



## Next steps for England's school system

the future for multi-academy trusts | quality, governance and growth | regulatory reform and accountability | meeting local needs | raising attainment

Morning, Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Westminster Education Forum policy conference **taking place online**

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with

**Hannah Woodhouse**, Regional Director for South West Regions Group, Department for Education

**Leora Cruddas**, Chief Executive, Confederation of School Trusts

and

**Mark Greatrex**, *Bellevue Place Education Trust*; **Vicki Hair**, *Browne Jacobson*; **Emma Knights**, *National Governance Association*; **Stephen Munday**, *The Cam Academy Trust*; **Jane Peckham**, *NASUWT*; **Sylvia Tai**, *Watford Grammar School for Girls*

This conference will focus on the future of the school system in England, with Government setting out plans in 2022 for all schools to either be part of or have plans to join a multi-academy trust (MAT) by 2030.

It takes place following the Department for Education's published guidance on *Commissioning High-Quality Trusts*, detailing how decisions will be made regarding the creation, consolidation, and growth of academy trusts.

It will be an opportunity to bring stakeholders together with policymakers to explore the shape and design of the school system in England, looking at meeting local needs and whether the focus should be on growing trusts, the ways in which school and trust leaders can work collaboratively with Government and local authorities, and how the quality of trusts can be measured through the new framework.

The conference also takes place following:

- the DfE's *Academies Regulatory and Commissioning Review*, which focused on regulatory reform, as well as the commitment to create new regional 'development networks' to support growing trusts
- the opening of applications for the Trust Capacity Fund to encourage academy trusts to take on schools from underperforming areas
- the creation of 15 new free schools by the DfE in areas of the country where education outcomes are considered to be the weakest

Delegates will also have the opportunity to consider the role of MATs in curriculum design and raising attainment, as well as the regulation and governance of trusts moving forward amid rising concerns surrounding accountability.

Further sessions will discuss the DfE's decision not to introduce Ofsted inspections for MATs, following Ofsted's review which found that the current inspection model does not hold MATs 'sufficiently accountable'.

Overall, the agenda includes discussion on:

- **quality and growth**: exploring best practice for the growth, consolidation and creation of trusts - assessing the growing role of MATs and the power held by their leaders
- **regulation of trusts**: the impact of Ofsted's limited power to inspect beyond school-level - opportunities and challenges of a suggested single independent regulator to investigate the quality of trusts
- **accountability**: the role of Ofsted moving forward - creating strong trust governance - examining the use of feedback from parents and local authorities within trust decision-making
- **the conversion process**: opportunities and challenges with conversion - supporting the incorporation of struggling schools - examining the process of matching schools
- **attainment**: the role trusts can play in raising attainment and engagement of pupils - supporting and improving struggling schools - aligning school and trust provision with the needs of local communities
- **the wider school system**: individual school identity within trusts - the future place and role of single-academy and smaller trusts, individual schools, faith and selective schools

- **the future of England's school system:** key policy priorities moving forward - implementing best practice approaches in the continued growth of trusts

[\[jump to more detail on the discussion\]](#)

The conference will be an opportunity for stakeholders to consider the issues alongside key policy officials from the CMA; DfE; HMRC; Home Office; NAO; and Ofsted.

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## The agenda:

*Draft, subject to change*

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **The regulation and governance of trusts moving forward**  
**Leora Cruddas**, Chief Executive, Confederation of School Trusts  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 Break
- 9.35 **Assessing what makes high quality trusts and the future shape of the school system - the future of individual schools and smaller trusts, the role trusts can play in raising attainment, and meeting the needs of local communities**  
**Stephen Munday**, Chief Executive and President, The Cam Academy Trust  
**Sylvia Tai**, Headmistress, Watford Grammar School for Girls  
**Jane Peckham**, Deputy General Secretary, NASUWT  
Senior academic  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.30 **Chair's closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.35 Break
- 10.45 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.50 **Holding trusts to account and creating strong governance**  
**Emma Knights**, Co-Chief Executive, National Governance Association  
Senior representative, parent/guardian group  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.25 **Implementing a trust-based school system - the school conversion process, supporting and incorporating struggling schools, individual school identity within trusts, and the future place of faith and selective schools**  
**Mark Greatrex**, Chief Executive, Bellevue Place Education Trust  
**Vicki Hair**, Associate, Browne Jacobson  
Senior representative, local authority  
Senior representative, selective school  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.25 Break
- 12.30 **England's school system - key policy priorities moving forward**  
**Hannah Woodhouse**, Regional Director for South West Regions Group, Department for Education  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Education Forum closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian  
**Sean Cudmore**, Deputy Editor, Westminster Education Forum

Additional senior participants are being approached, but if you or a colleague would like to be considered as a speaker at this seminar, please contact us at [speakeroffers@forumsupport.co.uk](mailto:speakeroffers@forumsupport.co.uk) specifying the event and session where you would like to speak and we'll get back to you as soon as possible. If you are offering to speak yourself please don't fill in the booking form, as this will be taken as an order and you will be charged for a place subject to our T&Cs.

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## Relevant developments:

- [How multi-academy trusts are involved in school inspections](#) - report published by Ofsted in April 2023

- [Trust capacity fund](#) - updated DfE guidance published in July 2023, on expanding MATs to include under-performing schools, with a focus on education investment areas
  - o the application window is open until October 2024
- [Commissioning High-Quality Trusts: How the Department for Education's Regions Group takes decisions about the creation, consolidation and growth of academy trusts](#) - DfE report published in July 2023
- [Academies Regulatory and Commissioning Review](#) - published by DfE in March 2023, examining how the trust system can be improved, looking at:
  - o the oversight the department sets for trusts
  - o decision-making processes and evolving the sector
  - o how support is offered to trust leaders
- [Breaking down the barriers to opportunity](#) - announced as one of Labour's five national missions in July 2023, with aims to:
  - o boost childhood development with 500k more children reaching the early learning goals by 2030
  - o work with Ofsted to bring Multi-Academy Trusts into the remit of inspection
- [Building strong trusts: assurance framework draft](#) - published by CST in June 2023, building on DfE's Trust Quality Descriptions, with the aim to support the sector in building organisational resilience

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Once submitted, this will be taken as a confirmed booking and will be subject to our terms and conditions below.

You can also pay in advance by credit card on 01344 864796. If advance credit card payment is not possible, please let me know and we may be able to make other arrangements.

Options and charges are as follows:

- Access to *Next steps for England's school system* (plus a permanent record of proceedings) is **£260** plus VAT per delegate
- Concessionary rate places for small charities, unfunded individuals and those in similar circumstances are **£115** plus VAT. Please be sure to apply for this at the time of booking.

For those who cannot attend on the day:

- full transcripts of all presentations, the questions and comments sessions, and further articles from interested parties, will be available [via our website](#) approximately 12 days after the event for **£95** plus VAT
- Concessionary rate: **£50** plus VAT

If you find the charge for places a barrier to attending:

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- typical eligibility: individual service users or carers not supported by or part of an organisation, full-time students, unemployed and fully retired people with no paid work, and small charities
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