student satisfaction surveys. Moreover this format should include information highlighting school 'value added' and should facilitate comparison with other genuinely comparable institutions. It should further highlight the contribution of 'feeder' primary schools or early years settings, so that the qualitative picture painted is as representative as possible.

How this would operate in the case of partnerships is however far from clear since a culture of keen competition for league table position on the basis of achievement and attainment points has now become entrenched. Moreover all 14-19 partnerships feature contributions from colleges, both Sixth Form and GFE, whose reporting is supposed to fall under the Framework for Excellence arrangements. Since there is widespread agreement among practitioners that the 14-19 is a phase of integrated learning experiences, the Department should conduct primary research among established and successful partnerships, publishing detailed proposals for a range of workable models and consulting further.

6 c) Other than how we measure performance, what are the key changes that need to be made to drive the development of stronger partnerships (paragraphs 3.25-3.34)?

Comments:

Partnerships presently consist of a wide range of school types which all experience significant per capita funding differentials, as well as differing significantly from colleges, both Sixth Form and GFE. Practitioners and leaders rightly point to the inequities and inconsistencies of the present system where advantage reflected in strong inspection performance may be rewarded and disadvantage compounded, as Ofsted has concurred. The recognition and resourcing on the part of both DCSF and DIUS of an integrated 14-19 learning phase is an essential precursor to effective collaboration on the ground.

A further key element is the requirement on the part of all providers to collaborate, a move currently resisted by some academies and selective schools in areas already 'creamed' by independent schools, thereby depriving partnerships of the full range of gifted and talented young people achieving at all levels, while failing to accept responsibility for sharing the distribution of young people with challenging behaviour or in need of particular support. The forces that divide schools are still greater than those which unite them.

7 What leadership and accountability arrangements are needed for local partnerships to secure a shared focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people (paragraphs 4.13-4.16)?

Comments:

Improved accountable outcomes for all young people will not result from differential allocation of attention and resources on 'threshold achievers' such as those performing at Grade D/E in GCSE English and Maths, given the application of current National Challenge accountability criteria. There is a need therefore for a unified and consistent set of accountability expectations from the Department, which complement rather than contradict the more nuanced judgments made by Ofsted and local authorities.

Effective leadership of partnerships requires a proven track record as a practitioner adding value, along with experience of developing grass roots collaboration with bodies other than schools alone. It is moreover important that the leadership support messages given by key advisory teams such as Primary and Secondary National Strategies, SSAT, NCSL and LSIS are grounded in a deep and integrated awareness of the entire pre-19 entitlement experience so that lessons from one key stage may inform all.

8 a) What are the main challenges to the children and young people's workforce in delivering the vision of the 21st century school (paragraphs 4.13-4.16)?

<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retention	<input type="checkbox"/> Initial training
<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing training	<input type="checkbox"/> Funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural change	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-agency/integrated working	Other (please comment)

Comments:

The biggest single challenge will be to recruit and retain skilled and experienced practitioners to providers considered to be failing to meet the criteria of the National Challenge, particularly in areas of acute socio-economic disadvantage. Providers in such areas are reporting serious difficulties in recruiting and retaining such staff owing to the adverse publicity of this achievement benchmark, which is at variance with attempts to raise attainment for all along in the spirit of 'Every Child Matters'.

8 b) How might we address these?

Comments:

There needs to be a clear, stable and agreed set of educational outcomes against which providers will be held accountable for the achievement of all learners, across the full spectrum of educational outcomes, eg GCSE grades A\*-G. This is preferable to the high-profile but sudden and divisive application of an arbitrary benchmark such as the National Challenge 30% GCSE grade C or above in English and Maths. Measures such as these have the unintended and counterproductive consequences of reallocating resources to 'threshold' achievers, away from others, undermining the value of achievement below the threshold, resulting in a flight of more able learners and advantaged parents, and demoralising students, staff and governors.

9 Is there a need for any further guidance that would help create a system of 21st century schools?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

There is a need for the Department to listen to guidance, rather than giving it, from those schools which have achieved significant value added, against background of disadvantage and 'creaming' of more able learners. This celebration of good practice should be complemented by celebrations of effective partnership development and community engagement, disseminated online and by the established and valuable method of 'learning visits'.

The Department should further research and publish case studies from our competitor nations which have proved more effective than ourselves in raising attainment, despite, and even because, of policy stances different from those of the Department. The current evidence would suggest that the UK is far from an idealised place in which children may grow up, and there is little evidence of our international leadership in this area.

10 a) Do you agree the seven areas discussed in chapters 3 and 4 are the key issues to be considered in a White Paper on 21st century schools?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

These are some but not all of the key areas. A number of key issues have already been raised but in addition:

The Government is in danger of over-prescribing curriculum models and routes, eg at 14-19, which ignore the widespread and successful learning supported over many years by alternative qualifications. Moreover there would appear to be a lack of learning from the inadequacies of previous Government curriculum development initiatives such as TVEI and GNVQ.

There is a need for grass roots research among young people who drop out of education, so that we understand better their reasons for doing so and therefore devise more socially inclusive strategies for encouraging their participation than criminalisation which can only alienate young people still further.

10 b) Are there any other issues you think should be considered?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

11 Do you have any other comments?

Comments:

No.

**Questions 12 - 22 relate to 'A School Report Card: consultation document'**

12 Do you agree that the following categories should be included on the School Report Card? (Please tick as appropriate)

Attainment

Pupil Progress

Wider Outcomes

Narrowing Gaps

Parents' Views

Pupils' Views

Parents' and pupils' views combined in a single 'Users' Views' category

Parents' and pupils' views combined within a 'Wider Outcomes' category

Any other categories (please comment)

Comments:

Alongside wider outcomes, account needs to be taken of factors seriously impacting learners' achievement and wellbeing, eg the impoverishment and community fragmentation caused by sharply rising local unemployment or outbreaks of racial tension.

13 Do you agree that each category should have:

a numerical score

an assigned rating

both a numerical score and an assigned rating

none of the above

other (please comment)

Comments:

Numerical scores may lead to borderline disputes about points allocated. Ratings allocated to clearly understood criteria are likely to leave valuable room for flexibility in awarding an overall grade.

14 a) Do you agree that the School Report Card should include:

an overall score

an overall rating

both

neither

other (please comment)

Comments:

This rating will prove meaningful if there is a clear, agreed and fair means of consolidating component ratings into an overall grade.

14 b) If an overall score is adopted, do you agree that this should be based on performance in all the categories included on the School Report Card?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

There will always be difficulty in blending quantitative metrics such as achievement scores with qualitative variables such as community engagement.

14 c) If an overall score is not adopted, how would we ensure that public attention is focused on a balanced measure of school performance, taking account of the whole range of school achievements?

Comments:

Consultation on the criteria for balance would prove help the Department recognise a consensus. Edexcel's view is that credit should be given for raising attainment beyond that which might reasonably be expected given the school's socio-economic and funding advantages or disadvantages, and taking due account of 'creaming' of more able students by the wide range of advantaged schools.

15 a) Do you agree with the principles for choosing indicators?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

Reference to narrowing gaps, considering value and evaluating schools according to advantage are welcome.

15 b) Are there other principles you think should be added?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

16 a) Do you think that information about the school's context should be provided as a separate item on the Report Card?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

This information is central to any accurate understanding of its performance.

16 b) Do you think that the indicators that underpin the scores for attainment, progress and wider outcomes should be 'contextualised'?

All

Some

Other (please comment)

Comments:

Yes, this information is central to any accurate understanding of its performance.

17 Should the School Report Card show separate information about the school's performance:

in the previous year

in the previous three years

other (please comment)

Comments:

Trend data is an important dimension of context.

18 Do you agree that the School Report Card should include information about the school's contribution to its local partnerships?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

Yes, but this indicator is reciprocal and should show also what the school gains from its partners, as in the case of its feeder schools or key 'progressor' universities with which it has links.

19 Do you agree that the School Report Card should:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cover all maintained schools, including special schools, pupil referral units and alternative provision, in due course	<input type="checkbox"/> include 11-16 provision only in the main performance assessment of secondary schools	<input type="checkbox"/> show separate information about the effectiveness of the sixth form, where relevant
<input type="checkbox"/> include 5-11 provision only in the main performance assessment of primary schools	<input type="checkbox"/> show separate information about the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, where relevant	<input type="checkbox"/> other (please comment)

Comments:

It should also be applied to Sixth Form and GFE colleges which contribute critically to both 14-19 and 16-19 provision.

20 a) Do you agree that the latest Ofsted judgement should be shown on the School Report Card?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

20 b) Do you agree that a common set of indicators should be used for the School Report Card and Ofsted's risk assessment?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

The more commonality and the less application of conflicting standards, the more confidence parents and stakeholders will have in the reporting mechanisms.

20 c) Do you agree that the School Report Card should take the place of Ofsted's proposed health check report?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

21 a) Do you agree that the School Report Card should be published:

annually

other (please comment)

Comments:

21 b) Should the results of Ofsted inspections be incorporated into School Report Cards as soon as they are available?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

22 Do you agree that the requirement on schools to complete the School Profile should be ended?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Comments:

The SRC should comprehensively supercede the various reporting measures currently in place.

23 Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation (e.g. the number and type of questions, was it easy to find, understand, complete etc)

Comments:

The questionnaire might usefully elicit feedback on all sections of the consultation document, rather than removing some. There is no opportunity to feed back on the proposals as a whole. For example, the School Report Card has proved controversial in some part so New Jersey where the judgments made have not been supported by the local community. Moreover, the questions raised in the Children's, Schools and Families Select Committee 'New Inquiry into School Accountability' provide opportunities for more strategic response.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

**Please acknowledge this reply X**

Here at the Department for Children, Schools and Families we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

Yes

No

All DCSF public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DCSF consultations are conducted, please contact Phil Turner, DCSF Consultation Co-ordinator, tel: 01928 794304 / email: phil.turner@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk.

**Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.**

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 3 March 2009

Send by post to: Consultation Unit, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Area GB, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2GJ.

Send by e-mail to: [21stcenturyschools.consultation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:21stcenturyschools.consultation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)