



National Audit Office

A SHORT GUIDE

The NAO's work on the Department for Education



National Audit Office

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This short guide is one of 17 we have produced covering our work on each major government department. It summarises our work during the last Parliament, reflecting programmes and spending before the May 2010 General Election, and as such does not reflect changes introduced by the new Government.

These guides are designed to provide Members of Parliament, and particularly select committees, with a quick and accessible overview of our recent work and how we can help with the scrutiny of government. The guides are not intended to provide an overall assessment of the departments' performance but simply to illustrate, with examples, the range of our work. Where the examples refer to specific weaknesses and recommendations, departments have in many cases taken action since to address them.

In the last year, we also supported the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee by preparing a memorandum which provided an update to our 2006 report on Sure Start children's centres. We will continue to support all select committees in 2010-11, providing further briefings on each major department and supporting specific inquiries wherever our expertise and perspective can add value.

introduction

about

About the Department

The Department's responsibilities

The Department for Education (the Department) was formed on 12 May 2010, and succeeded the Department for Children, Schools and Families, which was created in June 2007, and was responsible for education and services for children and young people up to age 19 in England.¹

Further and higher education continue to be the responsibility of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

This report represents the position at the time of the formation of the Department for Education but includes significant structural changes made to 4 June 2010.

The Department provides its services primarily through other organisations. These include:

- Ten executive non-departmental public bodies (Appendix 1);²
- 20,600 schools, (including around 200 academies with substantially more planned to open in 2010); and
- 113,000 providers of childcare and early years' education.

Where the Department spends its money

The Department for Children, Schools and Families spent £51 billion in 2008-09, with over three quarters of net expenditure going to schools and services for young people via local authorities (see opposite). Around £1,384 million of the funding through local authorities provided capital grants and area-based grants to support children and families; and youth programmes. Most of the funding through the Learning and Skills Council (which was wound-up on 31 March 2010) was spent in school sixth forms or further education, though the Council spent £2,048 million directly, including £532 million on Education Maintenance Allowances; £778 million on work-based learning; £203 million for Learners with Learning Difficulties; and £96 million on Learner Support.

The Department directly employs more than 2,800 staff, and within the education sector there are some 588,000 teachers, 335,000 teaching support staff, and 55,000 children's social care workers.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families spent £51 billion in 2008-09, with over three quarters of expenditure going to schools and services for young people via local authorities

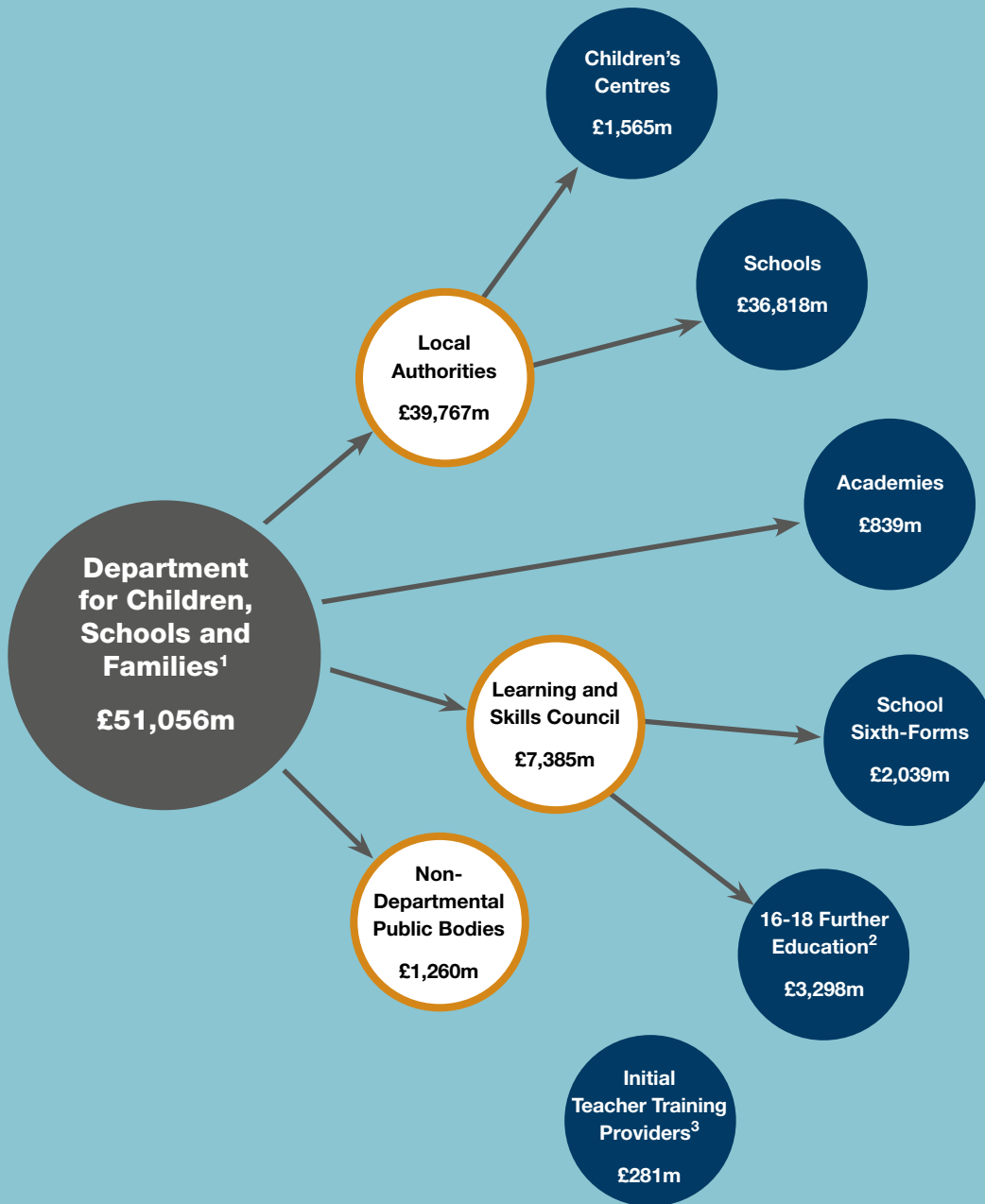
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¹ Throughout this guide we refer to the Department for Education as 'the Department' and to its predecessors by their full titles.

² The Secretary of State for Education has announced the intention to abolish two Non-Departmental Public Bodies – Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency and British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Hansard 2 June 2010, Col 458).

Where the money goes (2008-09 data)



Source: Resource Accounts 2008-09

NOTES

- 1 Includes £1,617 million for programmes that support schools, teachers, and learning that are not provided via Local Authorities; and £188 million for the Department's administration costs.
- 2 Includes independent training providers.
- 3 Funded through the Training and Development Agency.

financial management

Financial management

The ability of departments to control costs and drive out waste requires professional financial management and reporting. In particular, departments need to be better at linking costs to services and benchmarking performance to determine whether costs are justified and value for money can be improved. To provide assurance that resources are being appropriately managed and controlled, organisations have to publish Statements on Internal Control with their annual financial statements.³

Financial governance and reporting

We audit the accounts of the Department. Our audit work involves understanding the business of the Department, examining internal controls, agreeing the accounting policies, auditing transactions, liabilities and assets and confirming that the accounts present a true and fair view. We also consider whether the transactions of the Department are in accordance with Parliament's intentions. In each of the last five years, we have given an unqualified audit opinion on the Department's predecessors' accounts.

During 2009-10, the Department's financial procedures underwent substantial change as part of a move to a shared services arrangement with the Department for Work and Pensions for finance, procurement and payroll functions.

We work with the Department and its sponsored bodies to improve their published Statements on Internal Control to ensure that they are supported by robust evidence that controls are sufficiently reliable and that they comply with Treasury guidance. The Department for Children, Schools and Families' 2008-09 Statement on Internal Control drew attention to serious delays in respect of:

- the former Learning and Skills Council's contractor's processing of Education Maintenance Allowance applications; and
- the former Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's contractor's management of the national curriculum tests.

It reported that good progress had been made in reducing the risks of such problems occurring again. For example, lessons learnt would be reflected in the development of the governance and accountability framework for the Young People's Learning Agency, the successor body to the Learning and Skills Council.

In 2010, we are working with the Department to identify how its Statement on Internal Control could be developed further to increase the usefulness and transparency of reporting. We have also provided the Department's Audit Committee with our own **guidance on the Statement**.⁴

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FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT WORK
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³ *NAO Strategy 2010-11 to 2012-13*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/nao_strategy_2010-11_to_2012-1.aspx

⁴ *The Statement on Internal Control: A Guide for Audit Committees*, www.nao.org.uk/guidance__good_practice/audit_of_financial_statements.aspx

Our report on **Financial Management in the Department for Children, Schools and Families**⁵ found that:

'The Department [for Children, Schools and Families] meets many of the requirements of sound financial management... there remain, however, aspects of its financial capability and its ability to influence financial management in organisations on which it depends to deliver services which, as yet, do not meet accepted good practice.'

- It had made progress in improving financial management, with strong commitment at board level. Because it delivers mainly through partners, there are particular challenges in reporting and managing expenditure against strategic objectives, and in securing improvements in financial management in local organisations such as schools.
- It had built up a large capital underspend, which increased from £1.9 billion at 31 March 2008 to around £2.4 billion at the end of March 2009. Its capital expenditure programme required careful management, especially in the light of the £924 million brought forward from 2010-11 to 2009-10 as part of the then Government's fiscal stimulus.
- At March 2008, schools in England had a net cumulative surplus of £1.9 billion. Only one in five local authorities reduced their total net school surplus in 2007-08. Local authorities are accountable for



school spending and we considered they needed to do more to make sure that excessive uncommitted surpluses were deployed to meet local needs.

- Academies are directly funded by the Department, but there is insufficient accountability to Parliament and concerns about the adequacy of financial governance.

Our reports on programmes have also identified the need to improve financial management. For example, our report on **Building Schools for the Future**⁶ and our 2007 report on the **14-19 reform programme**⁷ found that financial modelling and forecasting for these large programmes were not always robust, necessitating changes to funding after the programme started.

Our report on **Financial Management in the Department for Children, Schools and Families**⁸ made 15 recommendations which were accepted, and actions to implement them are monitored through the Department's Finance Strategy Board. School balances reduced for the first time in six years in 2008-09, to £1.8 billion, and guidance has recently been made available to local authorities to help monitor budgets more effectively.⁹

Our 2009 **memorandum on Sure Start children's centres**¹⁰ found that since our 2006 report, financial management support available to centres had improved, and centres were being informed more promptly of their funding allocations, allowing them to plan ahead.

5 *Financial Management in the Department for Children, Schools and Families*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/financial_management_in_dcsf.aspx

6 *The Building Schools for the Future Programme: Renewing the secondary school estate*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/schools_for_the_future.aspx

7 *Partnering for success: Preparing to deliver the 14-19 education reforms in England*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/preparing_to_deliver_the_14-19.aspx

8 *Financial Management in the Department for Children, Schools and Families*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/financial_management_in_dcsf.aspx

9 *DCSF, Guidance for local authorities on managing surplus school balances*, March 2010.

10 *Sure Start children's centres – Memorandum for the Children, Schools and Families Committee*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0910/sure_start_childrens_centres.aspx

Efficiency

The Department had an ongoing programme of efficiency savings at the time of the May 2010 General Election. In March 2010, the Department for Children, Schools and Families announced a £300 million reduction in its budgets, over two years, including:

- £135 million reductions in the budgets of non-departmental public bodies;
- £50 million potential reduction from bursaries for initial teacher training and other packages; and
- £21 million to be reduced on departmental back-office and communications spending.

On 26 May 2010, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury announced that there would be a reduction of £670 million from spending allocated to the Department in 2010-11.

We are undertaking a programme of work to validate the value for money savings reported by major government departments between 2008-09 and 2010-11. As at March 2009, the Department for Children, Schools and Families reported savings of £1.017 billion (20 per cent) against its target of £5.14 billion savings to be achieved by 31 March 2011. The savings target represents nearly 15 per cent of the cross-government target.

Our review is due to be published in summer 2010. Examples of our validation of the savings reported by other departments can be found on our website.¹¹

NAO reports also consider aspects of efficiency across government (Appendix 3). Our report **Commercial skills for complex government projects**¹² highlighted where spending on consultants had been used to fill long-term gaps in the specialist skills available internally.

The former Department for Education and Skills was included in our report **The Efficiency Programme: A Second Review of Progress**¹³ which highlighted the difficulty of measuring savings where there are complex relationships between inputs and outputs. The highly devolved delivery makes measurement of efficiency a particular challenge, which we are re-examining as part of our validation of the efficiency savings referred to above.

Our 2007 report on **Improving the efficiency of central government's office property**¹⁴ found that of 16 government departments, the former Department for Education and Skills had the lowest office accommodation cost per square metre, and the second-lowest cost per employee.

A number of our reports have examined aspects of efficiency.



Sure Start Children's Centres¹⁵ December 2006

'Local authorities should help centres to provide services cost-efficiently, for example, by sharing staff across centres.'

In our recent update to this report for the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee, we found evidence of local authorities seeking economies by managing centres and centre budgets within a cluster, retaining support services within the local authority, and commissioning services centrally.

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WORK ON EFFICIENCY VISIT
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11 *Independent Reviews of reported CSR07 Value for Money savings*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0910/independent_reviews_of_vfm_sav.aspx

12 *Commercial skills for complex government projects*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/commercial_skills.aspx

13 *The Efficiency Programme: A Second Review of Progress*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0607/the_efficiency_programme_a_se.aspx

14 *Improving the efficiency of central government's office property*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/improving_the_efficiency_of_ce.aspx

15 *Sure Start Children's Centres*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0607/sure_start_childrens_centres.aspx

The Academies Programme¹⁶ February 2007

'Some academies undertake all their own procurement and support services, while others are establishing collaborations to help share and reduce costs.'

Our report recommended that the Department for Children, Schools and Families:

- encourage all academies to collaborate to achieve specific cost savings through shared services; and
- review, in the next two to three years, whether the academies' financial freedoms are contributing to improved efficiency and effectiveness.

We are examining progress against our recommendations and plan to publish the results in our second report on academies in summer 2010.



Building Schools for the Future Programme¹⁷ February 2009

'The main challenges to securing value for money revolve around increasing the pace of delivery; securing adequate cost assurance; and managing relationships in a complex delivery chain.'

Our report focused on the efficiency and economy of procurement, and recommended that the Department for Children, Schools and Families and its non-departmental public body, Partnerships for Schools:

- create a balanced scorecard of performance indicators to reflect the objectives of the programme;
- speed up the collection of cost information on involved schools so local authorities can benchmark the costs of projects;
- monitor the costs of establishing and using the Local Education Partnerships procurement model; and
- increase local authorities' capacity in procurement and programme management skills.

The majority of our recommendations have led to actions, for example, the development of the balanced scorecard.



¹⁶ *The Academies Programme*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0607/the_academies_programme.aspx

¹⁷ *The Building Schools for the Future Programme: Renewing the secondary school estate*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/schools_for_the_future.aspx

information

Use of information

The life blood of a successful organisation is the quality of information on which it makes decisions and monitors and assesses performance. Poor quality information leads to inefficiency and waste and can result in excess or unnecessary costs. Departments need reliable information on which to design and deliver services and monitor quality, be confident about their productivity, and drive continuous improvement.¹⁸

Testing the reliability of performance data across government

We carry out work across government to test the systems used by departments to report on their performance. This work provides assurance to Parliament and the public about whether these systems are adequate, and supports better performance management by government.

Under the previous Government, Public Service Agreements (PSAs) were the agreements between the Treasury and individual departments which set out priority areas for the Government's work and against which the departments reported their performance. For the period 2008-2011, 30 PSAs were used by departments to measure and report progress, each underpinned by several indicators.

In October 2009 we published our **Fifth Validation Compendium Report**,¹⁹ which reviewed data systems underpinning 13 of the Government's PSAs:

'the slow progress being made by some government departments in achieving better quality information about their own performance is a matter for concern. The NAO has found that some one third of the PSA data systems used by departments have weaknesses and just over a tenth remain unsatisfactory.'

Our Sixth Compendium Report, for PSAs across the whole of government, will be published shortly.

The Treasury announced in June 2010 that it had ended the system of Public Service Agreements and that in future departmental business plans would include the data the public can use to hold departments to account.²⁰ We will continue to apply the lessons from our work validating the PSA data systems when looking at government's performance data in future.

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WORK VISIT WWW.NAO.ORG.UK



¹⁸ *NAO Strategy 2010-11 to 2012-13*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/nao_strategy_2010-11_to_2012-1.aspx

¹⁹ *Measuring Up: How good are the Government's data systems for monitoring performance against Public Service Agreements?* www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/5th_validation_report.aspx

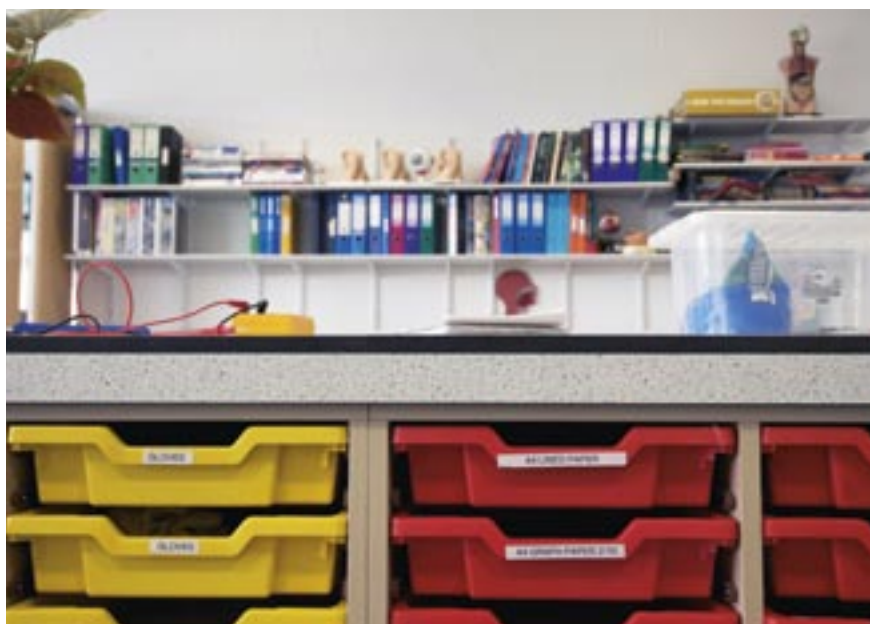
²⁰ HM Treasury: *The Spending Review framework*, June 2010 (paragraph 2.7).

Use of information by the Department

The Department for Education had lead responsibility for:

- PSA 10 to raise the educational achievement of all children and young people;
- PSA 11 to narrow the gap in educational attainment between children from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers respectively;
- PSA 12 to improve the health and well-being of children and young people;
- PSA 13 to improve children and young people's safety; and
- PSA 14 to increase the number of children and young people on the path to success.

Our **June 2010 reports**²¹ looked at the Department's data systems to support these PSAs. We concluded that seven of the 26 data systems were fit for purpose and 18 were broadly appropriate. We concluded that the remaining data system (for the prevalence of breast feeding) was not fit for the purpose of reliably measuring and reporting performance.



In our **2009 memorandum on Sure Start children's centres**,²² we also reported on the way in which information is used to monitor performance.

'Performance monitoring and financial management have improved since 2006. More performance monitoring is being undertaken, it is more sophisticated and it is applied more consistently.'

We found that the Department for Children, Schools and Families' guidance on how to manage the performance of children's centres is being used by local authorities, and there is now more regular performance review. Self evaluations completed by children's centres are used by most authorities as a basis for performance monitoring.

²¹ *Public Service Agreement data systems reviews 2010*, www.nao.org.uk/PSA-validation-2010

²² *Sure Start children's centres – Memorandum for the Children, Schools and Families Committee* www.nao.org.uk/publications/0910/sure_start_childrens_centres.aspx

delivery

A number of our reports have examined aspects of programme and project management, across the Department's highly devolved delivery network

Service delivery

Public services are different in the way they are delivered but their quality and cost-effectiveness depends on a number of common minimum requirements. For example, service delivery requires sound programme and project management, strong commercial skills, effective IT-enabled business change, and a real understanding of customer needs. Many of our reports to Parliament cover these issues. We summarise below some of this work, organised by key areas of the Department's business.²³



Mathematics performance in primary schools November 2008²⁴

'Since the late 1990's, the Department [for Children, Schools and Families] has had a specific strategy aimed at improving performance in primary mathematics which, along with its strategy to improve primary literacy, cost £207 million to implement in 2007-08.'

Our report examined trends in primary mathematics over the last decade and the impact of strategies and programmes to improve teaching and learning. In particular we evaluated performance in:

- raising attainment and progress in mathematics, and narrowing achievement gaps between certain pupils and their peers; and
- the delivery and effectiveness of the Primary National Strategy's resources and interventions, and their impact on pupil and school performance.

We concluded that the Department for Children, Schools and Families had helped to raise pupil achievement, but that progress had slowed since 2000 and that meeting ambitions for further improvements by 2011 will be challenging.

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REPORTS ON THE DEPARTMENT
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²³ *NAO Strategy 2010-11 to 2012-13*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/nao_strategy_2010-11_to_2012-1.aspx

²⁴ *Department for Children, Schools and Families – Mathematics Performance in Primary Schools: Getting the Best Results*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/primary_school_maths.aspx

Partnering for school improvement July 2009²⁵

'With a somewhat more demanding assessment of costs against the benefits achieved, these valuable relationships (achieved from partnering) could deliver significantly more demonstrable benefits than they do now.'

Our report found the Department for Children, Schools and Families spent around £400 million on initiatives that featured partnering in 2007-08. Partnering was widely used by schools and often developed in response to locally identified needs. We concluded that while it is difficult to demonstrate direct, quantifiable impacts of these initiatives, partnering has the potential to raise pupil attainment and improve behaviour in schools.

We made recommendations to enable organisations to maximise the impact of partnering. Our earlier report on the [14-19 reform programme](#)²⁶ had found scope for greater collaboration between educational institutions to deliver the new qualifications, including the 14-19 Diplomas.

The Academies Programme February 2007²⁷

'Pupils' achievements in 2005 and 2006 indicate a strong trend in raising attainment. If this trend continues, the Academies Programme will meet its objective of raising attainment in deprived areas.'



Our report concluded that most academies had made good progress in improving GCSE results, and the Programme was on track to deliver good value for money. Performance was rising faster than in other types of schools although results in English and maths were low. We found that more needed to be done by academies to collaborate with other schools and that capital costs required better management.

Our second study of the Academies Programme is evaluating whether it is achieving sufficient improvement in school performance to justify its costs. By considering the sustainability and scale of the Programme, we are assessing the prospects for delivering value for money in light of future plans for further expansion, and the robustness of the plans for transferring responsibility for finance and performance management of open academies to the Young People's Learning Agency.

Improving poorly performing schools in England January 2006²⁸

'All schools need to embrace continuous improvement. The Department [for Education and Skills], Ofsted and local authorities can do more to help schools identify weaknesses and address them before decline sets in.'

Our report found that the Government spent around £840 million in England in 2004-05 to help prevent poor performance and to turn around schools, excluding the costs of academies. These initiatives were having an impact, though more could be done to prevent poor performance in the first place, speed up the improvement of poorly performing schools, and support improved schools in sustaining their achievements. Reflecting the recommendations in our report, the Department for Children, Schools and Families:

- provided new advice to school governing bodies on headteacher recruitment, and piloted programmes to encourage talented teachers to move into leadership;
- through provision in the Education and Inspection Act 2006, enabled local authorities to address underperformance in schools at an early stage via the statutory warning notice system;
- streamlined and focused school improvement work to provide support to local authorities with under performing schools; and
- sought to strengthen school leadership by brokering collaborative arrangements between weaker and stronger performing schools.

²⁵ *Partnering for school improvement*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/partnering_for_school_improvem.aspx

²⁶ *Partnering for success: Preparing to deliver the 14-19 education reforms in England*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0708/preparing_to_deliver_the_14-19.aspx

²⁷ *The Academies Programme*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0607/the_academies_programme.aspx

²⁸ *Improving poorly performing schools in England*, www.nao.org.uk/publications/0506/improving_poorly_performing_sc.aspx

Appendices

1 The Department's sponsored bodies

In addition to the sponsored bodies listed below, there are two independent non-ministerial departments whose responsibilities relate closely to those of the Department:

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services & Skills (Ofsted)

regulates and inspects those responsible for the care of children and young people, and for educating and developing skills in learners of all ages.

Office of Qualifications & Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)

regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England, including the National Curriculum assessments (SATs).

Executive Non-Departmental Public Bodies and 2008-09 expenditure

Training and Development Agency £738.2m

seeks to raise children's standards of achievement and promote their well-being by improving the training and development of the whole school workforce.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority²⁹ £143.8m

from 1 April 2010 became the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill 2008-09.³⁰ Its role is to develop the curriculum, improve and deliver assessments, and review and reform qualifications.

Cafcass (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service) £113.8m

looks after the interests of children involved in family proceedings; advises courts about family proceedings applications; enables children to be represented in such proceedings; and provides information, advice and other support to children and their families.

National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services £110.6m

formerly the National College for School Leadership, renamed in September 2009, reflecting the extension of its remit to include responsibility for providing training and support for directors of children's services.

British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta)²⁹ £61.2m

the government's lead agency in education promoting the use of information and communications technology to improve and transform learning, teaching, and leadership in schools and colleges.

Partnerships for Schools £9.2m

was set up as a company with responsibility for the management and delivery of the government's capital investment programmes into schools, including Building Schools for the Future and the Academies Programme.

School Food Trust £7.9m

promotes the education and health of children and young people by improving the quality of food supplied and consumed in schools.

The Children's Commissioner for England £2.9m

created by the Children Act 2004 and promotes the views of children and young people.

Children's Workforce Development Council £71.9m

aims to drive forward workforce reform across children's services through providing advice, guidance and practical tools.

Young People's Learning Agency

established in April 2010 to provide financial support to young learners, fund academies and support local authorities to commission suitable education and training opportunities for 16-19 year olds.

²⁹ The Secretary of State for Education has announced the intention to abolish two Non-Departmental Public Bodies (Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency and British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) (Hansard 2 June 2010).

³⁰ This received royal assent on 12 November 2009.

Advisory Non-Departmental Public Bodies

Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy

provides advice to Government and monitors the success of its strategy towards achieving the goals of: reducing the rate of teenage conceptions, with the specific aim of halving the rate of conceptions among under 18's by 2010, and getting more teenage parents into education, training or employment, to reduce the risk of their long term social exclusion.

School Teachers' Review Body

examines and reports on matters relating to the statutory conditions and employment of school teachers in England and Wales as may from time to time be referred to it by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families.

Teachers TV Board of Governors

ensures the Teachers TV service remains editorially independent. The Board of Governors also acts as advisory body that informs decisions taken by the Secretary of State.

School Support Staff Negotiating Body

considers and negotiates on matters referred to it by the Secretary of State relating to the remuneration of school support staff, or conditions of employment relating to the duties or working time of school support staff.

Public Corporation

General Teaching Council for England³¹ £21.14m

seeks to improve standards of teaching and the quality of learning in the public interest.

Ad Hoc Advisory Groups

Learning Outside the Classroom National Advisory Group

Ministerial Taskforce for Home Access to Technology for Children

National Council for Educational Excellence

31 The Secretary of State for Education has announced the intention to introduce legislation in 2010 to abolish the General Teaching Council for England (Hansard, 2 June 2010, col 463-4).

2 Reports by the National Audit Office covering the Department's responsibilities since 2005

			Parliamentary Session	
December 2009	Sure Start children's centres – Memorandum for the Children, Schools and Families Committee			
21 October 2009	Measuring up: How good are the Government's data systems for monitoring performance against Public Service Agreements?	HC 465	2008-2009	
21 July 2009	Train to Gain: Developing the skills of the workforce ³²	HC 879	2008-2009	
9 July 2009	Partnering for school improvement	HC 822	2008-2009	
5 June 2009	Supporting people with autism through adulthood	HC 556	2008-2009	
30 April 2009	Financial Management in the Department for Children, Schools and Families	HC 267	2008-2009	
12 February 2009	The Building Schools for the Future Programme: Renewing the secondary school estate	HC 135	2008-2009	
19 November 2008	Department for Children, Schools and Families – Mathematics Performance in Primary Schools: Getting the Best Results	HC 1151	2007-2008	
11 July 2008	Renewing the physical infrastructure of English further education colleges ³²	HC 924	2007-2008	
25 June 2008	Widening participation in higher education ³²	HC 725	2007-2008	
6 June 2008	Skills for Life: Progress in Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy ³²	HC 482	2007-2008	
7 March 2008	Meeting Needs? The Offenders' Learning and Skills Service ³²	HC 310	2007-2008	
13 December 2007	Partnering for success: Preparing to deliver the 14-19 education reforms in England	HC 99	2007-2008	
26 July 2007	Staying the course: The retention of students in higher education ³²	HC 616	2006-2007	
19 July 2007	Helping people from workless households into work ³²	HC 609	2006-2007	
23 February 2007	The Academies Programme	HC 254	2006-2007	
19 December 2006	Sure Start Children's Centres	HC 104	2006-2007	
25 October 2006	Improving procurement in further education colleges in England ³²	HC 1632	2005-2006	
28 February 2006	Tackling Child Obesity – First Steps	HC 801	2005-2006	
11 January 2006	Improving poorly performing schools in England	HC 679	2005-2006	
18 May 2005	Securing strategic leadership for the learning and skills sector in England ³²	HC 29	2005-2006	
4 February 2005	Improving school attendance in England	HC 212	2004-2005	

³² The educational areas covered in these reports were the responsibility of the Department for Education and Skills until 28 June 2007 but are now the responsibility of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

3 Recent cross-government National Audit Office reports of relevance to the Department

			Parliamentary Session
18 March 2010	Reorganising central government	HC 452	2009-2010
6 November 2009	Commercial skills for complex government projects	HC 962	2008-2009
21 October 2009	Measuring Up: How good are the Government's data systems for monitoring performance against Public Service Agreements?	HC 465	2008-2009
16 October 2009	Government cash management	HC 546	2008-2009
16 July 2009	Review of errors in Guaranteed Minimum Pension payments	HC 878	2008-2009
26 March 2009	Innovation across central government	HC 12	2008-2009
27 February 2009	Helping Government Learn	HC 129	2008-2009
20 February 2008	Managing financial resources to deliver better public services	HC 240	2007-2008
17 January 2008	Making Changes in Operational PFI Projects	HC 205	2007-2008
15 December 2006	Central government's use of consultants	HC 128	2006-2007

4 Other sources of information

Reports from the Committee of Public Accounts

6 April 2010	Thirty-third Report of Session 2009-10 Nine reports from the Comptroller and Auditor General published from July 2009 to March 2010 ³³	HC 520
21 January 2010	Sixth Report of Session 2009-10 Train to Gain: Developing the skills of the workforce ³⁴	HC 248
15 October 2009	Fiftieth Report of Session 2008-09 Supporting people with autism through adulthood	HC 697
7 May 2009	Twenty-third Report of Session 2008-09 Mathematics performance in primary schools: getting the best results	HC 44
28 April 2009	Seventeenth report of Session 2008-09 Central government's management of service contracts	HC 152
26 February 2009	Fourth Report of Session 2008-09 Widening participation in higher education ³⁴	HC 226
29 January 2009	Third Report of Session 2008-09 Skills for Life: Progress in Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy ³⁴	HC 154
18 October 2007	Fifty-second Report of Session 2006-07 The Academies Programme	HC 402
17 July 2007	Thirty-eighth Report of Session 2006-07 Sure Start Children's Centres	HC 261
19 June 2007	Thirty-first Report of Session 2006-07 Central government's use of consultants	HC 309
17 October 2006	Fifty-ninth Report of Session 2005-06 Improving poorly performing schools in England	HC 956
24 January 2006	Twenty-first Report of Session 2005-06 Skills for Life: Improving adult literacy and numeracy ³⁴	HC 792
19 January 2006	Eighteenth Report of Session 2005-06 Department for Education and Skills: Improving school attendance in England	HC 789

³³ Includes Reports on: *Government Cash Management and Review of errors in Guaranteed Minimum Pension payments*, which includes the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

³⁴ The educational areas covered in these reports were the responsibility of the Department for Education and Skills until 28 June 2007 but are now the responsibility of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Where to find out more

The National Audit Office website is
www.nao.org.uk

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