

Coalition Changes – DCE update March–May 2011

Improving underperforming schools

1. Michael Gove has written to local authorities and academy sponsors asking for their plans to improve schools below the floor standards in their area. In practice:
 - A secondary school will be below the floor if fewer than 35 per cent of pupils achieve the standard of five GCSEs with grades A*-C including English and mathematics - raising the floor by five percentage points - and fewer pupils than the national average make the expected levels of progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in English and mathematics.
 - A primary school will be below the floor if fewer than 60 per cent of pupils achieve the standard of Level 4 in both English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 - raising the floor from 55 percent - and fewer pupils than the national average make the expected levels of progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics.
2. Local authorities had until 15 April to respond. In Wiltshire, there are 12 primary schools and no secondary schools in these categories.

Vocational Education

3. The independent [Wolf Review](#) into vocational education, commissioned by Education Secretary Michael Gove, has been published. Professor Wolf recommends a radical change of direction. There are four main principles for reform:
 - The system must stop 'tracking' 14 to 16 year olds into 'dead-end' courses.
 - The system must be made honest so young people are not pushed into damaging decisions.

- The system must be dramatically simplified to remove perverse incentives.
 - We should learn best practice from countries doing things better than us, such as Denmark, France and Germany.
4. Mr Gove said Prof Wolf's report was "brilliant and ground-breaking". He immediately accepted four of her recommendations:
- To allow qualified further education lecturers to teach in school classrooms on the same basis as qualified school teachers.
 - To clarify the rules on allowing industry professionals to teach in schools.
 - To allow any vocational qualification offered by a regulated awarding body to be taken by 14-to19-year-olds.
 - To allow established high-quality vocational qualifications that have not been accredited to be offered in schools and colleges in September 2011.
5. Mr Gove has now published the [government response](#) which states: "We will take action on all of Professor Wolf's individual recommendations, and in doing so, deliver on three key themes.
- Ensure that all young people study and achieve in English and mathematics, ideally to GCSE A*-C, by the age of 19. For those young people who are not immediately able to achieve these qualifications, we will identify high quality English and maths qualifications that will enable them to progress to GCSE later. We will also reform GCSE to ensure that they are a more reliable indicator of achievement in the basics, in particular by ensuring that GCSEs are reformed alongside our current review of the National Curriculum.
 - Reform performance tables and funding rules to remove the perverse incentives which have served only to devalue vocational education, while pushing young people into qualification routes that do not allow them to move into work or further learning. Those vocational qualifications that attract performance points will be the very best for young people – in terms of their content, assessment and progression.

- Look at the experience of other countries to simplify Apprenticeships, remove bureaucracy and make them easier for employers to offer.

Academies Update

	Date opened
Sponsored academies:	
The Wellington Academy	Sep 2009
Sarum Academy	Sep 2010
Non-sponsored academies:	
Hardenhuish	Sep 2010
Lavington	Jan 2011
South Wilts	Jan 2011
Bishop Wordsworth's	March 2011
Corsham Primary School	April 2011
The Corsham School	April 2011
Sheldon School	April 2011

Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability

6. Sarah Teather, Minister of State for Children and Families has launched a [Green Paper](#) on special educational needs and disability which makes wide-ranging proposals to respond to the frustrations of children and young people, their families and the professionals who work with them. The proposals will be consulted on until 30 June. She suggests:

- a new approach to identifying SEN through a single Early Years setting-based category and school-based category of SEN;
- a new single assessment process and Education, Health and Care Plan by 2014;
- local authorities and other services will set out a local offer of all services available;
- the option of a personal budget by 2014 for all families with children with a statement of SEN or a new Education, Health and Care Plan;
- give parents a real choice of school, either a mainstream or special school; and
- introduce greater independence to the assessment of children's needs.

Child Poverty

7. At the beginning of April the Government published its child poverty strategy – [“A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families’ Lives.”](#) This is the Government’s first national Child Poverty Strategy, setting out a new approach to tackling poverty for this Parliament and up to 2020. At its heart are strengthening families, encouraging responsibility, promoting work, guaranteeing fairness and providing support to the most vulnerable.

Independent Review on Capital Expenditure in Schools

8. Sebastian James, Group Operations Director at Dixons Retail plc, today published his independent **Capital Review**. Mr James reports: -

“In summary, I have found that the system of capital allocation and spending which has developed over at least the last decade has frequently resulted in poor use of resources, a bureaucratic system for providers and Local Authorities and a mixed – and at times poor - outcome for both parents and children.”

School Funding

9. Between 13 April – 25 May, the Government consulted on how school funding can be made fairer. As it stands, the school funding system creates large variations in how much money similar schools in different parts of the country receive. It sought the views of parents, teachers, schools, unions and local authorities about the current system, and asked whether a new system would result in a fairer outcome for schools. This is the first part of a two-stage process, further proposals will be published for consultation later this year.

Independent review into child protection – Munro report

10. On 10 May Professor Munro published her report [“A child-centred system”](#). Taken together, the recommendations cover the following key areas:

- radical reduction in the amount of central prescription to help professionals move from a compliance culture to a learning culture, where they have more freedom to assess need and provide the right help. Statutory guidance should be revised and the inspection process modified to give a clearer focus on children’s needs. Inspection should be unannounced;

- a change of approach to Serious Case Reviews (SCRs), with learning from the approach taken in sectors such as aviation and healthcare. There should be a stronger focus on understanding the underlying issues that made professionals behave the way they did and what prevented them from being able to properly help and protect children. The current system is too focused on what happened, not why;
- reform of social work training and placements with employers and Higher Education Institutions and doing more to prepare social work students for the challenges of child protection work. The work of the Social Work task Force and the Social Work Reform Board should be built upon to improve frontline expertise;
- each local authority should designate a Principal Child and Family Social Worker to report the views and experiences of the front line to all levels of management. At national level, a Chief Social Worker should be established to advise the Government on social work practice;
- local authorities and their statutory partners should be given a new duty to secure sufficient provision of early help services for children, young people and families, leading to better identification of the help that is needed and resulting in an offer of early help;
- affirmation of the importance of clear lines of accountability as set out in the Children Act 2004 and the protection of the roles of Director of Children's Services and Lead Members from additional functions, unless there are exceptional circumstances; and
- strengthened monitoring of the effectiveness of help and protection by Local Safeguarding Children Boards, including multi- agency training for safeguarding and child protection.

11. DfE Ministers have welcomed Professor Munro's thorough analysis of the issues. They want to consider carefully, with professionals, how best to respond to her proposals to bring about reform and expect to develop a response before the summer recess.

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Largely taken from the DFE website.

Appendices

Appendix A

Executive Summary – The Munro Review of Child
Protection: Final Report – A child-centred system