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**ASCL response to Labour’s National Education Strategy consultation**

1. **Introduction**

The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents over 19,000 education system leaders, heads, principals, deputies, vice-principals, assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of state-funded and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. ASCL members are responsible for the education of more than four million young people in more than 90 per cent of the secondary and tertiary phases, and in an increasing proportion of the primary phase.

ASCL welcomes the opportunity to respond to this important consultation. Rather than respond to every question in the consultation individually, we have instead taken the opportunity to articulate below our vision for a world-class education, our key concerns about the current system in England, and some recommendations for an incoming Labour government.

We hope this is a useful contribution to the debate. We would be delighted to discuss anything in this document in more detail, and to explore other ways in which we could support Labour’s work in this area.

1. **Leading the way: a blueprint for a self-improving system**

ASCL’s vision for a world-class, self-improving education system, and the actions needed to achieve this, are set out in our 2015 policy document [*Leading the Way: A Blueprint for a Self-Improving System*](https://www.ascl.org.uk/policy/blueprint-for-selfimproving-system/).

**Principles**

The Blueprint is based on the following principles, which we believe are fundamental to unleashing greatness in our education system:

* **Quality and equality**: A good education for all is a central principle of our Blueprint. We believe achievement can be realised at scale for all children and young people. We reject determinism either by social background or by perceived intelligence.
* **Accountability**: The highest form of accountability is the individual’s professional accountability for the quality of his or her own work and to the people who the profession serves. In a self-improving system, we believe that teachers and school leaders must be agents of their own accountability. The role of the state is to determine the accountability measures in the interests of the parents and the wider community, incentivising policies and behaviours that contribute to a high-quality education for all. The role of governing boards in holding schools and their leaders to account is central to a self-improving system.
* **Evidence**: We believe that there is a need for a strong system for analysing evidence so that it can be informed by professional expertise to improve the quality of practice and outcomes for students. Both policy and practice should be evidence-informed.
* **Emergence**: Our education system must prepare young people for life in a global, digitised community whilst continuing to equip them with core skills and an understanding of the best that has been thought and said. So education must both improve and innovate to stay relevant – it must both do things better and do things differently. A whole generation of children and young people are growing up using mobile devices and social media in an information age – their expectations will grow quickly. Pedagogical development is therefore both inevitable and necessary, but it will rightly build on the solid foundations that most schools have in place.
* **Collaboration and partnership**: There is a strong correlation between collaborative cultures and system success. We believe in continuous improvement through principled strategic partnerships: as government steps back, schools will need to operate in such partnerships if they are to build capacity and address system-wide challenges such as succession planning. School systems improve when the quality of teaching improves – partnerships offer the best way to ensure the spread of professional expertise and evidence between schools. We believe it is necessary to consciously build professional capital and trust among teachers and create the conditions for teachers to work together to improve practice within and across schools.
* **Subsidiarity**: We believe that decision making should be devolved to the most immediate level consistent with its implementation and to the place closest to students, ie to schools. This is our preferred definition of the principle that is elsewhere referred to as ‘autonomy’. In a system in which subsidiarity is the norm, there must be strong and intelligent accountability. Thus, subsidiarity and accountability are twin principles.
* **Common good**: We believe that education is for the common good. A good education creates the social conditions that allow young people, both as individuals and in groups, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily. A good education system builds character and resilience in all young people. We accept that sometimes the imperative for the common good must override subsidiarity – government has a role to play in ensuring that the system serves all equally well.

**Responsibilities for government**

In the Blueprint, we set out some clearly delineated responsibilities for government in a high-performing education system. These include:

* fair per pupil funding that is sufficient, sustainable and equitable, includes weighting for disadvantage and enables educational organisations to focus on closing achievement gaps
* a slim, smart and stable framework of standards in outcomes and public accountability
* calculation through agreed modelling of numbers of teachers needed in each sector and region and the promotion of the status and value of teaching as a profession
* a capital programme that ensures sufficiency and quality of educational provision and learning environments that are fit for the 21st century
* a role in monitoring the performance of the system and in identifying and helping to address potential strategic issues that could hamper future success

**Our vision**

We summarised our vision for the future of education in England in the Blueprint as follows:

**Teacher professionalism**

* Teachers and leaders constantly challenge each other and themselves to develop their own practice and professional learning. It is common for teachers to have a professional learning ladder from initial teacher education through to masters and research programmes.
* An independent College of Teaching, set up through a government endowment fund and led by a peer-elected board, sets teacher standards and has a key role in enhancing teachers’ professional learning.
* Government has put in place a national supply model that ensures there are enough good teachers in each subject and region.

**Curriculum, assessment and qualifications**

* An independent commission – including practitioners, parents, governors, employers and politicians – reviews the core curriculum every five years, giving the government one opportunity in a Parliament to make changes.
* The core curriculum framework is only one part of a school’s curriculum. Schools build the rest around the core framework to help students develop deep and broad knowledge, and relevant qualities and skills.
* Vocational qualifications have been reformed so that they are consistently high-quality and are now on a par with academic qualifications.

**Funding and governance**

* A new national funding formula is in place that is sufficient, equitable and sustainable, ending the unfairness which puts some schools at risk of financial failure. It is weighted to students with the greatest need.
* All schools have been encouraged and supported to enter or create formal partnerships with others in the form of multi-academy trusts and federations.
* Governance is much stronger, with a clear separation between members of academy trusts and local school governing boards, and strong succession planning which means most chairs of federations and trusts serve a maximum of two terms.

**Accountability**

* There is a slim, smart and stable public accountability framework with a small number of ambitious goals, including a nationally determined progress measure in place for at least five years – the term of government. Governments no longer use accountability measures to influence decisions about the curriculum, assessment and teaching.
* A new model of inspection makes reliable and credible judgements and has the trust and respect of the profession. Schools and colleges no longer feel under pressure to conform to what they believe inspectors want to see.
* Inspection focuses on outcomes rather than processes. A yearly review of each school considers a range of outcome measures that have been agreed by the profession. If these are secure, there is no need for an inspection visit.
* The inspectorate has the power to inspect groups of schools in trusts and federations as well as individual institutions.

**Scrutiny, intervention and support**

* Regional education commissioners, who report to Parliament rather than the DfE, oversee all schools in their area – including academies, free schools and those maintained by local authorities.
* They have the power to intervene where schools are causing concern, in the form of issuing warning notices, removing a governing body or ordering a school to work in partnership with another school or trust.
* Support to schools needing to improve is delivered by a range of providers but usually takes the form of school-to-school support delivered by multi-academy trusts, teaching school alliances, and national and local leaders of education.

**Strategic planning**

* Regional education commissioners are responsible for commissioning and tendering for new schools when needed and assessing bids for new schools. Where new schools are needed, the case is made to the education commissioner.
* The calculation of number of school places needed, and the duty to secure sufficient places, remains with local authorities. The duty to secure high-quality provision through the commissioning process sits with the education commissioner.
* Employers and education providers work closely together to ensure young people have the right skills for the local and national labour market.
1. **Progress to date**

We believe that significant progress towards this vision has been made over the three years since the Blueprint was published. For example:

* The establishment of the Chartered College of Teaching has the potential to transform the teaching profession in England, helping teachers to work in effective, informed, collaborative ways to raise the status of the profession and improve the quality of education in our schools and colleges.
* After decades of campaigning by ASCL and other organisations, the government is introducing a national funding formula, with the potential to fund schools and colleges in a fairer, more equitable way.
* Schools are beginning to work together in collaborative structures, and our collective understanding is growing about the types of structures and approaches which are most likely to lead to genuine improvements in educational outcomes.
* There is an increased focus on the progress pupils make in our accountability system, as well as their attainment.
* Ofsted is thinking deeply about the role it plays in school and college accountability, and is considering some radical changes to the current inspection system.
* Regional Schools Commissioners have been introduced, with powers to intervene in struggling schools and broker partnerships between schools.
1. **Key challenges to address**

However, there remain a number of grave problems with the education system in England, with serious consequences for the life chances of children and young people. We outline below what we see as the most worrying issues, with some proposed solutions. These issues are all interrelated, but we have separated them into four broad areas: funding, accountability, the ‘middle tier, and teacher recruitment and retention.

**Funding**

*The problem*

Budgets in many of our schools and colleges are at crisis point. A survey of ASCL members in May 2018 indicated that:

* 99% have had to make cost savings over the past 12 months, with nearly half (46%) saying this amounted to over £100,000
* 50% said their school was running with an in-year deficit in the current financial year, and 60% said they will be in deficit in the next financial year.

These figures must be seen in the light of the extensive cuts school leaders have already had to make in order to balance their books. Our previous years’ survey revealed that, in the academic year 2016/17:

* 95% had cut back on support services
* 82% had increased class sizes
* 72% had removed GCSE or vocational courses at KS4
* 79% had removed GCE or vocational options at KS5

In many cases, further cost savings can only be made by compromising the quality and breadth of the education schools and colleges are able to offer their pupils, and/or by jeopardising their safety. This is, in our view, a completely unacceptable state of affairs in one of the world’s richest nations.

The government continues to justify underfunding schools and colleges with a series of claims which do not stand up to scrutiny. These include the following:

*There is more money in education than ever before*

This is true, but only because there are more pupils in education in England than ever before. There were half a million more pupils in state-funded pre-16 education in 2017 than there were in 2010. While spend on education has increased in cash terms over the same period, per pupil spend in now in real terms decline. And, at the same time, the expectations on our schools and colleges have increased significantly, as they try to pick up the pieces left by the decimation of other public services.

*Schools and colleges are inefficient*

Schools and colleges are acutely aware of the need to run as tight a ship as possible in order to maximise the return on public investment. Many have embraced the concept of an integrated approach to curriculum and financial planning, and have made radical changes to the way in which they structure and deliver teaching and learning. But with staffing costs accounting for around 80% of most school and college budgets, there is a limit to which institutions can make efficiencies without impacting on pupils – and, in most schools and colleges, that limit was reached some time ago.

*The UK spends more on education than other countries (including many which apparently outperform us)*

According to OECD evidence, the UK does indeed spend more on average than other OECD countries on education as a proportion of GDP (6.5% in 2014; OECD average 5.2%). However, this figure disguises the relative amounts spent on public (i.e. state) and private education. The UK spend on public education is around 4.75% of GDP, below the OECD average of 5.2%. Data from the Independent Schools Council indicates that independent school annual fees averaged around £14,000 in 2017, an increase of 3.5% on the previous year. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, spend per pupil in publicly funded schools was around £5,500 in 2016/17 and is facing real terms cuts of 4.6% by 2020. The government has put social mobility high on the national agenda. We question how this can be achieved when the commitment to education funding is not even keeping pace with the growth of the economy.

*Potential solutions*

We would encourage an incoming Labour government to commit to the following in order to help address the current funding crisis:

* Prioritise sufficiency so that schools and colleges have enough funding to support the quality of education that young people have a right to expect and to drive the national agenda for social mobility. The funding for each institution must enable them to afford:
* a sustainable curriculum
* safe and well maintained buildings
* sufficient and necessary teachers and support staff
* sufficient high quality resources
* an effective contact / non-contact balance for teachers

Our modelling suggests that sufficient per-pupil funding is a median of £5,800 (rather than the £4,800 used in the DfE’s minimum funding level protection introduced as part of the National Funding Formula) in pre-16 education. In post-16 education, which has suffered particularly badly in funding terms since 2010, an uplift of at least £200 per student is required.

* Ensure appropriate funding is provided to schools and colleges to properly support the 1.2 million children and young people in the education system with special educational needs (14.4% of the pupil population).
* Reduce the current, and growing, requirement for schools and groups to ‘bid’ for targeted funding. The complexity of the current system has created a bidding culture, for which there is no guarantee of success but results in burdensome costs of bureaucracy and an outflow of public money to the private sector.
* See through the introduction of a National Funding Formula (NFF). Equitable distribution of revenue funding that facilitates every child having fair access to what they need to succeed underpins the ASCL principle that education is for the common good and that government has a role to play in ensuring that the system serves all equally well. The roadmap for the implementation of the NFF must include:
	+ a commitment to funding all four blocks within the Direct Schools Grant (DSG) adequately to mitigate the risks of transfer between blocks, which perpetuate the inadequacy of the current system
	+ confirmation of the date for the move to a ‘hard’ NFF, along with longer term protections where necessary, and a shorter transition period for low funded schools
	+ the introduction of a single funding year (currently maintained and academy schools operate different funding years)
	+ changes in audit requirements for maintained schools, should they be required to report expenditure back to the ESFA directly.

More detail on ASCL’s position and proposals on funding can be found in our [response to the recent select committee funding inquiry](https://www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.html?id=BB003271-B5B8-46B4-81CD95F2BA9F6FDF).

**Accountability**

*The problem*

The way in which schools and colleges are held to account in England, and the way in which perceived underperformance is tackled, is deeply flawed. Key issues include the following:

* Judgements about schools and colleges are too often based on what is easy to measure, rather than what is most important.
* An over-reliance on a small, narrowly defined set of measures disincentivises schools from offering a broad, rich curriculum, and from providing the best education to all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
* Reported performance measures aren’t well understood by stakeholders – particularly parents.
* Ofsted judgements, which should provide a counterbalance to the narrowness of the performance measures, place too much emphasis on those same measures.
* The consequences of schools underperforming against these narrow measures are often (or often perceived to be) punitive rather than supportive.
* There is insufficient evidence that the current approaches to perceived underperformance lead to meaningful and sustained improvement.

*Potential solutions*

ASCL has defined seven principles for a fair and effective accountability system. We believe such a system should:

* start from a shared understanding of what outcomes we, as a society, want for our children and young people
* be based around a set of proxies which incentivise schools to deliver on these outcomes, seeking ways to recognise and reward aspects which are important but difficult to measure, as well as those which are more easily quantifiable
* drive positive behaviour
* be based on information which is as accurate as possible, and not try to read too much into a small, unrepresentative amount of data
* be fair to schools in different circumstances and contexts, while recognising the importance of enabling every child to reach their potential
* lead to fair, proportionate, transparent and constructive consequences for schools which fall short of its desired outcomes, aligned with the best current evidence of what is most likely to lead to improvements
* be relentlessly self-critical, regularly evaluating impact and modifying as necessary

There are a number of ways in which an incoming Labour government could tackle the issues with the current accountability system, and move closer to the ideal model outlined above. These include the following:

* Work with the profession to agree and define the broad outcomes we want from our schools, and agree the best proxies for these outcomes.
* Develop an ‘information dashboard’ for all schools and colleges, based around these proxies.
* Use the information provided by this dashboard in an intelligent, nuanced way to identify schools in need of support in different areas.
* Facilitate schools to support each other in tackling weaknesses, building long-term local capacity.
* Remove any automatic consequences for schools underperforming against any particular measure (including revoking the requirement for the Regional Schools Commissioners to issue schools judged inadequate by Ofsted with an academy order).
* Explore with Ofsted the potential consequences, both positive and negative, of removing the exemption from further inspection for schools previously judged outstanding.
* Explore with Ofsted the potential consequences, both positive and negative, of removing the ‘overall effectiveness’ judgement.

More detail on ASCL’s position and proposals on accountability can be found in the final report of our 2018 [review of primary accountability](https://www.ascl.org.uk/news-and-views/news_news-detail.ascl-calls-for-overhaul-of-system-for-judging-primary-schools.html).

**The ‘middle tier’**

*The problem*

The way in which the education system in England is structured has undergone unprecedented change over the last few years. A third of state schools in England are now academies (including around three quarters of secondaries). Academies are increasingly coming together to form multi-academy trusts, leading to significant changes in the way our schools are led and governed.

The vision for, and ambition behind, the academies programme has shifted markedly since its inception. Labour’s original vision for sponsored academies was supplanted by Conservative policies enabling all schools to convert to academy status. Conservative enthusiasm for academies reached its zenith in the 2016 white paper *Educational Excellence Everywhere*, in which the then Secretary of State, Nicky Morgan, proposed a requirement for all schools to have converted to academy status by 2022. The reduced Conservative majority after the general election of 2017 put paid to that ambition. Morgan’s successor, Justine Greening, made it clear that, while academisation remained a key plank of the government’s school improvement strategy, forced academisation was off the agenda for the majority of schools.

These shifting sands have left us with a mixed economy of maintained schools and academies which is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. While ASCL was strongly opposed to compulsory academisation, we are concerned that the current half-reformed system leads to a different set of problems, which both schools and policy makers are struggling to address. These problems include the following:

* The increasing inability of local authorities to adequately support those schools which remain under their control. This is exacerbated by the imbalance between the percentage of primary and secondary schools which have converted, as LAs are left disproportionately trying to support primaries, with their smaller budgets and capacity.
* The growing number of ‘orphan schools’ – including some of those in the most challenging circumstances – which struggle to find a trust to take them on and can be left isolated and unsupported.
* The lack of joined-up, strategic local place planning and decision-making, particularly around admissions and exclusions, which disproportionately impacts our most vulnerable children.
* The lack of clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the various ‘middle tier’ bodies, including local authorities, RSCs and Ofsted. This can lead to duplication (which the system can ill afford) and to unnecessary workload and anxiety for school leaders and teachers.
* The lack of transparency in the decision-making process around schools becoming academies and joining multi-academy trusts.
* The significant variation in the performance of multi-academy trusts.
* The significant increase in the roles and responsibilities of those governing our schools and trusts, and the challenge, particularly in some localities, of recruiting people with the necessary skills and experience into those roles.

*Potential solutions*

We do not have the answers to all of these issues. However, we would encourage an incoming Labour government to consider the following thoughts:

* We do not believe that a Labour government should seek to turn back the clock on the academies programme. Whilst academisation is not a panacea, neither is bringing all schools back under LA control. The variable quality of both multi-academy trusts and LAs suggests that the answer to school improvement does not lie in further disruptive structural reform.
* We are convinced by the significant evidence for the benefits of strong school-to-school collaboration – particularly where this includes shared governance. Such collaborative models can exist between maintained schools (in the form of federations) as well as in multi-academy trusts. We believe that all schools should be encouraged and supported to form or join strong partnerships of this type.
* The role of LAs, RSCs and Ofsted needs to be clarified. The [recent report on system governance by the Teaching Schools Council in partnership with FASNA](https://www.tscouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Where-next-for-the-self-improving-school-system-final-May-2018-2.pdf), to which ASCL contributed, proposes a model for doing this, with clearly delineated roles around inspection (conducted by Ofsted), intervention (undertaken in different ways by the RSCs, the ESFA and LAs) and improvement (led by school leaders).
* Schools in a local area should be encouraged to take collective responsibility for all the children and young people living and being educated in their area. There are a number of mechanisms that could be used to achieve this, including fair access panels focused on the needs of ‘at risk’ and vulnerable children, and local coordination around exclusions.
* As mentioned in the section on accountability above, the requirement for the RSCs to issue schools judged inadequate by Ofsted with an academy order should be revoked. Instead, RSCs should be permitted to consider and implement a range of options to support such schools, as they can for schools in other circumstances.These options should include sponsored academisation, but also other actions such as brokering support from another school or teaching school alliance, or allowing the school to enter into a service level agreement with a MAT. Fostering such relationships may lead to the school choosing to enter into a formal partnership at a later date.
* Multi-academy trusts should be effectively supported, both financially and otherwise, to take on and improve challenging schools.Many potentially beneficial partnerships never come to fruition because trusts do not believe they have the capacity to support a particular school, or that doing so may impact negatively on other schools in the trust. For a self-improving system to work, the government must be prepared to provide trusts with the support they need to successfully take on schools in challenging circumstances.
* Decisions made about schools joining or moving between trusts should be made in an open and transparent manner. The criteria employed by RSCs to make decisions about schools should be clear and consistently applied.

More detail on ASCL’s position and proposals on the ‘middle tier’ can be found in our policy paper on [effective school partnerships](https://www.ascl.org.uk/policy/ascl-policy-papers/ascl-policy-effective-school-partnerships.html) and in our [response to the recent schools exclusion review](https://www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.html?id=4A7C5EB3-6131-4286-B55F72C0F29C52B3).

**Teacher recruitment and retention**

*The problem*

The dwindling numbers of people entering, and remaining in, the teaching profession has reached crisis point, particularly in secondary schools. In 2017/18, only 80% of the required number of secondary teachers were recruited. Targets were missed in almost every subject, with subjects including design and technology, computing, physics and maths being particularly badly hit.

At the same time, teachers are leaving the profession in increasing numbers. Between 2010 and 2016, exit rates increased from around 8% to 9% in primary schools and from 9.5% to 10.5% in secondary schools. Even more concerning is the increase in the number of teachers choosing to cut short their teaching careers, with around 80% of exits in 2016 due to movements to other jobs or outside the state sector in England, as compared with around two thirds in 2010. Exits also appear to be concentrated early in teachers’ careers, with only 60% of teachers working in a state-funded school in England five years after starting training. This five-year retention rate is even worse (only 50%) for high-priority subjects such as physics and maths.

The reasons for this crisis are complex, and undoubtedly link to the problems around funding and accountability explored above. The shortage of teachers poses a serious, and long-term, threat to the quality of education in this country. Unless concerted actions are taken to address the current difficulties, particularly with the known increase in pupil numbers, the situation will quickly worsen.

*Potential solutions*

ASCL, together with the other education unions, recently drafted a ten-point plan for tackling the teacher recruitment and retention crisis. We would urge an incoming Labour government to develop an overarching strategy for teacher recruitment and retention, based around the following proposals:

1. **Simplify the routes into teaching:** The routes into teaching are confusing to potential teachers and the application processes too complex. An immediate review and simplification of both the routes and the application system are required.
2. **Enhance developments on ways of reducing teacher workload:** More needs to be done to build on the reports that followed the 2015 workload challenge outcomes. Teacher workload is driven by external factors such as the numerous accountability measures, major curriculum and qualifications reform and funding pressures which have reduced staffing numbers and consequentially increased workload on remaining staff.
3. **Establish short and medium term plans to raise the salaries of teachers:** The fact that teachers’ pay was frozen and has, until this year, been subject to the public sector pay cap has meant that it has fallen significantly behind pay for other graduate professions. Acknowledging “high workload” and “strict accountability” the STRB last year described pay as an important factor in the recruitment and retention crisis which “presents a substantial risk to the functioning of an effective education system”. There needs to be ongoing actions taken to ensure that teachers’ pay is brought back to a level that is at least in line with other similar professions.
4. **Review and revise the accountability systems and their impact on schools, teachers and school leaders:** The accountability measures and their outcomes have an impact on teacher workload and stress. A major review of the effectiveness of accountability systems is urgently required, which must include consideration of reducing the burdens of Ofsted inspections.

1. **Develop a career strategy for teaching from pre-entry to leadership:** Knowing the potential routes through teaching as a career we see as a help to both recruitment and retention. We recognise that this is a job for the profession as well as government. The recent consultation on ‘Strengthening Qualified Teacher Status and improving career progression for teachers’ proposed some useful first steps, and we are keen to work with government and other organisations on this.
2. **Urgently review and revise the teacher supply model and the allocation of initial teacher training places:** It is ourview that the current model is not indicating sufficient initial teacher training places to meet need, nor is it addressing the issue of replacing non-specialist teachers with subject specialists. A rapid review and revision is required.
3. **Ensure that there is full geographical coverage of initial teacher training provision in all parts of the country:** As many newly qualified teachers remain in the area close to where they initially train, it is important that all areas of the country are covered by high quality initial training provision. This needs mapping out and appropriate actions taken.
4. **Review and revise the financial support packages for initial teacher training and loan reimbursement:** We have been promoting the idea of loan repayment for teachers for some time and welcomed the pilot scheme. Stronger evidence needs to be shared and discussed with regard to the effectiveness of the bursary scheme. Evaluation of both schemes is required at the earliest opportunity, supported by discussion of how to ensure they are most effective, with wide impact.
5. **Take forward the recently started work on flexible working:** Recent work in this area, by government and other organisations, is welcome. We believe that a work plan on flexible working, including a timescale, should be developed and implemented to take this valuable thinking forward.
6. **Develop national programmes to recruit returners, career changers and teachers from overseas:** We note the government is interested in how to bring qualified teachers back to classrooms; action on workload, funding, pay and accountability as well as refresher training would be a welcome signal. The scheme that has just been announced to recruit some teachers from overseas needs to be set at an appropriate scale to help meet the current shortfall and include consideration of any adjustments that may need to be made to immigration rules to support its implementation. It is also essential to take steps to secure the future of EU teachers currently working in the UK.

These proposals are by no means exhaustive, and there are other areas that must also be addressed. The fundamental issue is that we are currently not recruiting nor retaining enough teachers, and this can only be fully addressed through the development of a wide-ranging strategy which takes forward all of the proposals made above.

1. **Next steps**

ASCL intends to undertake significant work over the next year in all four of the areas outlined above: funding, accountability, the ‘middle tier’, and teacher recruitment and retention. We would be delighted to share our developing thoughts and proposals with Labour in whatever way would be most useful.

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