



Department
for Education

Academisation picture in Reading

Dame Kate Dethridge
Regional Director, South East Regions Group

November 2022

Regions Group overview



Regions Group is part of DfE, with each regional team led by a Regional Director. The current role of the group includes:

- **Children’s social care and special educational needs and disability services** – ensuring vulnerable children are supported, LA performance is monitored, good practice is promoted; providing support and intervention where appropriate.
- **Academies oversight** – trust accountability, SAT/MAT growth, safeguarding, intervention and academy transfers.
- **Free schools and places planning** – assessment of new free schools, viability and assessment of sufficiency.
- **School improvement (all schools)** – supporting teaching school hubs, and school improvement resource.

Regional Directors

- Delivering a joined-up approach across Department priorities (children's social care, SEND, schools and area-based programmes) offering a single point of contact.
- Make decisions that deliver for and respond to local needs and priorities.
- Develop an even better understanding of how local context impacts on children and learners, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people.
- Play an essential role in helping shape policy across DfE to reflect sector needs.
- Be responsible for how place influences delivery of commitments in the Schools White Paper, of proposals in the SEND Green Paper and of any actions arising from the Government's response to the Independent Care Review, as well as for the department's parts of the Levelling Up White Paper.



North East
Katherine Cowell



North West
Vicky Beer



East Midlands
Kate Copley & Carol Gray



West Midlands
Andrew Warren



Yorkshire & Humber
Carolan Goggin
Interim



East of England
Jonathan Duff



London
Claire Burton



South East
Kate Dethridge



South West
Hannah Woodhouse

Regions Group areas of focus



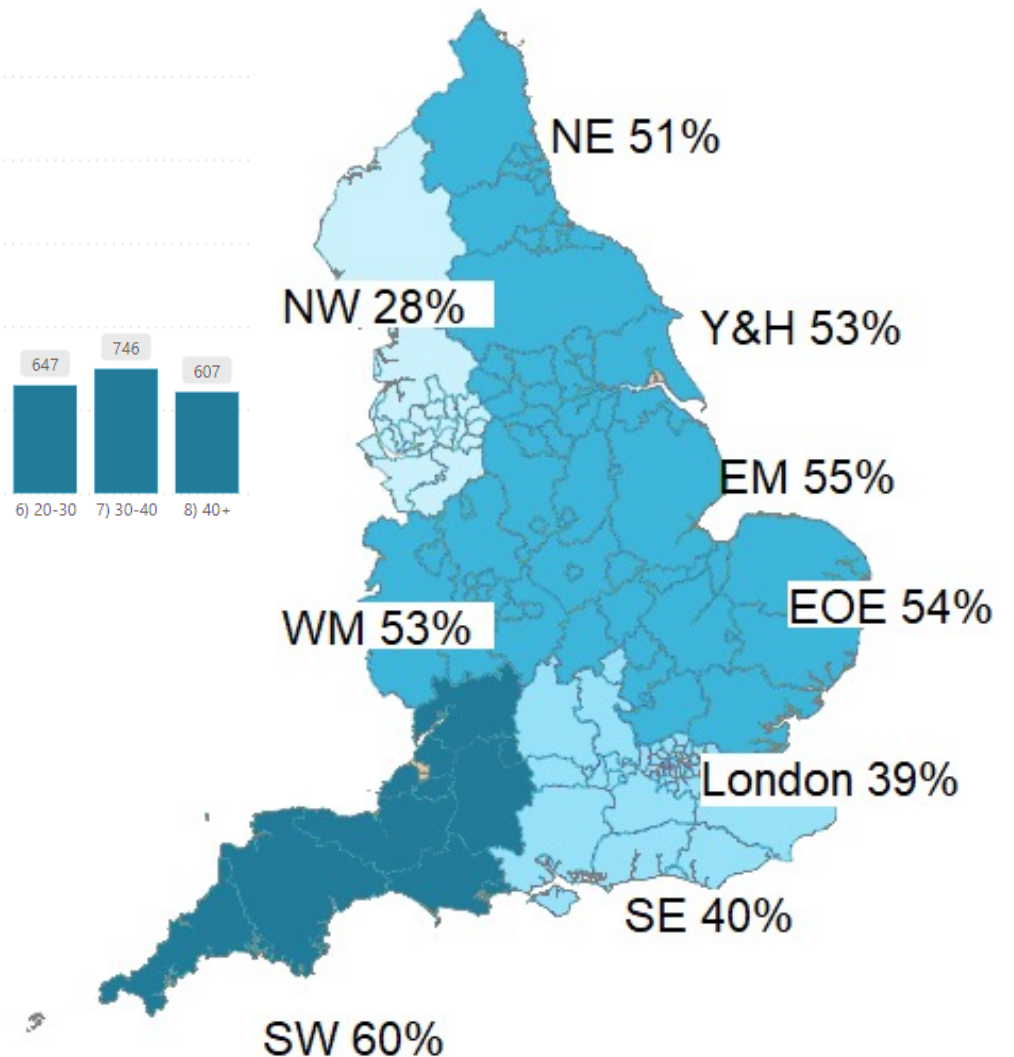
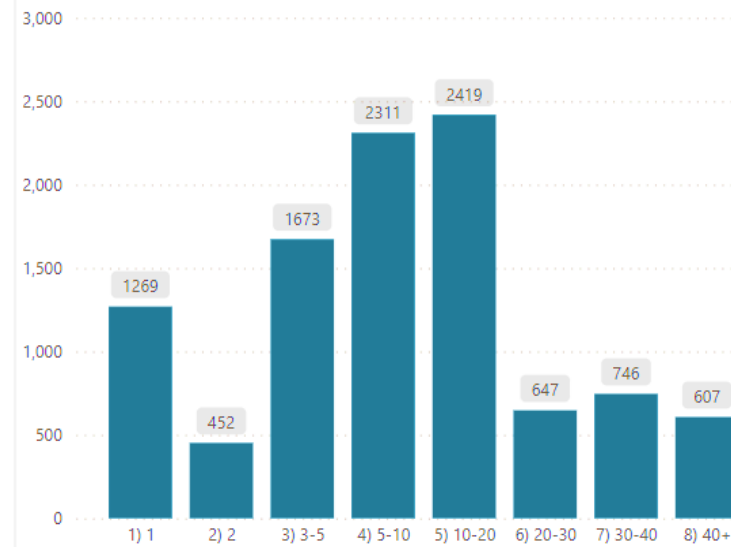
- Recognising the impact of the pandemic and understanding financial pressures/cost of living
- Intervention in vulnerable schools, trusts (and LAs)
- Building sector improvement capacity:
 - Establishing sources of support for vulnerable schools, authorities and trusts (incl. AMSD support)
 - Sufficiency and good free schools in the right place at the right time (incl. for SEND)
- Delivering reform:
 - Supporting every school into a strong trust, designing a mature and sensible trust landscape, new trusts where we need them (incl small LA est trusts pilot)
 - More deliberate trust design through 'area based commissioning' with capacity funding in high need LAs
 - Linking to implementation of SEND Green paper and Care Review

New opportunity to join up local conversations with a focus on vulnerable children and inclusion

Creating a system of strong multi academy trusts

- In January 2010, there were just 203 academies with fewer than 200,000 pupils.
- The total number of academies has now exceeded 10,000, with over 4.8M pupils.
- More than 7 out of 10 sponsored academies which were found to be underperforming as an LA maintained school in their previous inspection now have a good or outstanding rating.
- 80% of secondary schools now academies, but only 40% of primaries.
- There is also significant **regional variation** in the % of schools that are LA maintained, in SATs or in MATs.

Number of Academies in Different Sized Trusts



SEND and Alternative Provision Review –The problems it sought to solve



Outcomes for children and young people with SEND are consistently worse than their peers – across almost every measure



Experiences of navigating the SEND system to secure support are poor



There is **too much inconsistency** across the country – with decisions made based on where a child lives, not on their needs



Despite unprecedented investment, the SEND system is not **delivering value for money for children, young people and families**

The green paper proposed to deliver an improved system in five ways

Standards



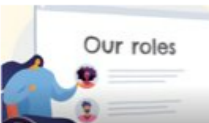
1. **Establish a national SEND and AP system** – with clear **standards** based on the evidence of what works – across 0-25 and across the spectrum of need, backed by clear **processes**.



2. **Building capacity in mainstream education** so all those working with children and young people with SEND have the knowledge and skills to do so.



3. **Appropriate and affordable specialist provision** for those who need it, including alternative provision. This should be high quality and close to home where possible.



4. **Clear roles, strengthened accountability and funding reform** so all partners have clear roles and responsibilities in line with nationally consistent expectations, and are held to account for delivering them.



5. **Delivering change for children and families**
A delivery programme to stabilize the system in the immediate term and deliver the necessary culture change to build an inclusive system in the longer term.

Consultation Feedback: there is broad consensus that our problem diagnosis is robust and correct

175 events held talking to 4,500 people, several thousand responses received covering a broad range of sectors.



Respondents welcome the focus on **inclusion** but want greater clarity by what this means in practice, how schools will be held accountable for it, and how our ambition for an inclusive system interacts with the ambitions in the Schools White Paper.



Respondents agree that **workforce** is critical to our reforms, and that for educational settings, it is important that all staff – including leaders – have a working understanding of SEND.



There is a need to improve **system capacity** recognising the current challenges facing all parts of the sector in terms of workforce fatigue, cumulative reforms, and a need to improve expertise.



Respondents agree that system reform will rely on **strong accountability and stable funding**, that works across the whole system (including health and social care).

Reading: a local overview

READING area



Reading school profile (as of October 2022)

- 55 state funded schools in total
- 26 academies (47%) including 1 FS
- 13 Primary, 9 Secondary, 4 Special/AP.
- 29 LA Maintained (53%) including 27 primary, 1 secondary, 1 special/AP
- SCAP 21, published in March 2022, forecasts Reading will have increasing surpluses at primary phase and slightly decreasing surpluses at secondary phase over the forecasting period, (to 25/26 for primary and to 27/28 for secondary).

Reading: a local overview (cont.)

Academy Trust Landscape

- There are currently 16 academy trusts operating across Reading.
- 6 standalone trusts (SATs): The Avenue School, Churchend Primary Academy, Highdown School and Sixth Form, The Heights Primary School, Kendrick School, Reading School.
- 10 multi academy trusts (MATs) operate across other LA areas: Anthem, Excalibur, Maiden Erlegh Trust, NAS Academies Trust, Oxford Diocese Schools Trust, Reach2, Thames Learning Trust, White Horse Federation, Kings Group, and Activate Learning Education Trust.
- There is one mainstream secondary in the pipeline (River Academy- Maiden Erlegh Trust):
 - This will be an 11-19, mixed, 8FE, non-faith, secondary school in Reading.
 - Work is underway to deliver River Academy in 2024. It was originally due to open in September 2023 in its permanent site with 240 pupils and grow to a full capacity of 1500 including 300 sixth form places.

Considering conversion and/or joining a MAT?

Contact the department RG.SE@education.gov.uk where my team will be happy to talk you through the Academy conversion process or joining a MAT

Special Schools

- Aim to provide children and young people with good quality provision in their local area
- Currently there are 4 special schools in Reading (The Avenue School, Thames Valley School, Hamilton School, The Holy Brook School).

New Special Free School

- There is 1 special school in the pipeline (Oak Tree School, Maiden Erlegh Trust)
 - 5-19, mixed, all-through school
 - At full capacity Oak Tree will offer 150 places for children with behaviour difficulties and autism
 - The school is due to open in September 2023

Application window for new schools

- The application window for local authorities to apply to the department's next round of free schools has just closed.



Department
for Education

Thank you