

TITLE	School Improvement Policy 2015
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 October 2015
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Judith Ramsden, Director of Children's Services.

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

RECOMMENDATION

To consider the priorities set out in the report and assess future developments in the context of these priorities.

To receive future reports evaluating the success of the policy.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The School Improvement Service has responsibility for ensuring all children and families have access to high quality and safe primary, including Early Years, secondary and special school provision. This includes working with the Headteachers' Steering Group to secure:

- Core support, advice and challenge.
- Addressing schools causing concern.
- Traded services packages and high quality CPD and training.
- System leadership, sharing of best practice and school to school support.

In 2014, with the support of the Headteachers' Steering Group, the Wokingham 4 success Policy was agreed. This detailed how the School Improvement Service would challenge and support schools. Signs of Success, attached, is the revised document.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Cross-Council Implications

List of Background Papers

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**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Signs of Success

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT POLICY – PRIMARY, SECONDARY
AND SPECIAL**

A STRATEGY FOR RAISING ACHIEVEMENT

- *Schools drive success*
- *Early intervention builds success*
- *Closing gaps spread success*
- *Wokingham children and young people enjoy success*

September 2015

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1. INTRODUCTION

This strategy sets out how Wokingham LA continues to ensure schools are ambitious for the children of the Borough, delivering excellent standards of education and supporting the well-being of all their pupils. Schools are responsible for school improvement and this strategy reinforces Wokingham's absolute determination to work in partnership with all schools and other providers to ensure that the aim of every child in Wokingham attending a school that is good or better is achieved.

Schools play a leading role in school improvement, with 'school to school' support being the preferred mode nationally. There is a strong focus on school to school support and networking through the seven Wokingham partnerships. The statutory responsibilities of the local authority include:

- promoting early action to tackle school underperformance so that it does not become entrenched and lead to formal school failure;
- ensuring that effective support and challenge is provided when an unacceptable standard of education is identified, so that improvements can be made quickly;
- decisive action if a school in special measures fails to make sufficient improvements, so that the education and life chances of pupils are protected.

Wokingham has no schools in special measures, and a good proportion of schools which are good or outstanding. Schools' performance trajectory is positive, and this policy supports that. Other statutory requirements linked to school improvement include assessment and moderation, the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), Equalities and Safeguarding. Schools now play a leading role in school improvement, with 'school to school' support being the preferred mode nationally.

2. VISION AND PRIORITIES

The work of the School Improvement Team supports the corporate vision:

'to make Wokingham the best place in the country to grow up, where all schools provide the conditions for all children and young people to achieve their very best, be happy, healthy and safe.'

This will be achieved through a focus on the following strategic priorities:

- **Closing gaps**
- **Early Years 0 – 5**
- **Sector led improvement**
- **Every school good or better**
- **Challenging, brokering and commissioning**

3. HEAD TEACHER STEERING GROUP

Purpose

- Oversight of school improvement policy and its implementation
- Liaison with Schools' Forum, clusters and federations
- Planning and evaluation of CPD

a. Membership/meetings

- Headteachers representing each primary cluster (7)
- Chair of primary heads' association
- Secondary federation (2)
- LA school improvement officers (2)
- Witness sessions from those presenting reports as necessary
- Four meetings per year (October, January, April, July)

b. Activities

- Evaluation of pupil outcomes and sharing good practice
- Evaluation of CPD feedback and determination of CPD programme
- Evaluation of governor training feedback
- Advice on LA SEF and on Headteacher Briefings
- Evaluation and review of School Improvement Policy/LA impact
- Review of LA support/traded services; HR; Finance etc
- Ensure coherence with Schools Forum

4. THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

4.1 The role of the School Improvement Service

The School Improvement Service has responsibility for ensuring all children and families have access to high quality and safe primary, including Early Years, secondary and special school provision. This includes working with the Headteachers' Steering Group to secure:

- core support, advice and challenge
- addressing schools causing concern
- traded services packages and high quality CPD and training
- system leadership, sharing of best practice and school to school support

The way in which we do this is by allocating School Improvement Officers (SIOs) to work with schools (see Section 4.4) with an emphasis on evaluating the impact of LA support and the necessary progress made.

4.2 The School Improvement offer includes:

- Early Years, Childcare and Play Service including central training and professional development opportunities, cluster meetings, SEND support, moderation, setting specific support, safeguarding, PREVENT and a comprehensive support and guidance offer for PVI settings supporting birth to 5 years and out of school provision.
- Primary School Improvement Service including assessment and moderation support, CPD programme, leadership development, facilitate school to school support, NQT support, Headteacher briefings, Headteacher performance management, network meetings, pedagogy support, in school INSET, Leadership recruitment, school reviews and support and challenge the Virtual School.
- Secondary School Improvement Service including safeguarding, PREVENT, teacher networks through Wokingham Secondary Federation, pedagogy support, Head Teacher performance management, support and challenge Virtual school and leadership recruitment.

- Closing the Gap support including network meetings for EAL and PPG, promotion of good practice, support for pedagogy, pupil premium reviews, support for pupil premium champion, leadership support, support from bilingual teaching assistants, central and in school CPD and multi-agency team liaison.
- Governor Services – traded service which includes advice, guidance and support, central training briefings, in house school briefings, training, bespoke work with vulnerable schools, brokerage of school to school governor support, leadership recruitment.

4.3 Policy and Procedures for supporting and challenging schools, and intervening in schools causing concern

This policy provides a framework by which Wokingham Local Authority:

- knows its schools and other providers
- supports the closing of the achievement gap
- intervenes in underperforming schools
- commissions and brokers support for schools and other providers

At the end of the school year, once all evidence has been analysed, if it is judged that a school is securely 'good' and the current Ofsted judgement 'requires improvement', the school will be offered a LA 'Section 5' review before the end of September to confirm the judgement.

All new headteachers will be offered a LA 'Section 5' review in the first term of their appointment to support them in determining the priorities for urgent improvement in their school.

This section sets out the Local Authority policy and procedures for discharging our statutory responsibilities for identifying schools requiring additional support and challenge and for intervening in schools causing concern (*as set out in the Statutory Guidance on Schools Causing Concern, September 2008 and Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act, 2006*). The policy has been revised for 2014-2015 in order to incorporate changes to the Local Authority services, and the most recent guidance on identifying and supporting underperforming schools. The policy also recognises the changing role of the Local Authority as a commissioner rather than a provider of support services to schools and the expectations outlined in Ofsted's Framework for Inspection of Local Authorities.

4.4 Role of School Improvement Officer (SIO)

Each school is allocated a School Improvement Officer (SIO) which is reviewed on an annual basis. The role includes:

- challenge and support
- identify improvement priorities
- broker appropriate support from a variety of sources
- monitor and evaluate the progress of pupils
- offer traded support for headteacher performance management and CPD
- offer support for headteacher recruitment and succession planning

This will be delivered through a 'core' programme of a total of three days' support per year for all schools, primary and secondary. These visits include preparation and report writing. The agenda for these visits will focus on achievement, teaching and learning, and leadership and management. There will be an increased focus on the quality of provision in the Early Years in all primary schools and 6th forms in secondary schools, as this will be a separate and key judgement in future inspections. A member of the

Early Years Team will support SIOs when appropriate. A significant majority of primary schools also commission headteacher performance management from Local Authority SIOs in the autumn term, which focuses greatly on standards and achievement.

Additional time will be allocated to those schools which are risk-assessed as Purple or Red (see below). In addition, schools may negotiate, through buy back, with the LA individual packages of support and challenge appropriate to individual school needs.

At the end of the each term, a desktop exercise will be undertaken by the School Improvement Team to review school risk levels. (See Section 6, page 6 for Academies and Free Schools).

Termly reports, completed by the SIO are sent to the school within ten working days from the date of the visit. A copy of this report will be sent by Governor Services to the Chair of the Governing Body, once agreed.

5. CATEGORISATION

The categorisation of schools takes place termly. Schools are notified in September each year and informed of any subsequent changes. Decisions made inform allocations of levels of support and challenge.

In determining school categories the Local Authority will have regard to all the intelligence about a school including school data; SIO visit reports; external monitoring reports; financial data; HR; information; and governance and leadership issues.

The categories assigned are described in the table below:

RISK CATEGORY	SUPPORT MODEL
<p style="text-align: center;">Gold</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Locally assessed outstanding or strong good</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three visits a year • Emphasis on moderating school's self – evaluation and improvement priorities. • Encourage and broker leadership of school to school support. • Potential partner school for schools in categories. • Encouragement and support to gain national recognition e.g. NLE, NLG, NSS and teaching school.
<p style="text-align: center;">Green</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Locally assessed good schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three visits a year. • Emphasis on developing outstanding provision increasing consistency across all areas of school improvement. • Encourage and broker participation in school to school support.
<p style="text-align: center;">Purple</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Locally assessed vulnerable schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three visits a year minimum • LA review of progress, (equivalent to a Section 5 inspection), six months after and six months before an Ofsted inspection, (to include a specific focus on Early Years, 6th form where relevant) • Access to additional support through leadership 'Getting to Good' workshops • A programme of support of up to 20 officer days which could include one full governing body training session, teaching and learning support, early years guidance and advice. • Following an OFSTED Section 5 Requires Improvement outcome formal meeting with the Director of Children's

	<p>Services and Assistant Director of Learning and Achievement (or their representatives), to discuss the post Ofsted action plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following Section 5 RI LA action plan workshop delivery with the senior leadership team, with agreed procedures for monitoring the plan. • Consideration of additional support_for Governing Bodies. • A School Improvement Board (SIB) will be considered.
<p>Red</p> <p>Local high priority schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three visits a year minimum • A School Improvement Board will take responsibility for coordinating and managing external support and monitoring of the action plan. • Access to additional support through leadership ‘Getting to Good’ workshops • A programme of support of up to 40 officer days which will include one full governing body training session, teaching and learning support, early years guidance and advice. • Following an OFSTED Section 5 Requires Improvement outcome formal meeting with the Director of Children’s Services and Assistant Director of Learning and Achievement (or their representatives), to discuss the post Ofsted action plan. • LA review of progress, (equivalent to a Section 5 inspection), six months after and six months before an Ofsted inspection, (to include a specific focus on Early Years,6th form where relevant.

6. ACADEMIES AND FREE SCHOOLS

The Local Authority, in keeping with its overall vision of ensuring the best possible provision for all its children and young people, will develop links with academies and free schools. SIOs will visit annually to develop knowledge and understanding of the schools and promote good relationships. Academies and Free Schools will be able to buy back support from the LA at the daily rate.

Schools that have Academy status and Free Schools will not be subject to the local procedures set out in this document. Academy and Free schools are also not subject to intervention from the Local Authority. Accountability is directly to the Department for Education through OFSTED inspections.

If there are concerns about provision or standards the Local Authority will raise these with the Department for Education. In addition, where concerns are drawn to the attention of the Local Authority by parents, we will, as champions of the child, draw these concerns to the attention of the school. We will write to the Chair of Governors where matters have been brought to our attention so that Academy and Free Schools are both aware and have the opportunity to address these issues.

If, following an OFSTED inspection an academy is judged as inadequate, the proprietor is required to prepare a statement of action and will be subject to HMI monitoring visits.

The Secretary of State in such situations has intervention powers including: appointment of additional governors, stopping funding the academy or closing the academy. Where schools in Wokingham choose to become Academies, the Local Authority is committed to working in partnership on school improvement, sharing expertise and best practice and providing access to local traded services.

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