

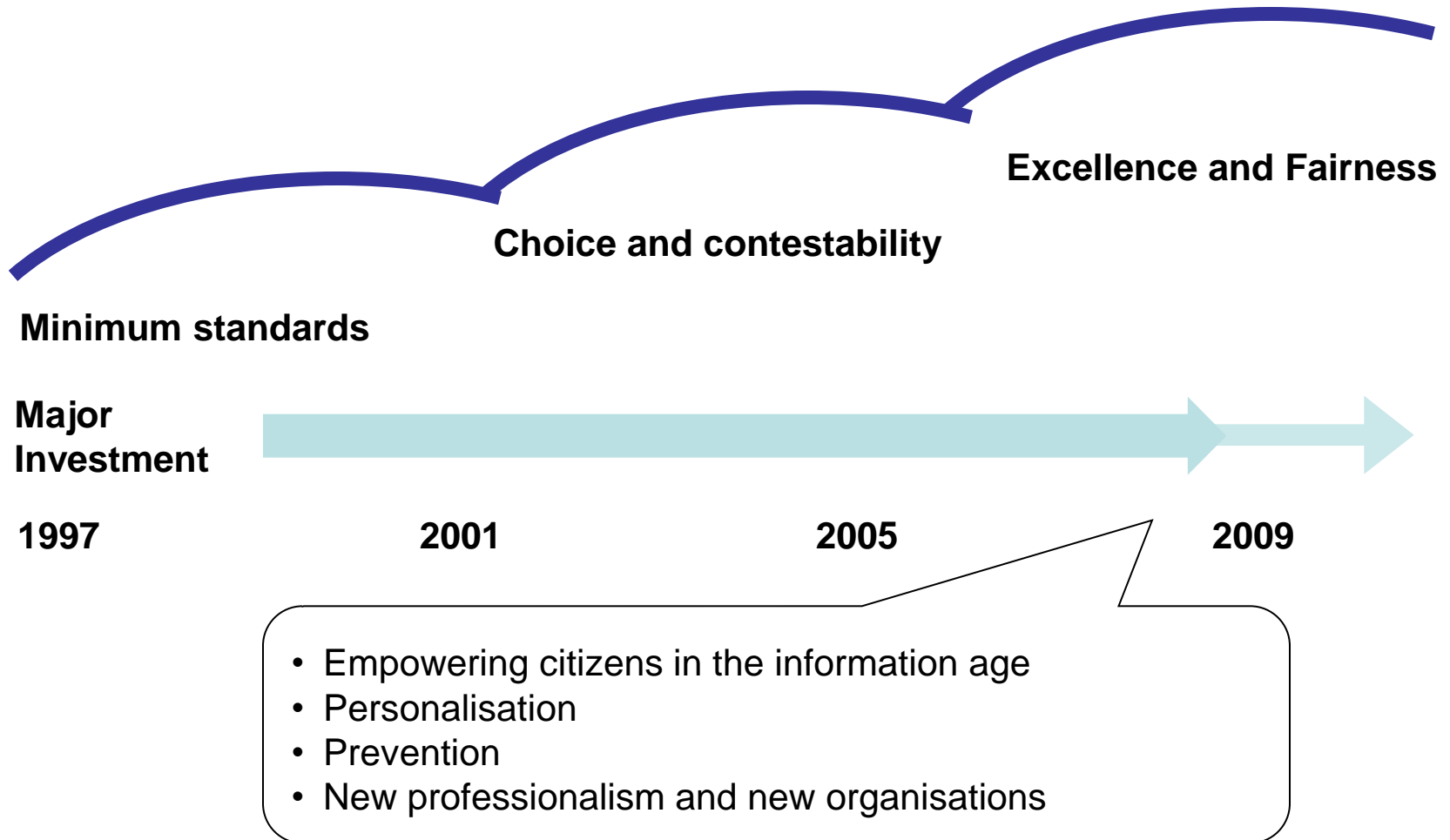
School system improvement in England and the influence of Canadian case studies

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There have been three phases of public service reform in the UK since 1997



... and the recent Schools White Paper marks the third phase of reform for the English schools system

Minimum standards

1997. *Excellence in schools*

- Prescriptive literacy and numeracy strategies, driven by national field forces
- Badly under-performing schools challenged; beginning of 'Academies' programme
- School specialisation and independence encouraged
- Large investments in workforce and buildings
- Independent inspectorate and published results tables continue

Choice and contestability

2005. *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All: More choice for parents and pupils*

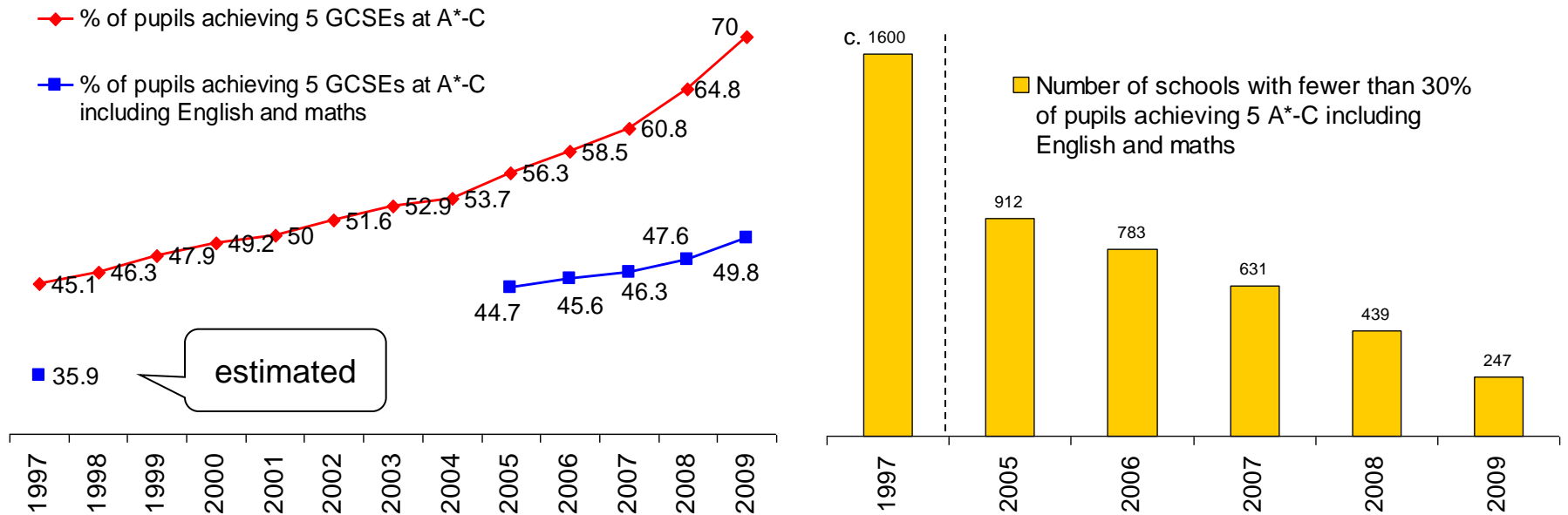
- Stronger failure regime
- Greater autonomy for higher performing schools
- Greater contestability, expansion of Academies, introduction of Trust schools.
- Free school transport for low income families and 'choice advisers' for parents
- Empowerment of parents to challenge LAs; set up schools

Excellence and Fairness

2009. *Your Child, Your Schools, Our Future: Building a 21c School System*

- Pupil and parental legal 'entitlements'
- Schools working in partnership and creation of Accredited School Groups
- Formal creation of 'executive head' role for individual leading more than one school
- Clear accountability and intervention for underperformers, with greater flexibility and freedoms for best

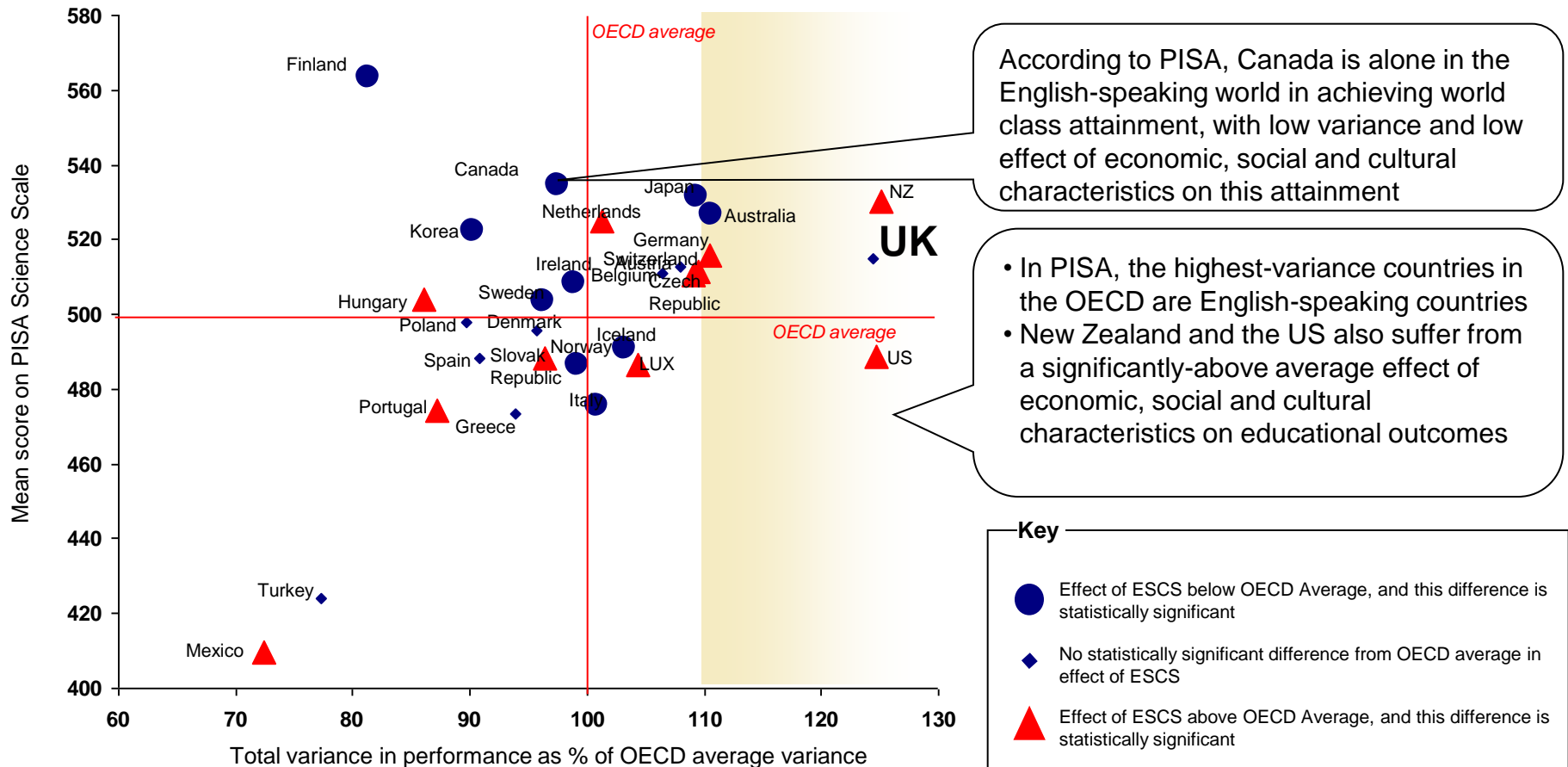
The system's performance improved considerably over the past twelve years



- Per pupil funding (including both revenue and capital) has risen from £3,030 in 1997/8 to a planned £6,290 in 2010/11
- There has been an increase in teacher numbers of over 42,000, or almost 10%
- 73% of parents are 'extremely satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the school their child attends, with only 6% saying they were either unsure or in some way dissatisfied

But there is more to do

Attainment, variance and the effect of social class in PISA 2006¹



And, since 2006, government has set new and more stretching objectives for schools and for the system

National targets

- Stretching 2020 attainment targets for all 19 year olds
- Narrowing the attainment gap between socioeconomic groups
- National Challenge: No school below a 'floor target' of attainment at age 16 by 2010/11
- Reducing the number of 'coasting' schools, where attainment may be above the floor target, but pupils are making insufficient progress

Other expectations

- Schools required to work in partnership with other services and with parents, to ensure children are safe, healthy, making positive contributions, enjoying and achieving and achieving economic wellbeing
- Raised participation age to 18
- Major programme of qualifications and curriculum reform for 14-19 year olds – impossible for schools to deliver acting separately

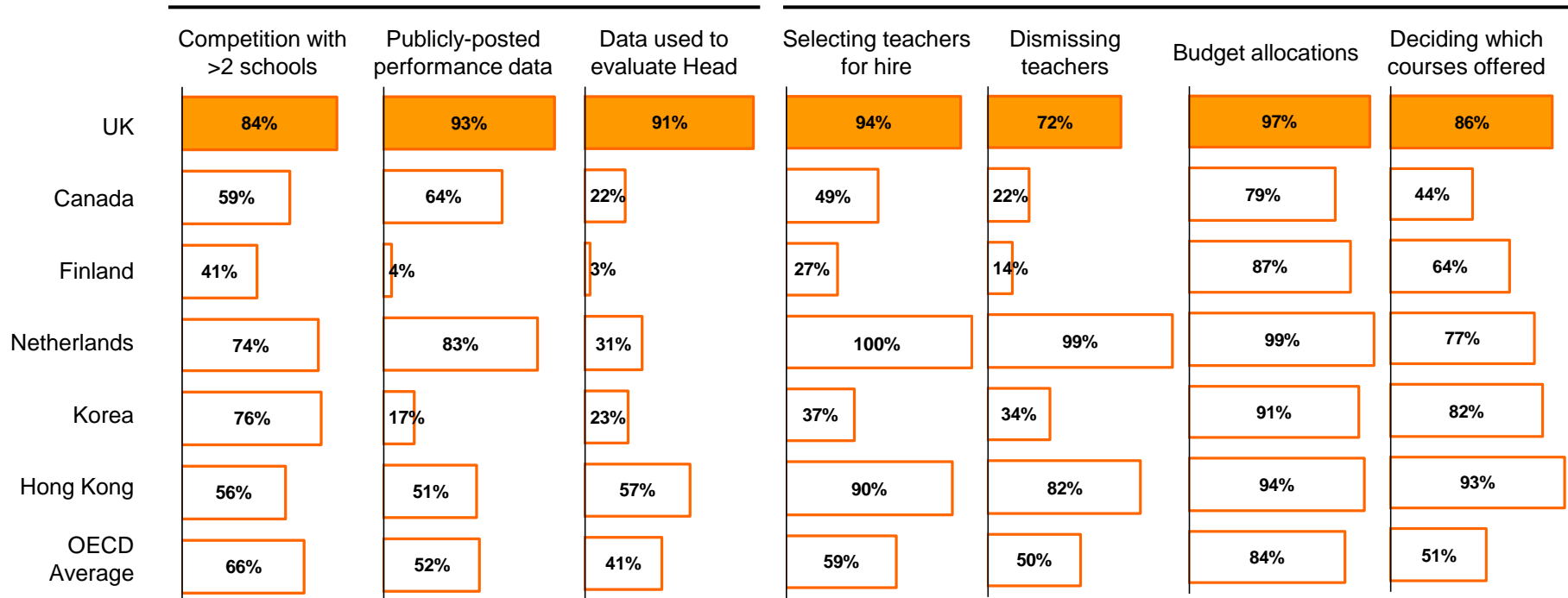
In analysis to support the next phase of reform, we looked closely at the organisation of world-leading systems

Competition and transparency

(% of pupils in schools where heads reported that this factor applied to them)

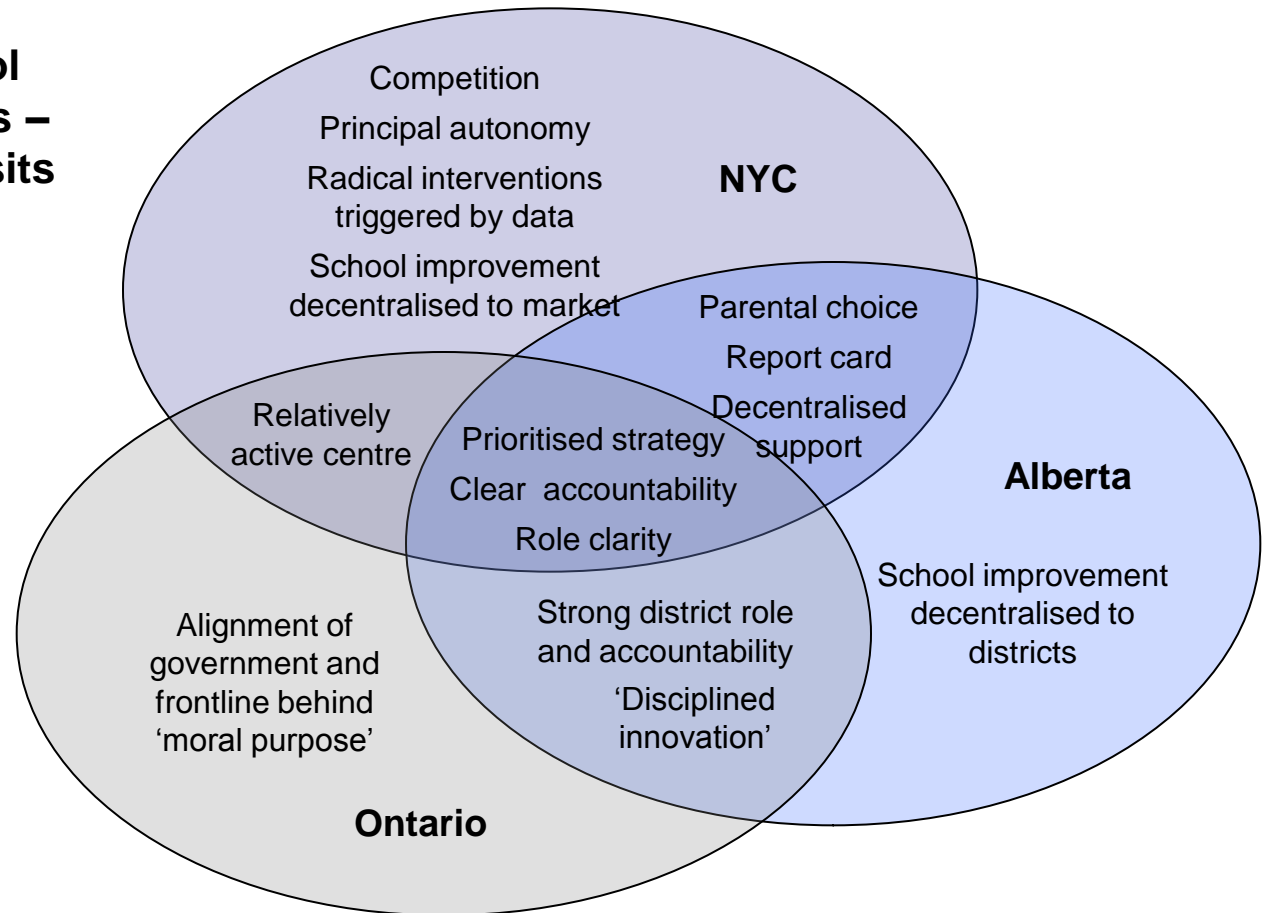
Decision autonomy

(% of pupils in schools where heads reported that 'only the school' had considerable responsibility for...)



Evidence from the English-speaking countries was important, due to similarities in social contexts

Key features of school improvement systems – observations from visits



The Alberta and Ontario systems appeared to share some common drivers of success

1. Simple and stable strategy; clarity of purpose down to front line
2. Clear central-local-school line of accountability
3. Less emphasis on competition, autonomy, choice etc as drivers of school improvement
4. Focus of frontline time on teaching innovations, and 'disciplined innovation' across the system
5. Impressive personalisation of offer to pupils

Recent English reforms in school system improvement reflect what we learned from world-leading systems

- **Devolution of school improvement budgets**, with schools to lead their own improvement and choose from a range of options for support
- **Greater accountability beyond the unit of the school**
 - a new legal accountability for 'Executive head-teachers' leading groups of schools
 - schools required to work in partnership
 - stronger area-wide accountability for head-teachers/ principals with proposed legislation to make clear that schools have responsibility for all children across the area, as well as those on their own roll
- **Improved Local Authority accountability** via citizen entitlements: "Pupil guarantee"; "Parent guarantee"
- Consulting on a new "School Report Card" to provide more **balanced assessment of school performance**