

THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ROLE IN THE LOCAL EDUCATION SCHOOL SYSTEM

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Education Advisory Board

Core aims

- To set out the future role of the LA in relation to children, with a coherent set of expectations and responsibilities,
- To ensure LAs have the right powers and levers to carry out those responsibilities effectively,
- To consider the necessary transition and implementation arrangements for LAs to help them manage change over the coming months and years.

Accountability

A local:national balance

What do we want to achieve together?

- We want all schools to be good and on the way to excellent
- We want all teachers to be performing at the levels achieved by the best in the profession
- We want all pupils to be achieving at or beyond identified potential
- We want parents to have access to a good range of schools for their children, and to be content that even if their first preference is not possible the place they take up is a good one
- We want the breadth and range of pedagogy in our schools to be informed by, and reflective of, the best in the UK and wider world. This should be underpinned by the latest research on how children's brains develop and teaching and learning

What do school say they want?

- A reliable supply of high quality teachers and school leaders;
- A clear community commitment – from politicians, parents and officials – that education is an absolute priority for our children and young people and it is valued highly locally;
- A predictable and reliable framework of resource allocation over a reasonable planning period, even taking into account the current economic situation;
- Access to information about how schools perform – across all dimensions, not just in examinations;
- Exhortation and encouragement for schools to work in collaborative partnerships. It remains the case, that however independent, autonomous or self-managing a school is, its prime duty is to its pupils on roll, but it has a broader responsibility to the wider community of pupils in the area it serves – particularly those all of us recognise have particular and specific needs or abilities;
- Knowledge that the system is responsive to changes in demand over time and specifically school places are in sufficient supply;
- Information about and access to providers of high quality services such as ICT, Finance and HR; and
- Clear leadership from local politicians on the critical importance of education and the high expectation and ambition they have for all schools and all students. This is a clear and immutable moral responsibility of elected politicians.

Central Government's role

- the economic case for investment,
- a clear resource base for all schools,
- promotion of the criticality of a successful school system for the future of our economy,
- the framework of standards it expects young people to achieve and the assessment framework of progress toward its levels,
- a reliable supply of skilled teaching and allied staff through a national plan,
- the anchor for the centrality of education for all individuals in the culture of our civil and social society, and
- beat the moral drum for high ambition and the celebration of the success of our school system.

Local government's role

- The job of local government is to ensure national policy can be implemented effectively by ensuring it is delivered through a lens of compound local factors and needs supported by local pride and determination for all pupils to do well in all schools.
- The local authority does not run or manage any school, consequently no school (church, academy, free school, community, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, special or nursery) should see the local authority as anything other than the voice of support, encouragement and celebration to the community of schools.

Challenges

- School autonomy and independence
- School improvement
- Curtailing independence
- Resources

Because only local government.....

- has authority through the ballot box
- carries the ambition of residents for a local education service,
- is linked closely to every school irrespective of constitutional status, by virtue of its role as the Children Services Authority,
- is the body which local people expect to "do something" to ensure public money is used wisely and local children are provided with quality education,
- has access to funding for capital development via regeneration,
- has a view beyond the interest of one school or a group of schools,
- has strategic planning reach taking account of what is happening beyond its boundary,
- has a statutory duty toward each and every child in its area irrespective of the school they attend – "your schools, but our children!"

The LA of tomorrow

Ambition and Challenge

To advocate for high standards of pupil attainment celebrate and promote success of the system and to be timely in identifying and ensuring an effective response at the first sign of an institution beginning to struggle.

Equity and Cohesion

To ensure sufficient places and arrangements are available, particularly for vulnerable, able and disabled children; that they are offered on a transparent and fair basis; and for ensuring a range of school types is available for parents to express a preference for.

Regulation and fidelity

To ensure children are attending school or educated otherwise; for child protection issues to be consistently and effectively dealt with; and resources are spent on the purposes they were provided for

The General Election 2017

Irrespective of the result, the new government must

- make clear what the role of the local authority is.
- The dire position of school funding;
- the serious problems we face in ensuring a continuing supply of high quality teachers (especially in the STEM and language subjects) and head teachers;
- the increasing irrelevance of the national curriculum

indicate the priority areas the new government should focus on.

Their focus should be on ensuring that what happens in the classroom is of the highest possible standard-many other things to do with structures, national assessment tweaks and teaching style fads are just noise alongside the critical path to a world class school education system.

In my view achieving that is made more difficult if local authorities are not the key strategic partner of national government.
