

Coalition Changes – DCE update September to November 2011

Parents to be given new freedoms to run their local children's centres

1. Parents and communities are to be given the freedom to run their local children's centre. The Government will consult in the autumn on changes to children's centres, including proposals that will enable parents and community groups to apply to their local authority to run a children's centre in their local area. Under the plans, local authorities, not the Government, would have the final say on whether projects go ahead.
2. The Government also confirmed that a further 18 local authorities will trial payment by results for children's centres. Together with the first wave announced in July, 27 local authorities will be testing rewards for reaching the most vulnerable families, improving family health and wellbeing and raising attainment of children at age five.

Government sets out which two-year-olds will be eligible for free early education

3. In October 2010, the Government announced, as part of the Fairness Premium, that it will extend the free entitlement of 15 hours per week – available to every three and four year old – to all disadvantaged two year olds. Plans, to be consulted on this autumn, will propose that the criteria for measuring disadvantage should match the criteria used to assess free school meals eligibility. The Government also wants local authorities to provide free early education for all two year olds who are looked after by the state. In total, approximately 140,000 two year olds each year will be able to benefit from an extra year of free early education from 2013. Under the plans, £331m will be available to local authorities in 2013-14 to fund places for two year olds. The Government wants local authorities to consider giving places to other two year olds who may get particular benefit – especially children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Review to improve the training and qualifications for people working in the early years

4. An independent review to strengthen the training, qualifications and career opportunities of people working in early education and childcare was launched at the end of October. The review will run until December 2011 and will look at:

- The content of early years and childcare qualifications and training courses to improve the skills, knowledge and experience of early years professionals.
- Career progression and motivation in the early years workforce.
- The development of a range of qualifications to meet the needs of all professionals, at every stage of their career.
- The high standards and quality that are needed to meet the needs of children, families, workers and employers in the early years sector.
- Raising the status of early education and childcare.

Free parenting classes

5. Central government will trial free parenting classes in three areas of the country, aiming to reach over 50,000 parents. The trials will run in Middlesbrough, High Peak in Derbyshire and Camden. They will be available for all parents of children aged five years and under. Mothers and fathers will be offered vouchers to pay for classes in the three areas. Organisations and services with a proven record of delivering parenting support will be asked to bid to run the classes.
6. The classes are likely to cover:
 - how to promote positive behaviour with better communication and listening skills;
 - managing conflict;
 - the importance of mothers and fathers working as a team;
 - the appropriate play for age/development;
 - understanding the importance of boundaries and routines to children;
 - firm, fair and consistent approaches to discipline; and
 - strengthening positive relationships in the family.
7. The classes will start in summer 2012 and the trial will run for two years.

Revised school admissions and appeals codes

8. Revised [school admissions and appeals codes](#) have been published following a 12-week consultation on proposals to overhaul the current system. The existing codes were considered too complex, confusing and unfair for parents. The consultation received more than 1,300 responses, 700 from parents who broadly welcomed the changes being made to the codes. Key proposals include:
 - giving adopted children who were previously in care the same, highest priority for places as looked-after children
 - introducing a 'national offer day' for primary places, mirroring that for secondary offers

- giving greater freedom to schools to increase the number of places they are able to offer to parents
- allowing schools to prioritise the children of staff employed there for two or more years, or who will meet a skills shortage
- allowing infant classes to exceed the statutory limit where the 31st child is a twin or from multiple births, or of armed forces personnel
- allowing academies to prioritise disadvantaged children who are eligible for the Pupil Premium
- allowing schools to take direct applications from parents to help reduce delays in finding a school place once term starts.

School Funding for vulnerable pupils set to double

9. Children's Minister Sarah Teather confirmed that the total funding available for the Pupil Premium will be £1.25bn in 2012-13. This is a rise from £625m in 2011-12, and will rise again each year until 2014-15 when it will be worth £2.5bn.
10. Per pupil allocations and how the Pupil Premium will be distributed in 2012-13 has not yet been finalised.
11. From this year the school performance tables will include information that holds schools better to account for the contribution they make towards narrowing the gap in attainment between pupils from low income families and their more advantaged peers. This will also help demonstrate the impact of the Pupil Premium.
12. Funding for FSM pupils are set to benefit from an extra £58 each for 2011-12 after the Department for Education announced this year's Pupil Premium will increase to £488. The money has been released because fewer-than-expected children have registered for FSMs this year.

New phonics check

13. The check was piloted in 300 schools this summer and will be rolled out across England next year. All Year 1 pupils will be screened between 18 and 22 June 2012. The check involves teachers taking pupils through a booklet of 40 words on a one-to-one basis.

Behaviour checklist to help teachers maintain discipline in school

14. A simple checklist of what schools can do to instil good behaviour in the classroom has been developed and published by Charlie Taylor - the headteacher of a special school with some of the toughest behaviour issues and the Government's Expert Adviser on behaviour.
15. The behaviour checklist – titled [“Getting the simple things right”](#) – follows Charlie Taylor's recent behaviour summit, where outstanding headteachers from schools in areas of high deprivation gathered to discuss the key principles for improving behaviour. Many of them

emphasised the simplicity of their approach but they agreed that most important of all was consistency. Actions from the checklist include:

- Ensuring absolute clarity about the expected standard of pupils' behaviour.
- Displaying school rules clearly in classes and around the building. Staff and pupils should know what they are.
- Ensuring that children actually receive rewards every time they have earned them and receive a sanction every time they behave badly.
- Taking action to deal with poor teaching or staff who fail to follow the behaviour policy.
- Ensuring pupils come in from the playground and move around the school in an orderly manner.
- Ensuring that the senior leadership team like the head and assistant head are a visible presence around the school during the day, including in the lunch hall and playground, and are not confined to offices.

Summer School Programme

16. The Deputy Prime Minister announced a new £50 million pupil premium summer school programme to help the most disadvantaged pupils make the transition from primary to secondary school. The scheme will benefit up to 100,000 pupils per year. They will benefit from two weeks of additional teaching through the scheme.
17. The new summer schools will allow schools to pick the pupils in danger of falling back and provide them with two weeks of support and catch-up, so that they start secondary school ready to learn. All pupils eligible for free school meals who are making the transition between primary and secondary school in September 2012 will attract the extra funding. Schools will make a judgement on which pupils need extra support in making the transition.

Standards and Testing Agency

18. The Standards and Testing Agency (STA), a new executive agency of the Department for Education, commenced operating on 3rd October. The STA will be responsible for the development and delivery of all statutory assessments from early years to the end of Key Stage 3. This work was previously carried out by the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, which – subject to the will of Parliament – will cease its final remaining functions in March 2012.

Vocational qualifications to be judged against strict new rules

19. Only high quality, rigorous vocational qualifications will count in performance tables, and they will be included on a one-for-one basis with academic qualifications, under new guidance announced by the Department for Education. From 2014 only vocational qualifications that

meet strict new criteria will be recognised in the tables. GCSEs, established iGCSEs and AS Levels will continue to be included. All these qualifications will count equally on a one-for-one basis. Qualifications will only count if:

- they offer pupils proven progression into a broad range of further qualifications or careers post-16, rather than narrowing students' options
- they are the size of a GCSE or bigger
- they have a substantial proportion of external assessment and require students to use knowledge across their subject
- they have grades such as A*-G (those with simple pass or fail results will be excluded).

Consultation on Teacher Recruitment

20. The Department for Education has launched a consultation on proposals to allow schools to appoint the talented and experienced teachers they need. The changes would see bureaucracy reduced so that fully qualified teachers from the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and further education teachers are more easily permitted to teach in schools as qualified teachers without further training or assessment, or serving statutory induction. Recognising QTLS status and certain overseas teaching qualifications will require a change in the law. Subject to the public consultation and parliamentary process, we anticipate that revised regulations will come into effect from April 2012. Until these changes are made, the existing regulations will remain in force. The [consultation](#) will close on 16 December.

School Building Regulations

21. Ministers are consulting on simplifying and reducing the regulations around school buildings, as part of the independent Capital Review recommendations, which proposed how to build and maintain school buildings better and more cost effectively. The new proposals provide strong safeguards, especially for vulnerable pupils, but free up schools to take a more common sense approach.
22. Under the new proposals, the same regulations will apply to all schools. The relevant supporting guidance will also be simplified, going from 32 pages to just eight pages of clear and concise advice. A further 5,000 pages of other guidance on school buildings will be reduced next year, by around 75 per cent. The premises regulations consultation, including the proposed revised guidance, can be found on the DFE [consultations website](#). It closes on 26 January 2012.

Proposals to overhaul post-16 education

23. [Consultations](#) have been launched (closing date 4 January 2012) by the Department for Education and the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) which recommend that:
- The complex funding system should be simplified and made fairer so it works in favour of students. Schools and colleges will be funded on a per student basis rather than per qualification.
 - All students aged 16 to 19 without a grade C or better in GCSE English and maths should continue to study those subjects. This year's annual skills survey from the CBI found that more than two-fifths of employers were not satisfied with the basic literacy of school and college leavers.

Voluntary and community organisations helping children with special educational needs and disabilities

24. Voluntary and community organisations will help deliver key reforms to support children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities, and their parents.
25. At the beginning of November, Children's Minister Sarah Teather announced contracts involving voluntary and community organisations which will deliver the support, including the Council for Disabled Children and I CAN, the children's communication charity. The organisations will support the delivery of short breaks, provide greater information and help to parents, and help disabled young people and those with SEN prepare for employment, training and independent living after they leave school. Funding of around £6 million a year has been provided for two years to deliver the support.

Academies Update

			Date opened
	Sponsored academies:		
1	The Wellington Academy	Salisbury	September 2009
2	Sarum Academy	Salisbury	September 2010
	Non-sponsored academies:		
3	Hardenhuish	Chippenham	September 2010
4	Lavington	Lavington	January 2011
5	South Wilts	Salisbury	January 2011
6	Bishop Wordsworth's	Salisbury	March 2011
7	Corsham Primary School	Corsham	April 2011
8	The Corsham School	Corsham	April 2011
9	Sheldon School	Chippenham	April 2011
10	Pewsey Vale	Pewsey	July 2011
11	Wootton Bassett	Wootton Bassett	July 2011
12	Kingdown School	Warminster	August 2011

13	St Laurence	Bradford on Avon	August 2011
14	Malmesbury	Malmesbury	August 2011
15	The Holy Trinity School	Great Cheverell	September 2011
16	Saint Edmund's Catholic Academy	Calne	September 2011
17	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	Devizes	September 2011
18	St Augustine's Catholic School	Trowbridge	September 2011
19	Springfields School	Calne	September 2011
20	The John Bentley	Calne	November 2011

£11 million to fund new online and telephone family support services

26. Family organisations, including Relate, Netmums and Gingerbread, will receive Government funding to deliver national online and telephone support services. The Government is providing up to £11 million to eleven voluntary and community organisations to deliver the support. Specialist organisations including the Family Rights Group, Young Minds and Contact a Family are among those benefiting from the funding.
27. Families will benefit from a range of support including relationship advice, services tailored specifically for fathers, helping single parents get back to work, advice on education issues such as exclusions and information about benefits. Families who need it can also get specialist support – such as parents of disabled children and those with special educational needs and parents whose children have mental health or behaviour problems.

Local authorities challenged to do better on adoption

28. The Government has published the tables for the first time ranking every local authority in England on key issues, including how quickly they place children for adoption. In 2010/11, Wiltshire achieved 85% of its adoptions within 12 months of “the best interest decision to adopt” which is well above average performance.
29. The Government wants to overhaul the care and adoption system to improve chances for vulnerable children. The Education Secretary has a range of powers to intervene in local authorities which are failing to fulfil their statutory duties as corporate parents. The Department will be monitoring progress on local authority performance and will update the tables with the most recent statistics later in the year.
30. The Government has also published a new [Adopters' Charter](#), which sets out clear principles on how prospective adopters should be treated. It tackles the persistent myths that people who smoke, are

single, or are overweight cannot foster and adopt children. Local authorities must not automatically exclude people on these grounds.

Guidance on safeguarding children who may have been trafficked

31. Updated guidance, [Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked](#), was published jointly by the Home Office and the Department for Education. The guidance makes clear that trafficked children who are forced into sexual exploitation, coerced into committing crimes or used by adults to commit offences are treated by the police and CPS as victims of crime. Where children are found to be trafficked their safety and welfare needs must be urgently addressed. This guidance will help local agencies, including local authorities, NHS bodies and the police, to address this abuse effectively.

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Largely taken from the DFE website content up to 4 November 2011

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