

Securing School Improvement Protocol

(March 2014)

**Detailing the monitoring, support, challenge and intervention
for school improvement in Telford & Wrekin Schools.**

1. Introduction

There are many successful schools in Telford & Wrekin and the Council is committed to work in partnership with all schools to ensure that every pupil receives a good quality of education and achieves excellent outcomes.

This policy contributes significantly to achieving the priorities of Telford & Wrekin Council, to ensure the education and personal development needs of all children and young people are effectively addressed.

The policy outlines the strategies used by the Local Authority (LA) to ensure that all schools are supported and monitored effectively, that early identification of emerging issues is noted and acted upon, and intervention, where needed, is timely and well planned. It is also used to help make good schools better.

The School Improvement Service has the key responsibility within the Council for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the quality of education and standards of attainment and achievement in all Telford & Wrekin schools, and for planning the targeted intervention in those schools where significant improvement is necessary.

It is not expected that a school will be placed within an intervention category based on one criterion. Some criteria carry more weight than others but a collection of criteria, each separately indicating a minor concern, may suggest the need for support and intervention. The LA expects its officers/partners to take a pragmatic and reasoned approach to intervention and has a successful record in doing so. The action that will need to be taken by the LA and its schools is also detailed and clearly identifies what will happen if a school needs support.

We remain committed to working in partnership with schools building upon successful practice.

Jim Collins

Assistant Director Education & Skills

2. Key Principles

- Successful schools and effective school improvement depend on high quality leadership and management and improving professional practice.
- School improvement relates equally to the inclusion of all children and young people, through personal and social development, broader educational outcomes and experiences, and to what is measured by national assessments.
- Personal and professional needs and relationships are highly valued and are central to the process of school improvement.
- Relationships between schools and the LA are based on mutual trust, empathy and openness with secure processes for collaboration and consultation.
- Successful schools and Local Authorities listen to the views of learners, parents/carers, the local community and other stakeholders and include their views in Improvement Plans.

The LA has a key role in monitoring, supporting, challenging and intervening in partnership with schools and colleges across the Borough.

These four key tasks are defined as follows:

Monitoring

The regular and systematic collection and analysis of a wide range of performance data (qualitative and quantitative), in conjunction with schools' self-evaluation processes, in order to inform school and LA strategic planning and quality assurance processes, and to ensure that statutory requirements are met.

Supporting

Working in partnership with schools to address identified needs, either directly or through brokerage of external providers. The LA's system is designed to ensure that schools receive sufficient and timely support to address identified concerns.

Challenging

Working in partnership with schools to ensure that opportunities for improvement are recognised and exploited to the full so that pupils' achievements, personal development and well-being are maximised through the effective use of rigorous school self-evaluation.

Intervening

Schools are responsible for their own performance and improvement. The LA is able to provide support for schools in their own self evaluation. Where performance, self-evaluation, plans for improvement or other aspects of leadership are judged to be inadequate or failing to make rapid improvement to secure good overall effectiveness, the LA will use its powers of intervention to ensure that the school's performance improves. Successful school improvement strategies should lead to improved achievement and learning, quality of teaching and leadership and management.

The supported self-evaluation cycle

LA officers, advisers and partners will work with all school leaders, including Governors, in supporting school self evaluation. The allocation of support throughout the year is differentiated according to need or the level of support which the school chooses to purchase from the LA.

Schools in Category 3 and 4 will be required to produce a Raising Achievement Plan and this will be rigorously monitored by the School Improvement Team to ensure that the school is making rapid and sustained progress to be good or better. Additional support to schools in Category 3 and 4 will be identified in Raising Achievement Plans (RAPs) for those schools.

3. The Role of the Local Authority in Quality Assuring performance in Academies

The Local Authority has a clear role in quality assuring all provision across the borough, whether this is maintained schools and settings or academies.

The Local Authority will undertake an annual assessment of provision for all settings, using all available data. The annual assessment of provision will be encapsulated within the Annual Report for the setting, this will also include the Local Authorities categorisation for the setting. The Annual Report will be sent to the Head teacher and the Chair of Governors, Trust Board or Sponsor.

It is our aim to work in partnership with all providers in the borough. It is therefore always preferable to prepare any annual report and categorisation process in partnership and discussion with the setting.

Where there is a concern over any aspect of provision in an academy (category 3 and 4), the following hierarchy of processes will be followed:

1. There will be an informal discussion with the Head teacher, seeking a rapid response and appropriate actions (detailed in a RAP).
2. There will be an informal discussion with the Trust Board or Sponsors seeking a rapid response and appropriate actions.
3. Where there is no appropriate response to steps 1 or 2 there will be formal written communication with the Head teacher seeking a rapid response and appropriate actions.
4. There will be formal written communication with the Trust Board or Sponsors seeking a rapid response and appropriate actions.
5. Should there be no engagement in the process through the previous steps or if the concern continues, the LA will formally write to the Secretary of State and Ofsted to outline the details of this concern.

3. Purpose

The purposes of the LA's work with schools in the self evaluation cycle is:

- to support schools in becoming autonomous, self evaluating and successful inclusive institutions where overall effectiveness is judged to be good or better;
- to support schools within the process of self-evaluation, challenging them to make full use of the range of evidence available in order to identify success and good practice and determine priorities for improvement;
- to identify and share good practice within and across schools;
- to encourage schools to set challenging targets for improvement;
- to link, where relevant, the school's needs to the LA support plans;
- to evaluate the effectiveness of schools' plans in implementing national policy and raising standards;
- to identify schools where intervention may be necessary, including structural solutions;
- to determine, in partnership with schools, the nature and extent of support to be provided through LA and other services;
- to support Governing Bodies in discharging their responsibilities through an effective balance of challenge and support to secure good or better overall effectiveness.

Support for all Schools

The School Improvement Team can provide support for all schools for the following:

- recruitment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher in community and voluntary controlled schools (statutory requirement); and in voluntary aided, foundation schools, trust schools or academies, if requested by the governors;
- quality assurance of the school's processes for monitoring newly qualified teachers;
- visits, as required, to monitor the administration and/or special arrangements for end of phase tests and assessments;
- visit to meet with members of inspection teams and attend OfSTED inspection feedback meetings;

- additional visits to follow up specific serious allegations, issues or incidents e.g. child protection or financial audit report or critical incident. This is likely to happen in collaboration with Officers from Safeguarding or Finance or other appropriate sections of Children, Young People and Families (CYPF).

Supporting Improvement

In order to implement this policy and to provide the required support for all schools, the LA will:

- a) demonstrate total commitment to school improvement and fulfil our priority of improving the educational achievement of all young people and promoting widespread participation in effective learning opportunities;
- b) use its powers of intervention if needed;
- c) support schools to self-evaluate their own performance through validation and moderation;
- d) respond promptly to requests for support and advice;
- e) make all headteachers and chairs of governors aware of the category in which their school is placed and reasons for such categorisation;
- f) work with the Dioceses, where appropriate, to secure improvement for individual schools;
- g) ensure that appropriate officers co-ordinate the support and intervention for a school drawing on appropriate services;
- h) broker and commission support for schools which cannot be found within the Council's services;
- i) monitor the progress of all schools and provide feedback to the Assistant Director Education & Skills;
- j) identify successful practice and disseminate this as far as possible;
- k) respect the confidentiality of the school;
- l) avoid the creation of a dependency culture respecting each school as an autonomous, self-governing organisation;
- m) treat schools as unique institutions in respect of the support provided.

In implementing the Securing School Improvement Policy the LA will expect a school to:

- a) respond positively to the advice, support and challenge provided by the LA;
- b) monitor, review and evaluate its own progress;
- c) work with the LA to develop, and implement within agreed timescales, an action plan for the required improvements;
- d) involve the governing body and/or Diocese in the improvement process;
- e) allocate resources to target the areas requiring most support;
- f) encourage all staff to be pro-active in helping it make the required improvements, providing additional training and support if needed;
- g) provide constructive feedback to the LA on its school improvement functions;
- h) sustain and build upon the improvements once these are achieved;
- i) remain independent and autonomous, taking full responsibility for its own improvement and ultimate performance.

4. Identifying the level of Support for Schools

The LA has set out five strands of evidence criteria which will be used to identify a school which requires advice and support and, if needed, intervention. The five strands are:

- Pupils' achievement
- Pupils' behaviour and safety
- Quality of teaching
- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management
- Organisational change and temporary situations

It is not expected that a school will normally be identified as requiring additional support or intervention based on one criterion alone. The use of the criteria will allow the LA to identify issues where a school may need temporary support and advice. The criteria do not carry equal weight, nor are they written in a hierarchical way but they will assist in identification of need and raise achievement.

Schools will be identified as requiring additional support where they do not meet some of the criteria in the following headings:

Strand 1; Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils:

The school provides at least satisfactory and improving standards of education specifically:

- Attainment levels in statutory tests or examination results which are at least at the national average or above the national floor standards.
- Progress measures which are at least at the national average.
- Attainment levels which have improved over time as shown by rolling averages.
- Aspirational targets based on the prior attainment of the pupils.
- No statistically significant variations between the performance of girls and boys, between different ethnic groups or between individual groups of pupils, including FSM and CLA.

- Attainment in the foundation subjects is at least in line with the national expectations as indicated by OfSTED inspection outcomes.
- Learners make a positive contribution to the community and develop skills that contribute to future economic well-being.
- Attention is given to pupil care. Schools effectively develop well-being and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Impact of pupil consultation and involvement is evident.

Strand 2; Pupils' Behaviour and Safety

- Good attendance and punctuality at school and in lessons.
- Good conduct in lessons and around the school.
- Positive behaviour and attitudes from young people which demonstrate that they have respect for one another and for adults.
- There are consistently low numbers of exclusions either permanent or fixed term.
- Pupils, parents and carers hold positive views about the behaviour and safety within the school.

Strand 3; The Quality of Teaching & Learning

- Consistently good or better teaching across the school that contributes to good progress of all pupils.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress, provide constructive feedback and plan lessons to match their needs.
- Teachers and other support staff stretch each individual pupil including pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs.
- Good relationships between pupils and staff.
- Effective use of intervention and support staff to improve student outcomes to be good or better.

- Effective teaching to support all pupils to read fluently and develop their skills in literacy and mathematics.
- Implementation of key policies for inclusion, equal opportunities, disability, race and safeguarding (including child protection).
- Effective use of environment to meet pupils' learning needs.

Strand 4; Effectiveness of Leadership and Management

Leadership and Management at all levels is at least good with the head teacher and senior staff giving clear direction on how the school should improve based on accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

- Effectiveness of Leadership Team in embedding the school's vision, ambition and driving improvement in their achievement.
- Effectiveness of the leadership team including governors in monitoring and improving teaching and learning.
- Appropriate and rigorous appraisal and performance management systems in place which result in improved teaching and learning and pupil performance.
- Effective financial, resource and personnel management which results in improved pupil outcomes.
- Confidence in the head teacher and senior leadership team by the staff, parents and governors.
- Good quality advice and guidance relating to course and career choices.
- Positive impact of care, advice, guidance and support on learners' progress, personal development and well-being.
- Range of extra curricular or extended learning activities.
- Making the required statutory returns to government or the LA within the required timescales.
- Adherence to significant advice from officers and/or external agencies where to do otherwise would prejudice the school's future and/or legal standing or children and young people's well being.

- Effective support and professional development for all staff including newly qualified teachers.
- Minimal level of parental complaints about the school.
- Appropriate attention and consideration given to health and safety issues.
- The accuracy of the school's self evaluation and the use made of its findings to drive improvement.
- The school has capacity for sustaining improvements.
- Appropriate response to complaints/allegations about bullying and harassment.
- Strategic planning which reflects and promotes the school's ambitions and goals.
- Linking and engaging with the community and other partners of the school e.g. church or faith groups, partner schools, government agencies, voluntary sector and other agencies.
- Accurately self-auditing and self-evaluating the school's progress, improvement and achievement.
- Governors appropriately monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and fully holding the school to account for its performance.
- Good relationships amongst staff and between staff and pupils.
- Middle leaders are strategic and are impacting on standards of achievement and teaching and learning.

Strand 5; Organisational Change and Temporary Situations

These situations are beyond a school's normal experience and may be beyond a school's control:

- significant changes in the Senior Leadership Team;
- significant staff absence or vacancies which might potentially impair the school's ability to make progress in the short or longer term;
- significant number of new or temporary staff which might potentially stall the school's progress in the short or longer term ;
- concern over the numbers of staff leaving the school within a short time frame for unexplained reasons, or frequent staff absences, or failure to recruit;

- significant new building works or temporary accommodation or transfer of accommodation which might potentially impair the school's progress in the short or longer term;
- a disproportionately large number of pupils leaving or entering the school;
- school experiencing or planning for review, re-organisation, merger or closure which might potentially impair the school's progress in the short or longer term;
- school experiencing a difficult, unusual or unique situation which might impair its ability to sustain its progress and performance such as ill health of a child or adult; serious incident in school; fire or serious vandalism.

5. Categories of Schools

The LA will use four categories to classify the intervention level of support that a school will receive. The level of support will depend on the seriousness of the indicators and the temporary nature of the support needed. The categorization will be dependent on the individual needs of the school and there may be circumstances where a school could move from a category 1 straight to a category 3 for example in the case of significant changes in leadership or high level of appropriate parental concerns or complaints.

Category One

Those schools which have no significant issues raised from the identification criteria and are deemed by the LA to have practice worthy of sharing with other schools across the Borough. They will consistently set challenging targets year on year and meet or exceed them and will have a recent, good or outstanding OfSTED report demonstrating that they have no significant issues in the school's RAISE online data when compared to similar schools, prior attainment or progress measures.

Category Two

Those Schools that require additional support, advice and visits are those that have not met 2 or more of the criteria in strands 1 to 4; or in exceptional circumstances those listed in strand 5. This support can be brokered in from the LA School Improvement Team by the Traded Service model of delivery.

Category Three

Those schools which have been within Category Two and which have not made the progress expected within twelve months; or those where there are serious concerns.

It is recognised that, when a school is identified as needing additional support in line with this protocol, this may initially cause concern for school staff. For example some staff may perceive that they will be expected to manage an excessive workload and to work long hours. This in turn may cause additional stress to staff.

Heads and governors should make it clear at the outset to all staff what Category Three means for their school and to establish that the emphasis will be on working smarter. A Raising Achievement Plan (RAP) will be published and shared with all staff outlining the additional support that the school will receive in order to ensure that improvement can occur. In a few cases there may be individual capability issues identified and if so the aim will be to improve an individual's capability using the appropriate policies and support.

Assistance from Telford and Wrekin Council's Human Resources and the Occupational Health Team can be accessed if there are concerns about stress levels within a school.

Category 3 schools will be subject to intervention from the LA which will always include the following:

- Joint monitoring activity to validate SLT judgements and validate next steps .
- Joint writing of a RAP to align support, prioritise need and provide clear pathways for continuity and progression.
- Termly review of the RAP and progress data to ensure impact against the success criteria.

In addition the LA is able to offer the following activities by a Traded Service model of delivery:

- A programme of co-coaching to increase confidence levels of staff and improve subject knowledge by sharing good practice.
- Dual lesson observations with middle or senior leaders with a view to improving the percentage of good teaching and pupil progress and to build leadership capacity.
- Additional lesson observations focused on teaching and pupil progress to follow up identified whole school issues outside of performance management time.
- Joint book scrutiny with middle and senior leaders to review pupil progress and build leadership capacity
- Review of monitoring evidence base and practice including tracking and intervention system.
- Pupil or student interviews to review the impact of provision on learning.
- Brokered support from NLE, LLE or other local school.

A senior school improvement officer will chair a school specific Review Team each half term and will report through minutes to the school and senior officers on the improvement made by the school. Members of the Review Team will be appointed as deemed necessary. Details of the role and possible membership of the Review Team are found in *Annexe 1*.

It is anticipated that schools subject to such targeted support and intervention will secure satisfactory progress against the key targets within one year, though in exceptional circumstances this period may be extended.

If the progress made by the school is inadequate despite the LA support received, the Assistant Director Education & Skills will report the matter to the Director of Children's Services and recommend that a review of the leadership of the school is undertaken and formal capability procedures are explored. At this point, the school will be subject to a formal LA warning notice and an escalation to **Category Four** status.

Category Four

This category has two sub-categories:

4a (Schools issued with a formal warning notice by the LA)

Those schools which the LA judges to have failed to make rapid and sustained progress to secure good or better outcomes despite the LA support provided to them, or those schools that have been deemed by OfSTED to Require Improvement and have then failed to make adequate progress on a subsequent Section 8 monitoring visit. The LA could take serious action such as:

- removal of delegated powers;
- appointment of additional governors;
- establishment of an Interim Executive Board (IEB);
- contacting OfSTED to request an inspection;
- consideration of a structural solution.

The Council considers that this is unlikely to happen or the sanctions exercised if all parties co-operate towards securing improvement.

4b (External categorisation)

Those schools that are categorised by OfSTED as:

- Having **Serious Weaknesses**.
- Requiring **Special Measures**.

These schools will receive substantial additional visits, challenge, advice and support. In addition to that given to **Category 3** schools.

However, in the early stages, where appropriate, weekly visits will take place to help to secure the action plan and subsequent remedial action.

The school's LA Statement of Action will be completed. This will be discussed first with the Director of Children's Services, aligned with the school action plan and then be sent to OfSTED.

The School Improvement Team will produce appropriate documentation and regular feedback for the Assistant Director Education & Skills on the school's progress.

A formal review of progress will be undertaken by staff from School Improvement. A report will be written and shared with staff and governors. The Service Delivery Manager will meet termly with the governors to review the school's progress with them. He/she will attend the feedback sessions from any HMI monitoring visits together with the School Adviser wherever possible.

If the progress made by the school is inadequate despite the LA support received, the Assistant Director Education & Skills will report the matter to the Director of Children's Services and recommend that a review of the leadership of the school is undertaken and formal capability procedures are explored and this may include use of statutory powers as described under Category 4a.

In addition to the above, the LA will, where appropriate:

- provide regular telephone contact;
- meet regularly with the headteacher;
- ask officers to attend governing body meetings;
- undertake a review of the effectiveness and impact of the governing body;
- advise on recruitment and on appointment to any staffing vacancies;

- broker the secondment of staff from other schools into the school;
- identify additional resource needs;
- provide training for governors and staff;
- assist with public meetings for parents;
- broker an associate headteacher or senior staff to strengthen the leadership and management of the school;
- review any additional projects that the school is involved in to ensure that they are refocused to meet the priorities for improvement;
- consider and respond to any reasonable request for advice and support.

Schools will remain at this stage until they are removed formally by OfSTED.

Category 3 / 4 Meetings

Role

The role of the LA includes contributing to the:

- assessment of the causes of concern about the school;
- devising and updating of the intervention/action plan for improvement;
- monitoring of, and reporting on, the implementation of the plan;
- successful removal of the causes for concern.

Membership

The membership of the LA Review Team could vary depending on the particular causes for concern at the school. However, the core membership is likely to be drawn from:

- Officers of the School Improvement Team, one of whom will lead the Team and chair the meetings.
- Attached Adviser.
- Staff from Inclusion Support Services eg Educational Psychologist, Education Welfare Officer, and Behaviour Support Team member.
- Staff from other areas of support services e.g. Finance Officer, HR Officer, and Capital & Facilities Officer.
- Others as deemed relevant and necessary.
- The Head and/or senior management, and Chair of Governors, of the school causing concern will also attend review meetings.

Review meetings will be held each half term and will focus on aspects of work related to the intervention/action plan. A consistent format will be used to monitor progress on the following areas:

- Human Resources
- Finance
- School Developments
 - Raising Achievement Plan update
 - Evidence and judgements from monitoring
 - Pupil progress data
 - Attendance
 - Exclusions
 - Leadership and management concerns
 - Exit Strategy

Only after a review meeting, will the category of a school (Category 3 and 4 only) be changed, except where a school is entering a category for the first time. Such changes will be made in discussion with the school.

Protocol for School Reviews

<p>Initiated and led by the LA at no cost to the school.</p>	<p>Type 1</p>	<p>A LA initiated review</p> <p>This may be initiated for a variety of reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Director of Children’s Services may order a review to investigate a particular aspect of concern • There may be continued concerns raised about the school from stakeholders, LA officers or Ofsted, and a review is considered the most appropriate way to establish a clear way forward.
<p>A school may request the support of the School Improvement Team as part of the school’s routine self evaluation processes. These reviews are part of the Quality Assurance processes of the school and will be delivered by a Traded Service model of delivery.</p>	<p>Type 2</p>	<p>A school initiated review led by SLT or LA</p> <p>Where the School Improvement Team is asked by the school to review provision in partnership with school staff, it will generally be for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school wishes to have a formal external judgement made about aspect (s) of school development • To support the training and development of staff within school as part of improving school self evaluation processes. <p>The School Improvement Team are asked to support the school’s self evaluation processes by building capacity in the school’s review team.</p>