

**Department for Education Board Meeting
04 June 2020, 13:00-16:30
Permanent Secretary's Boardroom**

Attendees

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| Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP | Secretary of State (<i>Chair</i>) |
| Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP | Minister of State for School Standards, Minister for the Board |
| Michelle Donelan, MP | Minister of State for Universities |
| Gillian Keegan, MP | Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills |
| Vicky Ford, MP | Parliamentary Under Secretary for Children and Families |
| Richard Pennycook | Lead Non-executive Board Member |
| Ian Ferguson | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Irene Lucas | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Toby Peyton Jones | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Ruby McGregor-Smith | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Nick Timothy | Non-Executive Board Member |
| Jonathan Slater | Permanent Secretary |
| Indra Morris | Director General, Social Care, Mobility and Disadvantage |
| Mike Green | Chief Operating Officer |
| Jonathan Clear | Strategic Finance Director |

Presenters

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| Andrew McCully | <u>Title</u> Director General, Early Years and Schools |
| Gillian McFarland | Deputy Director, Vulnerable Children and Young People |
| Robert Arnott | Director of Strategy, Social Mobility & Disadvantage |

Other Attendees

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| Warwick Sharp | <u>Title</u> Principal Private Secretary to the Secretary of State |
| Shelley Cooper | Board Secretary |
| Andrei Vitaliev | Board Secretariat |

1. INTRODUCTIONS, MINUTES AND ACTIONS

- 1.1. The Secretary of State (SoS) welcomed Members to the meeting.
- 1.2. No new interests were declared and the minutes and the action tracker from the previous meeting were accepted without amendment.

2. SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

- 2.1. The Secretary of State introduced the item.
- 2.2. The Board received an update on the Audit and Risk Committee noting the progress of the Group and SARA accounts. ARC had continued its focus on investment management, cyber security and protection of departmental data.
- 2.3. Members noted that the Implementation Committee had discussed schools' commercial function.
- 2.4. The Board were informed that a key focus of the Leadership team had been overseeing the response to COVID-19 and Leadership Team had formed a Board that met weekly.
- 2.5. In discussion the Board noted that as the department reopened schools, colleagues would be welcomed back to offices across the DfE estates in phases.

3. FINANCE UPDATE

- 3.1. The Board noted that the 2019/20 accounts had been closed subject to the auditor's opinion and received an update on the DfE's financial position at Q1.
- 3.2. The Board discussed the financial impact of COVID-19 in context of the department's risk appetite.
- 3.3. The Board agreed that reform across the post-16 sector would be a strategic priority and agreed to have a strategy meeting in July to focus on the reforms.

4. RESPONSE TO COVID-19: REOPENING SCHOOLS

- 4.1. The Board noted that from 1 June, year 1 and year 6 pupils would be welcomed back into school. The department was working to welcome all learners back to school in September.
- 4.2. The Board noted the provision of online teaching resources which would be vital in the event of a second spike of the infection rate.
- 4.3. The Board discussed possible measures to address the attainment gap.

5. VULNERABLE CHILDREN

- 5.1. The Board considered an update on Vulnerable Children policy and noted that personal and family challenges had been exacerbated during the pandemic response.

- 5.2. The Board discussed regional variation in the number of vulnerable children attending school and/or interacting with a social worker.
- 5.3. The Board discussed the importance of a strategic response building on the outcome of both the Care and the SEND review. The Board acknowledged the importance of early intervention to improve the life chances of vulnerable children.
- 5.4. It was noted that schools, policy teams and Local Authorities had worked more collaboratively than ever before with a focus on the customer.

6. IMPACT OF COVID-19: DEVELOPING A RENEWAL AGENDA

- 6.1. The Board considered an update on the development of a renewal agenda. The renewal agenda would develop a set of priorities for the department, identifying learnt lessons from the department's response to the pandemic and exploiting innovation and opportunity for positive change.
- 6.2. The Board identified the importance of being ambitious in the department's plans for the future. It would also be vital to engage with employers on the inter-departmental skills package.

7. AOB

- 7.1. The Board approved the interim risk appetite statement.