

## Westminster Education Forum policy conference:

### Next steps for England's school system

Timing: Morning, Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> 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  
**Elizabeth Funge**, Assistant Director, Education, East Sussex County Council  
Senior representative, multi-academy trust  
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*  
**Professor Stephen Gorard**, Director, Durham University Evidence Centre for Education; and Professor, Education and Public Policy, Durham University  
Senior representative, faith school  
Senior representative, selective school
- 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