

INTRODUCTION

The primary focus of the Bill we will introduce later this parliamentary year is to create a school and teacher-led education system and therefore to empower our schools and school leaders. The Bill will establish a Headteachers' Charter. The purpose of the Charter is to set out the rights and responsibilities of headteachers that will empower them to be the leaders of learning and teaching in their schools. This legislative underpinning will make it clear that headteachers are best placed to make decisions about how learning happens in our schools. The Charter will also set out the support headteachers can expect to receive to meet the needs of their school communities by clarifying the responsibilities that local authorities will fulfil in order to enable headteachers to lead.

Headteachers as leaders of learning need to be able to choose the people in their team. This is arguably the most important factor in their ability to improve the quality of learning and teaching in their school. Headteachers should have more influence on how staff are recruited, select who works in their school and determine the structure within which those professionals are deployed. Currently, in some areas, key decisions about staffing are often taken without headteacher involvement and the Bill will aim to change this.

The Bill will also improve parental and community engagement in school life and in learning outside of school, and strengthen the voice of children and young people, by actively promoting and supporting pupil participation. The Bill will provide the legislative underpinning for the establishment of Regional Improvement Collaboratives to allow them to fulfil their agreed functions which will include (but are not limited to): regional priorities and regional improvement plans; professional learning and leadership; curriculum support; sector specific support; improvement methodology; sharing good practice and the impact of research; peer to peer and school to school collaboration and a regional approach to supporting staffing challenges.

In addition, the Bill will enable registration of other education professionals with the Education Workforce Council. This will be established to take on the responsibilities of the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) and the Community Learning and Development Standards Council (CLDSC) and to establish appropriate professional standards for other groups within the education workforce.

The Headteachers' Charter will support rather than replace some elements of the existing legislative framework such as the duties placed on local authorities and headteachers through 'Getting it Right for Every Child' legislation; requirements to promote and support equality and inclusion and health and wellbeing for all pupils; duties relating to additional support for learning provision which apply to local authorities; and legislation relating to maximum class sizes. How the provisions in the Charter will work alongside other legislative duties relating to education will be set out in detail in the Bill.

We have set out in this consultation paper why we think these changes will improve the educational outcomes for young people, how they will work in practice and how the legislation needs to change to enable them to happen. We are seeking views on whether the changes which we have set out will deliver the empowered school and teacher-led system which we aim to achieve.

We will continue to work with stakeholders during the consultation period and during the parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill to ensure that headteachers are well prepared to take on their more empowered roles and that local authorities, Regional Improvement Collaboratives, and school communities are well prepared to support them to do so.