

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

18 MAY 2016

**STATEMENT OF SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS PORTFOLIO HOLDER****COUNTY COUNCILLOR ARTHUR BARKER****White Paper “Educational Excellence Everywhere”**

The White Paper “Educational Excellence Everywhere” was published in March. It contained a clear statement of intent by Government regarding a direction of travel towards a fully academised system. For areas such as North Yorkshire, where the numbers of existing academies are very small (8%), the challenge is to ensure schools are in good, productive and quality arrangements which will secure improvement as well as retaining appropriate levels of autonomy.

There is no doubt that the ambitious language in the White Paper - which recognises how “education unlocks opportunity helping children from all backgrounds to shape their own destiny” - is one we recognise and particularly share.

The White Paper was the subject of considerable national and local debate. The Leader and myself joined the debate writing to the Secretary of State to express concern not about the ambition expressed but about both the proposed compulsion approach to conversion and additionally the potential impact on small schools.

By 6 May government had reflected further and announced that they had decided that, while reaffirming their continued determination to see all schools become academies in the next six years, it is not necessary to bring legislation to achieve blanket conversion of all schools. They propose use of existing powers for conversion as well as two new powers where

- it is clear that the local authority can no longer viably support its remaining schools because a critical mass of schools in that area has converted
- the local authority consistently fails to meet a minimum performance threshold across its schools, demonstrating an inability to bring about meaningful school improvement

Neither of these descriptors are currently applicable to North Yorkshire.

**School Funding**

In March, the DfE launched the first part of a two-stage consultation on a national funding formula. This consultation kept very much to principles but allowed us to gain some insight into the government’s longer term plans.

We have lobbied for a number of years now for a fairer distribution of school funding across England and it looks likely that the details – when available later this year – will confirm a move towards this. However we do have some concerns if the government moves to allocate funding direct to every school in the country – without any local input – from April 2019. In particular they have suggested getting rid of a “mobility” factor which is absolutely necessary at schools in North Yorkshire with high pupil turnover. This is an issue for those supporting service families or in areas with seasonal employment trends. We also have concerns about the simplistic way of calculating sparsity which does not take account of the nature of North Yorkshire and such geographic barriers as rivers, dales, moors and hills.

Our response noted these concerns and we await with interest the government's reply to these, along with the details in stage two. The proposals will also have an (as yet unquantified) impact on the council's overall finances and services as it seeks to restrict the local decision-making abilities of the North Yorkshire Education Partnership and County Council in setting budgets.

### **School Organisation**

Following the County Council's decision following consultation to publish statutory proposals to amalgamate Selby High School and Brayton High School, the Regional Schools Commissioner published an academy order authorising Brayton High School to enter into a Multi Academy Trust with Rodillian Academy Trust in Wakefield. Statutory proposals for amalgamation have therefore not been published. Brayton governors are now consulting parents on the Academy proposal which is expected to take effect in September 2016.

As a result of the publication of the White Paper in March, it was decided to suspend decision-making, following initial consultation, on a proposal to amalgamate Caedmon College Whitby and Eskdale School. Governors of both schools, with the support of the local authority, will consider alternative options during the summer term.

### **School Ofsted inspection outcomes**

The percentage of schools graded as good or outstanding by Ofsted continues to be an improving picture with all indicators now above national averages for the first time. As at 1 April 2016, 86.8% of North Yorkshire's primary schools are graded as good or outstanding which is just above the national figure of 86.7%, and 82.5% of secondary schools are good or outstanding, which remains considerably better than the national figure of 75.8%.

The percentage of pupils attending a good or outstanding school has also increased and at a faster rate than the national rate. As of 1 April 2016, 87.1% of North Yorkshire's primary school pupils attended a good or outstanding school (better than the national figure of 85.8%). 85.5% of North Yorkshire's secondary pupils attend a good or outstanding school, which again is higher than the national figure of 78.9%.

There are now three primary schools that are inadequate and none in secondary. Moorside Infants received a judgement of inadequate in inspection during March. The other two schools are Hawes Community Primary and Richmond CE Primary Schools. In all cases the LA is working closely with the DfE, the schools and potential academy sponsors.

**County Councillor Arthur Barker**  
**Executive Member for Schools and Early Years**