

Barnsley Local Authority School Improvement and Quality Assurance Policy

(Including Schools Causing Concern)



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1. Foreword including Statement of Purpose, Including the Statutory Basis

This document should be read in conjunction with the DfE Guidance on Schools Causing Concern which can be found at www.education.gov.uk

Ofsted has recently introduced a new framework for the inspection of local authorities' contribution to school improvement services. This framework builds on the Education Act 1996 which requires local authorities to promote high standards for **all** pupils.

Currently school improvement services are provided in different ways across the country. This document describes how **Barnsley Local Authority** supports school improvement and quality assures schools locally. It describes how the local authority fulfills the statutory functions to monitor, challenge, support and intervene in inverse proportion to effectiveness. It also describes how the local authority fulfills its role as '**Champion for Children**'.

In line with government policy the underlying principal is one of strengthening the role of good and outstanding schools within a model of sector-led school to school improvement.

With increasing numbers of 'autonomous' academies, and reducing local authority central resources, traditional local authority functions have been under increasing pressure, and in many local authorities, education functions have been substantially reduced.

Locally we have for some time been working with schools, particularly in the primary phase, to build the capacity within good and outstanding schools in order that they then provide support to other schools where there is need to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children. We have encouraged and supported eighteen headteachers to become accredited Local Leaders of Education (LLEs) and four headteachers to become National Leaders of Education (NLEs). Experienced and effective governors have been trained and deployed to support improved strategic leadership in under performing schools. Some of these governors have been recruited to be members of Interim Executive Boards (IEBs) or School Improvement Strategy Groups (SISGs). The recent formation of a local Teaching School Alliance provides opportunity for the commissioning of effective CPD and targeted professional development. Both our SEND and EBD special schools are judged by Ofsted to be outstanding and the dispersed PRU which is judged to be good providing further capacity for wider improvement.

A common protocol has been agreed with sponsors, which ensures a commitment to effective partnerships and collaborations with maintained schools as part of a sector-led approach to improvement.

In order to ensure clarity and effective action the LA undertakes regular risk assessments for all schools. In partnership with schools the LA reviews on a monthly basis their current status based on a register of high, medium and low risk. Following these conversations any necessary adjustments are made to action plans.

2. Procedures for Risk Assessment

The process of risk assessment for all primary and secondary schools is conducted as part of the LA annual calendared cycle of review. Risk assessments are undertaken by SEOs in consultation with the Head of Learning and Standards and are based on the following evidence:

- Analysis of data
- Previous Ofsted inspection outcomes
- LA Intelligence
- DFE assessments
- Previous outcomes of risk assessments and LA reviews.
- Changes in leadership.

An annual assessment of all schools is undertaken following the publication of results of external tests (July to August). Based on the assessment of risk, schools are allocated to one of four categories dependent on the level of concern identified.

A school will automatically be allocated to a category of support where a new headteacher has taken up post at the school to assist with induction and familiarisation to a new school.

Levels of risk are identified in Table 1. Support provided by the LA is tailored to need in response to risks identified. In addition, external support may be brokered or commissioned by the LA along with the development of sector-led partnership working in conjunction with the LA's field force of national and local leaders of education and consultant headteachers.

3. Review of Risk Register

The annual allocation of risk attached to each school is reviewed and updated at regular intervals during the year. Reviews take into account the role and effectiveness of both the LA and school leaders (including governors) in responding to the key priorities identified in school improvement plans.

SEOs monitor and evaluate the progress and impact of actions taken to secure school improvement each **month**. This helps to develop a strong degree of local intelligence about schools across the borough. Updated evaluations of work undertaken are presented to senior members of the school improvement service and to lead elected members of the council.

Updates on actions taken to support school improvement are reviewed on a **weekly** basis. This enables SEOs to anticipate where further intervention might be needed or to identify where support might no longer be needed.

From September 2013, evaluations of the impact of LA support and intervention as well as the impact of external support will be presented on a **termly** basis to the Challenge Board for scrutiny.

A letter is sent to all school leaders and Chairs of Governors to communicate the level of risk identified by the LA early each September. Any additional changes made during the course of the year, following reviews, are communicated by letter and visits to the school to meet with leaders, including governors

4. Summary of Support Programmes (Table 1)

Table 1: Level of Risk and Associated Support				
	High Risk/support	Medium risk/support	Low risk/support	No risk/support
Time allocation	Up to 24 SEO visits per year	At least ½ termly visits	Termly visits	Two visits per year
Nature of feedback to school	Six written reports per year	At least three written reports per year	Three written reports	Two written reports
Nature of support/ intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEO identified. • SISG established and meet monthly / half termly. • Audit need. • Agree priorities & broker additional support from LLE / NLE / CHT etc. • Monitor School Improvement Plan and its impact. • Access Leadership Development Programme. • Audit effectiveness of governance • Report progress to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SISG and HoS / AED / LM/CB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEO identified. • SISG established if required. • SEO visits to monitor and evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school data - impact of teaching on learning - effectiveness of leadership and management - behaviour and safety • Audit of governance if required. • Advise HoS of progress. • Access Leadership and Development Programme if required. • LLE/NLE/CHT identified, if appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEO/CHT identified. • Termly visits to monitor current status. • Advise HoS if additional intervention is required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEO/CHT identified • Visits to monitor progress and good practice.

AED: Assistant Executive Director

CB: Challenge Board

CHT: Consultant Headteacher

HOS: Head of Service (Learning and Standards)

LLE: Local Leader of Education

LM: Lead Member of Council

National Leaders of Education

School Evaluation Officer

SISG: School Improvement Strategic Group

5. The Agreed Process for Escalation Where Agreement Cannot Be Reached, in Schools and Academies, Including Timescales

Serious concerns about a maintained school

- i. Informal discussion with the headteacher, seeking a rapid response and appropriate action.
- ii. Informal discussion with the governing body, seeking a rapid response and appropriate action.
- iii. Formal written communication with the headteacher, seeking a rapid response and appropriate action.
- iv. Formal written communication with the governing body, seeking a rapid response and appropriate action including information on the next steps of escalation.
- v. If the headteacher's performance is under question, meetings between the senior responsible local authority officer and the chair of the governing body and then the headteacher to spell out the concerns and to decide any necessary action.
- vi. Formal warning notice under provisions of the Section 60 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 [References 10 and 11] instructing the school to take the necessary action.
- vii. Appointment of additional governors, replacement of the governing body by an Interim Executive Board, requirement of the governing body to take specified actions, or removal of a delegated budget under Sections 63 to 66 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Whichever of these powers is used, the intention must be to ensure that the governing body or Interim Executive Board is able and willing to take the necessary actions with the support of the local authority, up to and including taking capability proceedings against the headteacher.

Serious concerns about an academy

- i. Informal discussion with the headteacher, seeking a rapid response and appropriate action.
- ii. Informal discussion with the governing body, and, where appropriate, the sponsor or multi-academy trust, seeking a rapid response and appropriate action.
- iii. Formal written communication with the headteacher, seeking a rapid response and appropriate action.
- iv. Formal written communication with the governing body, and, where appropriate, the sponsor or multi-academy trust seeking a rapid response and appropriate action, including information on the next steps of escalation.
- v. Formal written communication with the Secretary of State for Education, as the academy funder, informing him of the issues and seeking a response.
- vi. Formal written communication with Ofsted, as the regulator, informing them of the issues and seeking a response.

In the event of an academy not engaging with the school quality assurance process, steps 1 and 2 may not be practicable, in which case the local authority should move directly to the formal steps.

6. Complaints and Dispute Resolution Procedure

In the first instance any concerns regarding process or actions taken by members of the service should be referred to the Service Managers for primary and secondary phases. Where a concern is in relation to a Service Manager then a referral should be made to the Head of Learning and Standards.

7. The Agreed Basis for Publishing Quality Assurance Information

Key performance indicators are reported quarterly in the CYPF Directorate Quarterly Performance Management Report to cabinet.

8. The Agreed Process for Local Authority Scrutiny of Quality Assurance Information

The annual allocation of risk attached to each school is reviewed and updated at regular intervals during the year. Reviews take into account the role and effectiveness of both the LA and school leaders (including governors) in responding to the key priorities identified in school improvement plans. This process includes weekly, monthly and quarterly reviews.

9. The Links between the School Quality Assurance Process and the School Improvement Process

10. Quality Assurance Procedures for the Overall Process, Involving Both Internal Moderation And Validation, and External Stakeholder