

## Edexcel Thinks: DCSF 'Your child, your schools, our future' White Paper

### What's the issue

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, the DCSF released its latest White Paper on schools entitled '*Your child, your schools, our future*'. The Paper offers a model of schooling for the future built around new forms of accountability and defined guarantees. What is Edexcel's initial reaction?

### What does Edexcel Think:

- Edexcel believes that the cataloguing of Parent and Pupil Guarantees is to be welcomed as it can create the opportunity to ensure that minimum standards of provision are available for all. Some of the Guarantees, however, will require considerable resourcing while many people will want to know who can they can turn to if they feel a particular Guarantee is not being met
- Edexcel supports any move to strengthen the professional status of teachers. As such it supports the principle behind the proposed renewable licence to teach but believes this is a process that should be managed by headteachers who work with teachers on a daily basis. It further believes that the opportunity should be used to consolidate wider professional development opportunities such as pedagogic research, industrial placements and chartered assessor status within the licensing scheme. It does however agree that there should be external verification and registration of any licensing system to ensure national standing
- Edexcel supports the proposed two year piloting of the School Report Card and is pleased to see that one of the performance categories to be included is that of narrowing gaps in pupil performance; this will help incentivise work in this area. The danger of course is that the Card will be used to make snap judgements on the basis of a simple grading system. To help avoid this, Edexcel suggests that either a statement rather than a grade is used to define a school or that any grades used are contextualised in the text
- Edexcel welcomes the proposals to establish an accreditation system for schools wishing to operate groups of schools but would like to see further research into the costs and benefits of collaborative models. There have been suggestions that responsibilities can become blurred in collaborative arrangements particularly when a range of children's services is added and often the presumption of collaboration needs to be considered on an individual basis
- Edexcel notes with interest the ambition indicated in the paper "*to develop a national formula for 14-19 provision over the longer term*" but is somewhat concerned that this is being considered at the same time as the Department is reviewing the distribution of school funding and trying to establish a commissioning framework for 16-19 funding. This suggests a formula being built from two different starting points

### What is Edexcel doing?

Edexcel submitted a response to the School Report Card consultation in March 2009 and gave witness evidence to the Select Committee Inquiry into Schools Accountability. It will also prepare a response to the forthcoming Ofsted consultation on the School Report Cards and will aim to influence its development so that it can provide a useful tool for users.

Edexcel is working hard to help schools raise performance where necessary. It has, for example, a designated project team working to develop resources and support for National Challenge centres.

Edexcel offers training, guidance and support for schools, colleges, employers and other Edexcel customers across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and internationally. Edexcel also offers a range of online training events for teachers. Programmes are highly interactive, with full use being made

of multimedia elements such as video clips, polls and downloadable resources to keep the learning interesting.

Edexcel offers ResultsPlus Progress, an online diagnostic assessment service, which creates a set of tests that instantly generate teaching group and personalised reports, showing the strengths and weaknesses of students as they progress. This tool is available to all Edexcel centres.

## Background

This White Paper is part of the 14-19 educational reform package currently being implemented. The Paper's roots can be traced back amongst other Papers to the Every Child Matters Green Paper and subsequent long-term Children's Plan. This has as its core aims the improvement and integration of universal services - in early years settings, schools and the health service.

Some of the policy plans in *'Your child, your schools, our future'* are dependent upon the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) being granted Royal Assent. At present, the Bill is working its way through the Houses of Parliament and it is currently at the Committee stage in the House of Lords.

On 14 October 2008, the Secretary of State explained how he wanted to improve schools' performance through the introduction of a new School Report Card. The Report Card will provide a clearer, more balanced and comprehensive account of each school's performance and will complement rather than compete with Ofsted inspection reports.

## Useful links

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=Cm+7588> Link to White Paper

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00664-2009> Link to School Report Card prospectus

<https://www.resultsplusprogress.com/Public/Login.aspx> Link to Results Plus Progress microsite