

DfES background material – LEA fourth level

From the requests that DfES have had it is clear that English LEAs have different uses for the proposed generic .sch.uk domain name and therefore we would like them to have the freedom to identify a name that reflects the use and so is informative. A generic name could not do this.

The reason why the Scottish proposal is not appropriate in England is because England and Scotland have different approaches to schools and LEAs. There is greater autonomy for English schools with a target to promote diversity. To do this it is also important for LEAs to have freedom to support schools in a way appropriate for their area. In Scotland there is greater reliance on top down policies, hence the request for generic names.

The 'Schools - achieving success' White Paper is a significant package for the reform of education. It sets out our vision for the education service for the years ahead, building on the excellent foundations laid over the past four years.

All of the themes in the White Paper lead to one end - higher standards for all. The DfES will achieve this through:

- greater diversity and flexibility;
- delivering high minimum standards;
- supporting teachers and schools to deliver change; and
- encouraging innovation with the best schools leading the system.

The DfES want to build a flexible and diverse system in which every school is excellent and plays to its strengths; where schools learn from each other; are freed to innovate.

At the heart of the DfES vision for transforming education is the ambition for every LEA and school to create or develop its mission and ethos, including a mission to raise standards and enlarge opportunities for all its pupils. An LEA's and school's main priority is to serve its pupils, their families and their community, but we also want schools to contribute to the family of schools and to the development of the education system. Successful headteachers build the strength of their school by defining a clear sense of purpose for it and by developing its distinctive character. LEAs and schools with a positive ethos and strong sense of purpose, focused on high standards of behaviour and achievement, develop these same qualities in their pupils and staff. The debate that takes place when a good school defines its character can itself be a powerful catalyst and focus for school improvement. The evidence shows that schools with a distinct identity perform best, with the ethos acting to motivate staff and pupils across a wide range of subjects and activities, improving teaching and learning.