

Westminster Education Forum policy conference:

Next steps for England's school system

Timing: Morning, Wednesday, 5th November 2025

Taking place online

Draft agenda subject to change



- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Lord Watson of Invergowrie
- 9.05 **The school system in England - current state of play, key challenges and emerging opportunities**
Professor Anne West, Professor, Education Policy, London School of Economics and Political Science
- 9.15 **Assessing the potential impact of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill on England's school system**
role of local authorities in admissions processes and oversight moving forward / local authority, MAT and school collaboration / priorities for school autonomy, accountability and data-sharing / balancing new responsibilities with resource and capacity constraints / managing local authority oversight and school autonomy / impact of the extension of national curriculum requirements of academies / intervention and improvement strategies and the future role of RISE teams
Julie McCulloch, Senior Director, Strategy, Policy and Professional Development, Association of School and College Leaders
Professor Mark Boylan, Professor of Education, Sheffield Institute of Education, Sheffield Hallam University
Senior representative, multi-academy trust
Senior representative, local authority
Senior representative, legal
- 9.40 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.05 **Priorities for developing local authority capacity to fulfil expanded oversight responsibilities**
Councillor Arooj Shah, Leader, Oldham Council; and Chair, Children and Young People Board, Local Government Association
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.25 **Chair's closing remarks**
Lord Watson of Invergowrie
- 10.30 Break
- 10.40 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentary
- 10.45 **Assessing the role of multi-academy trusts in school improvement moving forward**
Senior representative, multi-academy trust
- 10.55 **Priorities for multi-academy trust inspection, capacity and governance moving forward**
assessing models for trust-level inspection and regulation / improving trust-level accountability and transparency / preserving individual school identity within trust structures / trust funding and capacity moving forward / strengthening safeguarding and leadership across trusts / supporting strong governance structures / aligning trust funding mechanisms with system-wide priorities
Mark Blackman, Director, Leadership Together
Louise Stevenson, Headteacher, St Mary's C of E School, Cornwall
Rachel Barrett, Head, Academies and Business Services Director, Duncan & Toplis
Julian Scholefield, Chief Executive, Esteem Multi-Academy Trust
Senior representative, local authority
- 11.20 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.40 **The future for home education - assessing proposals for registration and suitability requirements, and defining and assessing suitable education**
Wendy Charles-Warner, Co-Chair, Education Otherwise
Professor Jonathan Glazzard, Professor, Education for Social Justice, University of Hull
- 11.50 **The role of selective and faith schools in the school system moving forward**
potential impact of proposed changes to faith school admissions / priorities for the creation of new voluntary aided schools, including approval processes, funding models and oversight / ensuring fair access to and inclusion in selective schools / strategies for improving inclusivity and community cohesion / balancing religious ethos with national curriculum and secular frameworks / ensuring transparency and oversight in the governance of faith and selective schools / priorities for safeguarding and educational standards
Senior representative, faith school
Senior representative, selective school
Senior commentator
- 12.05 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **Policy priorities for England's school system moving forward**
Paul Cohen, Deputy Director, Regulation and Quality Division, Schools Group, Department for Education
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Education Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentary
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Education Forum