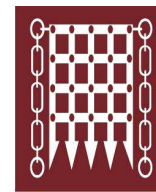


Westminster Education Forum Keynote Seminar: Expanding free schools and academies: impact, accountability and the future of England's school system

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 12th November 2015

Venue: Glaziers Hall, 9 Montague Close, London SE1 9DD

Agenda subject to change



**WESTMINSTER
EDUCATION
FORUM**

- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chair's opening remarks**
Ian McVicar, Policy Adviser, Department for Education
- 9.05 - 9.35 **The changing landscape of England's school system**
Mela Watts, Director, Free Schools Group, Department for Education
Dr Tim Coulson, Regional Schools Commissioner for East of England and North-East London
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.35 - 10.25 **Expansion of free schools and academies - impact on school places, teacher recruitment and other schools**
With the Government committed to creating 500 new free schools, what will be the impact on the availability of school places, particularly in the primary sector, and on staff recruitment and more widely for surrounding schools? How should the Government address concerns that free schools are not being built in areas in need of additional places? What impact will the establishment of more free schools have on pupil numbers and resources in neighbouring and maintained schools within the locality of the new schools? How effectively will proposals in the Education Bill for coasting schools that do not show signs of improvement and schools rated 'inadequate' to be converted into academies contribute to the Government's aim of improving overall schools standards, and how should Government address concerns that this approach will deter prospective headteachers from taking up headships? What steps could be taken to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of outstanding heads and sponsors willing to take over schools that receive academy conversion orders?
Dr Peter Kent, Immediate Past President, ASCL
Jack Worth, Research Manager, NFER
Dr Robin Bevan, Headteacher, Southend High School for Boys, Essex and Elected National Executive Member for School and College Leadership, ATL
Hywel Jones, Headteacher, West London Free School
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.25 - 10.30 **Chair's closing remarks**
Ian McVicar, Policy Adviser, Department for Education
- 10.30 - 10.55 Coffee
- 10.55 - 11.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Suella Fernandes MP, Member, Education Select Committee
- 11.00 - 12.00 **The future accountability and oversight of free schools and academies**
What impact has the introduction of Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) and Headteacher Boards (HTBs) had so far in strengthening the accountability of free schools and academies? In light of their expected further expansion, will the existing accountability structure of eight RSCs supported by Headteacher Boards have the capacity to oversee the increased number of schools? Should Ofsted's remit be further extended to provide judgement on academy chains after being inspected; what other steps could be taken to strengthen the scrutiny of academy sponsors? In light of recent financial mismanagement concerns in some schools, what could be done in order to strengthen financial oversight of free schools and academies? How can the transparency of free schools and academies be improved; should a common approach to accountability be adopted?
Natasha Porter, Deputy Head of Education, Policy Exchange
Hugh Greenway, Chief Executive, Elliot Foundation
Dr Melanie Ehren, Reader in Educational Accountability and Improvement, Institute of Education, University College London
Alan Yellup, Chief Executive Officer, Wakefield City Academies Trust and Elected Member, Headteacher Board, West Yorkshire and Lancashire
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.00 - 12.55 **England's school system going forward: the role of local authorities and other providers - and options for collaboration**
How are local authorities reshaping their educational role in light of the increased number of schools outside their control? In light of the expected further establishment of free schools and academies, what is the future for maintained schools in an increasingly academised school system? With the decision to allow the Weald of Kent school to build an 'annex' in a neighbouring town, what should be the future ground rules for expansion of grammar schools be allowed to expand - including parental demand? How should Government respond to concerns, such as those raised by the Social Integration Commission, that faith schools can create segregation in the schools system? What role should independent schools play in an increasingly competitive schools market with a diverse range of school types? Will provisions in the Education Bill aimed at encouraging outstanding schools to assist the improvement of coasting and schools rated 'inadequate' facilitate more collaborative partnerships between schools? How can Government support and incentivise collaborative partnerships and the sharing of best practice to improve standards? What would be the likely impact of extending academy freedoms to all schools? Should innovative providers from abroad be encouraged to open up new schools to promote innovation in the school system?
Barry Sindall, Chief Executive, Grammar School Heads' Association
Nick Cross, Director of School Improvement, Kent Catholic Schools Partnership
Alice Phillips, former President, Girls' Schools Association (2014) and Headmistress, St Catherine's School, Bramley, Surrey
John Fowler, Policy Manager, Local Government Information Unit
Questions and comments from the floor with **Paul Barber**, Chief Executive, Catholic Education Service
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chair's and Westminster Education Forum closing remarks**
Suella Fernandes MP, Member, Education Select Committee
Dieuni Welihinda, Forum Lead, Westminster Education Forum