

North Yorkshire School Improvement Strategy 2019-2020

*Building Capacity
Accelerating Improvement*

Enter



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Foreword

The School Improvement Strategy is an evolving strategy developed in Partnership between schools and the Local Authority (LA) with the aim of providing a framework to support and challenge every school in North Yorkshire to continue to improve the life chances of our children and young people.

The strategy outlines a commitment to securing and investing as much centrally commissioned funding into the schools system in the county as possible, to enable the development of a strong sustainable infrastructure to deliver our targets for the future.

Our schools are vital to the futures of North Yorkshire's children and young people. We all acknowledge that there is still more work to do. We want North Yorkshire's schools to be recognised across the country as some of the best – to work, teach and learn in. With the commitment of every school in the district, the LA, and an evolving strategy which outlines what to do and how we get there, we can achieve this together.

Introduction

There has been unprecedented change in the way education services are organised over the last four years. Nationally, the academy programme has been accelerated and free schools, established by independent groups and organisations but funded directly by central government, have been introduced. The rise of multi-academy trusts (MATs) is changing the landscape both in relation to locally developing MATs and trusts from out of area working with North Yorkshire schools. The national curriculum has been reviewed and changed. Examinations at Key Stages 2, 4 and 5 and performance expectations have altered significantly, participation age is now 18 years; and additional funding is available through the Pupil Premium to support “closing the gap” between vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils and their peers. The emphasis for school improvement is now on a sector-led approach, bringing together teachers, governors, local school partnerships, multi-academy trusts, teaching school alliances, school-improvement specialists, the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), the Department for Education (DfE) and local authorities in partnership to develop innovative and collaborative approaches to improve the quality of schools and teaching. The local authority still has a responsibility for the educational outcomes and health and wellbeing of all its children and young people. The Council is working with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) who has direct responsibility for all academies and free schools, to use its statutory powers to ensure all schools are held to account for the achievement of all their pupils.

Vision

North Yorkshire is a great place to grow up and we have the highest expectations for the achievement of children and young people in the County. We believe all children and young people have the right to achieve their full potential whatever their culture or background.

The Local Authority (LA) recognises that it is the responsibility of school leaders to secure improvement in their school. As part of the working partnership with schools the LA will act as champions of educational excellence for children and young people, working with early years settings, state funded schools, academies, free and independent schools to forge strong professional relationships through school networks and teaching school alliances.

We will strengthen our quality assurance role to ensure that all schools strive to improve. We will broker school-to-school support using high quality performing leaders to work alongside those schools requiring support, to get to good or better.

Through partnership working we will:

Ensure every child and young person in North Yorkshire has an excellent education

Raise educational standards and outcomes in schools

Improve the quality of provision so that all schools are judged at least good by Ofsted

Ensure that all individuals and agencies working with children safeguard and promote their welfare

Principles

The Local Authority is committed to:	The Local Authority will:
<p>Effective partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with childminders, settings, schools, trusts, federations, alliances, dioceses and agencies, striving to ensure that all actions taken are in the best interests of all children and young people • Promote, facilitate and commission partnership working • Communicate regularly with system leaders, TSAs, Ofsted, DFE and RSCs to ensure that intelligence to support improvement is shared
<p>Intervening swiftly with those schools in danger of failing to provide a good standard of education for children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge all settings and schools to provide for the needs of all learners through a rich and appropriate curriculum • Challenge underachievement • Value and promote actions to ensure the safe-guarding and well-being of all children and members of school communities • Broker, commission or provide support to improve leadership and practice • Champion the needs of all pupils, especially the most vulnerable
<p>Identifying early those schools and settings requiring early support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate how schools and settings can improve provision in a variety of suitable, appropriate and manageable ways • Challenge schools where provision falls below expectations and use its intervention powers as necessary for the best interests of the pupils • Act openly and with transparency in all matters
<p>Trust and honesty to ensure that education systems are effective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest in our professional conversations • Listen to all and respect the views of others • Be transparent in how we use information • Promote and celebrate the diversity within systems and approaches to school improvement • Quality assure provision and support to ensure maximum impact on outcomes for all children

Priorities

The Young and Yorkshire 2 Plan is the plan for all children, young people, and their families living in North Yorkshire. The vision set out in the plan is for North Yorkshire to be:

A place of opportunity where all children and young people are happy, healthy and achieving.

One of three outcomes in the plan is: Education as our greatest liberator with high aspirations, opportunities and achievements. We want to ensure the best possible achievement for all learners by ensuring they go to a great school, setting or provider. We still need to make progress across our four priorities:

Priority

1

Ensuring our children have great Early Years



Priority

2

Raising achievement and progress for all



Priority

3

Equip young people for life and work in a strong North Yorkshire, national and international economy



Priority

4

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children



These priorities will be achieved through the following key actions:

Ensure there is sufficient good early years provision to enable young children to be ready for school by ensuring that there is high quality early learning and childcare provision for under-fives.

Promote high standards of achievement in primary, special and secondary education and in particular, improve Key Stage 2 results, outcomes in areas of deprivation and outcomes for disadvantaged young people.

Develop the capacity of special school provision and further the skills of mainstream schools to support a broader range of children and young people with additional needs.

Aim for full participation in education and training for all 16, 17 and 18 year olds and reduce the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and 'not knowns' in the county.

Improve outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in all phases and close the gaps between them and other students in the county and nationally.

Continue to explore alternative models of delivery, where appropriate, and work with North Yorkshire Education Services (NYES) to ensure competitive services that provide value for money and are fit for purpose.

Partners and collaborators

How do we challenge leaders to be outstanding?

How do we empower Headteachers in this changing educational landscape?

How do we develop a self-improving sector led model?

In order to achieve these we must work in partnership and use our resources through:

- Collaboration and partnership working with all our schools, academies and maintained schools alike
- The North Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Area funded by the DfE which has been awarded to North Yorkshire is focusing on three key areas:
 - Improving early years education
 - Boosting literacy and numeracy skills
 - Helping more secondary schools to become good or outstanding
- The North Yorkshire Teaching School Alliances and federations
- Alliances and multi-academy trusts within and beyond North Yorkshire

Monitoring and Challenge

A statutory function of all Local Authorities (LAs) is to ensure that all schools provide a high quality educational experience for the children and young people in their care. In meeting these statutory duties the LA is required to monitor, challenge and, where necessary, intervene in maintained schools.

Academies across the county are also invited to engage with the prioritisation should they wish to participate as part of the North Yorkshire family of schools.

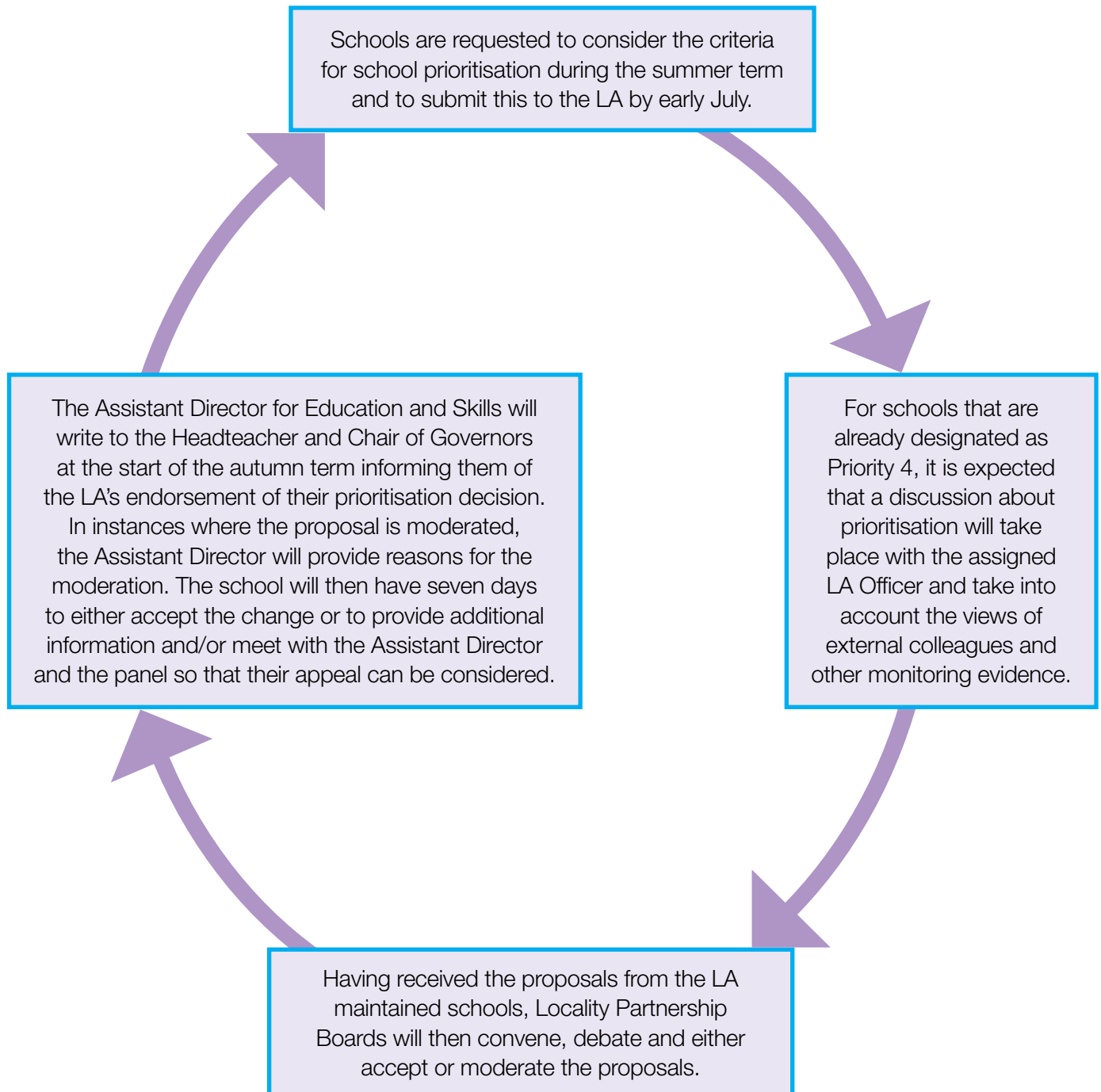
North Yorkshire County Council's Children and Young People's Service is committed to working with all partners to monitor, challenge and intervene in LA maintained schools in inverse proportion to the success of each school; success being defined in terms of the quality of provision and the outcomes achieved by pupils.

In order to carry out this function in an effective and transparent way, North Yorkshire County Council operates a system of school prioritisation whereby LA officers and school partnerships assess the performance of schools and educational institutions, to judge the degree of risk in the quality of education being provided and where necessary to respond to these risks.

The purpose of the school prioritisation process is to reach an agreement about the priority for intervention for each primary, special and secondary LA maintained school. This enables the LA to deliver its statutory functions, to manage risks, target appropriate interventions and thereby help those who are causing concern. The process also allows the LA to be confident that all schools/institutions are meeting their responsibilities for continuous improvement.



Annual review process



School Prioritisation Criteria

	Prioritisation Criteria	Local Authority School Improvement Role
Priority 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school is likely to be evaluated as good or outstanding with strong capacity for improvement and able to deliver support other schools. ■ Led by highly effective system leaders and governors with the capacity to support other schools and undertake outreach work. ■ Safeguarding is effective. ■ Self evaluation is robust and accurate. ■ Outcomes consistently compare favourably to national standards and has good value added scores including those of vulnerable groups of pupils. ■ Provision for all groups of learners, including gender, disadvantaged and SEND is good or outstanding. ■ Teaching at all key stages is effective and the school's curriculum meets the needs of its pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allocated LA officer with one core visit focused on school improvement, outcomes and school self-evaluation. ■ Access to briefings and termly Headteacher improvement networks ■ Support for Headteacher recruitment (shortlisting and final interview) ■ Access to governor school improvement networks ■ LA performance information ■ Access to LA professional development and consultancy via North Yorkshire Education Services ■ Opportunities to broker additional visits to strengthen our traded offer ■ Additional intervention brokered as necessary and agreed with the LA officer and the leadership of the school.
Priority 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school is likely to be evaluated as good and confirmed through its most recent Ofsted inspection. ■ Maybe judged to be 'requiring improvement' however the school has good capacity within leadership and is highly likely to be judged 'good' if inspected or evaluated by external consultants. ■ One which has good leadership and governance, and has some capacity to support another school. ■ Performance outcomes are close to national standards and data indicates improvement. Vulnerable groups are performing as well as, or better than, other pupils. ■ Any initial concerns around attendance, behaviour, exclusions, complaints, governance, HR or finance may have been identified that require close monitoring. ■ Safeguarding is effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allocated LA officer with one core visit focused on school improvement, outcomes and school self-evaluation. ■ Access to briefings and termly Headteacher improvement networks ■ Support for Headteacher recruitment (shortlisting and final interview) ■ Access to governor school improvement networks ■ LA performance information ■ Access to LA professional development and consultancy via North Yorkshire Education Services ■ Opportunities to broker additional visits to strengthen our traded offer ■ Termly contact focused on school improvement, outcomes and school self-evaluation. Termly contact via phone or Skype. ■ Additional intervention brokered as necessary and agreed with the LA officer and the leadership of the school.

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 48pt; font-weight: bold; color: white;">3</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold; color: white;">Priority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Judged to be 'requires improvement' (RI) by Ofsted in its last inspection. ■ Currently judged as 'good' or 'outstanding' but is highly likely to be judged 'RI' if inspected or evaluated by external consultants. ■ One where there are concerns about leadership and/or governance. ■ One where there are concerns around attendance, behaviour, viability, exclusions, complaints, governance, HR or finance have been identified. ■ One where there is a decline in pupil performance over time. ■ Vulnerable groups may not be effectively supported and teaching and learning is inconsistent. ■ Standards do not compare favourably to those nationally. ■ One which has been in the past 'causing concern' and is showing early signs of improvement, but is not yet consistently performing well. ■ One in which safeguarding is effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allocated LA officer with one core visit focused on school improvement, outcomes and school self-evaluation. ■ Access to briefings and termly Headteacher improvement networks. ■ Support for Headteacher recruitment (shortlisting and final interview). ■ Access to governor school improvement networks. ■ LA performance information. ■ Access to LA professional development and consultancy via North Yorkshire Education Services. ■ Opportunities to broker additional visits to strengthen our traded offer. ■ A School Partnership Improvement Plan will be put in place. ■ Termly visits (minimum) from LA Officer with half termly Skype/ phone call or visit as appropriate. ■ Additional support commissioned from professional partnerships, teaching schools, alliances or trusts and other LA services.
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold; color: white;">(for School Improvement)</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold; color: white;">Priority 4#: Team Around the School (for schools with complex weaknesses)</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 48pt; font-weight: bold; color: white;">4</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold; color: white;">Priority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ School is considered high risk and vulnerable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ judged as RI for the last two inspections ■ judged as serious weaknesses or special measures ■ at risk of being judged serious weaknesses or special measures or a third RI judgement ■ Quality Leadership is limited at all levels ■ Safeguarding is ineffective and there are concerns. ■ Standards do not compare favourably to national for a sustained period ■ Vulnerable groups may not be effectively supported and teaching and learning is inconsistent ■ There are significant concerns around attendance, viability, behaviour, exclusions, complaints, governance, HR or finance. ■ One with complex weaknesses which may include leadership/governance, behaviour and teaching and learning ■ One with high persistence absence (PA), high levels of exclusions and attendance is significantly below the national average ■ One with serious financial concerns ■ External monitoring, including by HMI indicates that progress is not rapid or sustained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allocated LA officer with one core visit focused on school improvement, outcomes and school self-evaluation. ■ Access to briefings and termly Headteacher improvement networks. ■ Support for Headteacher recruitment (shortlisting and final interview). ■ Access to governor school improvement networks. ■ LA performance information. ■ Access to LA professional development and consultancy via North Yorkshire Education Services. ■ Opportunities to broker additional visits to strengthen our traded offer. ■ A School Partnership Improvement Plan will be put in place. ■ Half termly contact from LA officers. ■ Additional support commissioned from professional partnerships, teaching schools, alliances or trusts. ■ Financial support for improvement may be considered ■ A range of officers are involved in supporting the school – e.g finance, governor support officers, inclusion and HR

Team Around the School (TAS)

These involve key officers from a number of services including school improvement, finance, inclusion, strategic planning and human resources.

The purpose is to discuss issues / concerns and provide solutions to our very complex and vulnerable schools.

LA Adviser time allocations

Priority 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 1 core visit a year, usually in the Autumn term with a report (1 day per year inclusive of preparation and written report)■ Brokered support as appropriate
Priority 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 1 core visit a year usually in the Autumn term with a written report (1 day inclusive of preparation and written report)■ 1 contact usually in spring/summer terms by Skype / email (up to 2 days per year inclusive of preparation and written report according to need)
Priority 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 2 visits a term (4 days per year inclusive of preparation and written report)
Priority 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Up to 4 visits a term (8 days per year inclusive of preparation and written report); or additional time to be negotiated with the Assistant Director Education and Skills and the Principal Advisers

Action

Six outstanding schools in North Yorkshire have been successful in securing teaching school status and the setting up of Teaching School Alliances. Their potential to drive school improvement is by building leadership capacity, commissioning school improvement and brokering school to school support.


North Yorkshire Local Authority is working closely with the Opportunity Area and linking with different school partnerships, school leaders and the teaching school alliances to shape the local vision and strategy for school improvement and the development of a shared local vision for education.

In order to build capacity and accelerate improvement, North Yorkshire leaders, governors and teachers recognise the need to think beyond serving pupils within their own school and extend their commitment to serving all North Yorkshire children and young people studying in the district.

The success of the self-improving system in North Yorkshire will be the employment of leaders with high level people skills to key positions and the effective use of school leaders and practitioners to support the demands of school to school support and the sharing of best practice within the district.

Our Commitment

The consensus is for all North Yorkshire educational establishments, the local authority, the Teaching School Alliances and other partners to adopt the three key commitments that:

1 	2 	3 
<p>North Yorkshire is a sector led school improvement system whereby all key stakeholders have a shared vision for improving educational and welfare outcomes where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ every child has a school place; ■ the needs of vulnerable children are catered for; ■ no school is left behind; ■ schools and academies are challenged to work together; ■ weak or declining performance is quickly identified and corrected; ■ data and knowledge are shared across schools; ■ there is accountability to local communities; ■ all schools work within the agreed local safeguarding arrangements. 	<p>All schools belong to a partnership. Relationships remain vital, but are no longer enough on their own: schools are increasingly seeing the importance of being connected to at least one formal network. For the vast majority of school leaders, relationships are being transformed into more formal, self-conscious and professional connections.</p>	<p>All schools are to be good or better by September 2021. In order to achieve this ambition, underperformance and safeguarding concerns will be dealt with promptly and weak leadership and teaching immediately tackled so that every child is able to attend a good or outstanding school within the next three years.</p>

Accountability

As schools formalise their partnerships, they are also reassessing the type of leadership required. School leaders are reflecting on how to create the right leadership and governance structures, and thus capacity, within their partnerships. Some school leaders have taken on a more strategic, executive role within their federations, alliances or multi-academy trusts (MATs), whereby they are overseeing an overarching school improvement strategy, and support and mentor new leaders. Other school leaders are seeking to build capacity within their networks by creating new positions that would co-ordinate the day-to-day work of the partnership.

The accountability framework needs to be re-balanced to facilitate the development of the self-improvement system. A greater emphasis needs to be placed on formative accountability to peers and partners, as opposed to summative accountability to an external regulator alone i.e. the local authority. Effective collaboration involves hard accountability hence there is a need for key stakeholders to develop clear structures and systems for holding each school to account for progress and performance and introduce quality assurance measures which will assess the impact of partnership activity.

The role of the key stakeholders in School Improvement

The Learning Trust

- The strategic board which considers, discusses, analyses and develops county-wide challenges and strength such as sharing good practice, disadvantaged groups, exclusions and Key Stage 2 mathematics
- The Board will be chaired by a Headteacher. The constitution of the Board include representation from: schools (maintained and academies), Local Authority, Health, the Diocese, the Regional Schools Commissioner Office

The Locality Partnerships will:

- Risk assess and categorise schools in their partnerships
- Monitor, support and challenge schools judged to be of medium, low or no risk
- Focus on specific locality issues and how these are to be challenged and developed
- Support the move to a sector led model by developing high quality system leaders
- Commission school to school support
- Quality assure the impact of school to school support

The Local Authority will:

- Be a commissioner and in some instances not a delivering organisation
- Challenge, monitor, quality assure and intervene in Schools Causing Concern, Priority 4 and high risk Priority 3 schools and schools in an Ofsted category (Special Measures or Serious Weaknesses)Provide support and challenge to the school partnerships that operate within the County and work with the most vulnerable and high risk schools by providing them with a targeted intervention programme of support
- Identify and remove barriers to the raising of standards
- Act as a critical friend to all schools regardless of their type or status
- Commission school to school support that cannot be brokered by the TSAs
- Work with the RSC to provide appropriate challenge and support to academies

The National Support Schools, Teaching School Alliances and federations will:

- Provide leadership and management professional development opportunities (including governors) across all phases
- Recruit and train teachers through the development of clear career pathways for all school staff
- Broker system leadership and school to school support using resources such as National Leader in Education (NLEs), Local Leader in Education (LLEs) and Specialist Leader in Education (SLEs) as well as working with the partnerships utilising non-accredited good and outstanding professionals
- Ensure practitioners are actively engaged in research and development

The delivery framework for school improvement

The sector led model for school improvement, with the teaching schools and partnerships taking the key lead, is developing in practice. Principally the LA acts as the champion for children providing monitoring, challenge and support. The role is to intervene in the most challenging schools as illustrated below.

Intervention	This will involve the implementation of a focused and timely intervention programme led by a local authority school officer who will broker, commission and coordinate the support package offered to the high risk school. The LA officer will play a key role in holding the leaders and governors to account through appropriate challenge and, where necessary, intervention. In addition if the LA commissions the lead role to a system leader it will be ensured the strategic plan is clear and understood by all providers. Principal Advisers will quality assure the impact of the support.
Targeted	This will involve the implementation of a support package brokered and commissioned by the LA School Officer whose role will be to monitor and quality assure the impact of the support as well as hold the leaders and governors to account through appropriate challenge.
Universal	This autonomous system will involve schools working in partnership with each other, supporting and monitoring continued improvement and taking the lead in creating models of training, research and professional development to share with other schools. Work will be quality assured to assess the impact of support. Teaching Schools will lead on Initial Teacher Training programmes, research and high quality development support for partner schools.

Intervention

Schools Causing Concern

Where early-stage monitoring and challenge do not result in rapid improvement in maintained schools the local authority will consider using its intervention powers in line with DfE guidance.

As a precursor to these, and in the hope of averting them, the Director of Children and Young People's Service, will invite the Headteacher and Chair of Governors to discuss the local authority's concerns and intentions.

The local authority will issue a pre-formal warning notice where there is evidence to justify both the local authority's concerns and the school's reluctance or inability to address those concerns successfully within a reasonable time frame.

The local authority pre-formal warning notice is similar to a "warning notice" and will be given in writing to the governing body of the school and copied to the Headteacher and diocesan authority where relevant. It will set out:

- the matters on which the local authority's concerns are based;
- the action which the governing body is required to take in order to address the concerns raised;
- the initial compliance period beginning with the day when the pre-formal warning notice is given and the timeframe which the governing body is to address the concerns set out in the pre-formal warning notice;
- the action the local authority will take if the governing body does not take the required action.

The local authority will raise any concerns about academy performance or safeguarding issues directly with the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Process

Stage 1	LA works with the school to improve and sets out its concerns and intentions.
Stage 2	LA issues a pre-warning notice to the Governing Body. Action Plan from Governing Body is required by the LA within 15 days. Increased School Adviser time. Focused intensive school to school support.
Stage 3	School takes focused action to bring about rapid improvement.
Stage 4	Improvement secured LA removes pre-formal warning notice. Improvement not secured Formal Warning Notice issued by LA to the Governing Body. Action plan from the Governing Body is required by the LA within 15 days. The local authority will raise any concerns with the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and the DfE, as the regulator for independent schools.

Statutory Guidance

The Department for Education document, *Schools causing concern: Statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2018)*, relates to all local-authority-maintained schools causing concern, and includes information about warning notices and local authorities' powers of intervention.

References

- North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Plan: Young and Yorkshire 2 2017-2020
- North Yorkshire - Education is our greatest liberator 2017
- North Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Area 2017-2020
- North Yorkshire Schools Causing Concern document 2018-19
- North Yorkshire SEND Strategy document 2018-2021
- North Yorkshire Achievement Unlocked Strategy 2017-2020
- DfE: Schools causing concern: Statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2018)
- Prioritisation Process 2018-19
- HM Government Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018

Glossary

A level	Advanced level (Key Stage 5 qualification)
Cllr	Councillor
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
FE	Further Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education (Key Stage 4 qualification)
LA	Local Authority
LLE	Local Leader of Education
MAT	Multi-Academy Trust
NEET	Not in Education Employment or Training
NLE	National Leader of Education
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PA	Persistent Absence

North Yorkshire School Improvement: Schools Causing Concern 2019/2020

Monitoring, Support, Challenge and Intervention

North Yorkshire has well established processes for identifying schools causing concerns and needing additional external support. When school improvement concerns are raised, contact is made with the school by an LA officer employed by the Local Authority (LA) to discuss and identify any support required.

The LA's responsibility for school improvement recognises as a cause for concern in schools where any one of the following applies:

- Performance is below the floor standard;
- A declining trend in pupil attainment and progress;
- Progress rates are well below national average;
- Little or no improvement in standards of attainment that are below average;
- Wide gaps in progress and outcomes that are well below average for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups;
- Date and information online/Analyse School Performance (ASP) data which is significantly below what is expected over a three year period;
- High rates of pupil absence, persistent absence and exclusion;
- More than one inspection where the school has been rated no better than "Requires Improvement";

- Poor quality teacher assessment and weak tracking and monitoring of individual pupil progress after a moderation or other visit;
- Weak governance following a review;
- High levels of parental concerns and complaints;
- Inadequate progress arising from HMI monitoring visits;
- Rapid or significant reductions in pupil numbers;
- Financial deficit or financial mismanagement;
- Reluctance to acknowledge concerns and address weaknesses;
- Reported incidents that lead the LA to consider whether there is a breakdown of leadership or governance;
- Records of visit from LA Officers which report poor progress and continued weak performance;
- Concerns raised by locality partnerships.

Increased support, including provision brokered from another school or the Teaching School Alliances, is evaluated at Governing Body Rapid Improvement Group meetings. Typically they should take place at least every six weeks and include the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, relevant LA officers and, when appropriate, the Diocese. At these meetings plans are made for further actions to bring about the required improvement.

Where there are concerns about the performance of an academy or free school, the School Improvement

Lead, Principal Advisers and the Assistant Director will raise them with the Headteacher and Academy Trust. If these concerns are not able to be resolved rapidly, the LA discusses the issues and risks that have been identified with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC).

There are three identified types of schools causing concern eligible for intervention by either the LA or the Secretary of State as described below:

1. Schools inspected and graded “inadequate”.

These categories relate to schools where the quality of education is below an acceptable level. This includes not reaching floor standards.

2. Schools that are “coasting”.

Coasting schools are those that consistently fail to ensure pupils achieve their potential. This is measured over three consecutive years. The first coasting schools were identified in 2016.

3. Schools that have failed to comply with a warning notice.

LAs and RSCs may give warning notices to maintained schools where they have concerns about unacceptable performance (including results below floor standards); a breakdown in leadership and governance; or the safety of pupils or staff. Where a maintained school does not comply with a warning notice, it will become eligible for intervention. Arrangements for academies are contained within their funding agreement.

In practice the third type is rare so the real vulnerability is a school falling below floor standards or dropping into the new “coasting” definition.

The main mitigating factor is the school’s internal capacity to improve.

The stages of escalation: The Local Authority Powers of Intervention

The aim is to enable a school to become self-improving and self-sustaining. It is an expectation therefore that the leadership of the school is able to operate independently of support within a reasonable time.

Stage 1

- LA prioritisation/risk assessment is undertaken in July supported by the LA, Headteachers and the Diocese;
- Concerns are shared with school if risk assessed as P3 or P4;
- School Adviser checks, advises and comments on the rigour and suitability of the school's plan for improvement and whether leadership, including governance, has the capability to deliver against the plan – joint exercise with school leaders;
- The Headteacher and Chair of Governors of schools identified as requiring significant additional support are invited to a meeting with the LA to discuss and agree the support needed to promote more rapid improvement. Agreed actions are confirmed in writing;
- School to school support sought from traded services, a TSA or through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the receiving and supporting schools;
- A focused review of leadership, governance or use of pupil premium is recommended. This could be carried out by the LA, a strong school or a National Leader of Education/Local Leader of Education or a National Leader of Governance (NLG);
- It is recommended that the school considers entering into particular arrangements such as a partnership to access support from system leaders, Local/ National/ Specialist leaders of Education from Teaching Schools Alliances and Executive Headteachers;
- Support for governing bodies which may include: skills and training needs analysis, a review of the effectiveness of the Governing Body, bespoke training, coaching or support from governors with particular expertise, training on the skills required to evaluate the effectiveness of the school and Governing Body over time;
- Governing Body Rapid Improvement Group meetings set up for P4 schools (and recommended for some P3 schools).

Stage 2

- LA pre-warning notice issued to the Governing Body and Action Plan from Governing Body is required by the LA within 15 days;
- Increased School Adviser time. Focused intensive school to school support.

Stage 3

- Formal Warning Notice issued by LA to the Governing Body under section 60 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (copied to Headteacher, Diocese, Ofsted and RSC);
- Action plan from the Governing Body is required by the LA within 15 days.

Stage 4

- A school becomes 'eligible for intervention' if it has not complied with a Warning Notice or has been placed in category by Ofsted i.e. 'serious weaknesses' or 'special measures', (but not 'requires improvement') or it meets the definition of coasting;
- Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Secretary of State can direct a local authority to consider giving, and to give a Warning Notice. If a maintained school is the subject of an academy order made under section 4(A1) or (1)(b) of the Academies Act 2010, the governing body and the local authority will be under a duty to facilitate the maintained school's conversion into an academy by taking all reasonable steps towards that end;
- LA intervention – withdrawal of financial delegation and appointment of an Interim Executive Board or appointment of additional governors to the existing Governing Body.

At all stages the LA maintains a close dialogue with schools, evaluating progress achieved and communicating any continuing concerns. Scrutiny meetings are time limited. If sufficient progress is made, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors are informed in writing; however if progress is not evidenced and rapid improvement not achieved, the LA's response is escalated to a more formal warning notice which is copied to Ofsted and the RSC.

Statutory interventions

There are two types of warning notice that can be issued by LAs or RSCs to maintained schools:

- a performance standards and safety warning notice;
- a Teachers' Pay and Conditions warning notice.

Following the issue of a valid Warning Notice the LA will strengthen the school with any or all of the following:

- the appointment of additional governors to the Governing Body or the appointment of an Interim Executive Board (IEB);
- suspend the delegated budget;
- direct specific actions where discipline has broken down;
- require the school to enter into arrangements with another person (who may be the Governing Body of another school); collaboration between schools, or Further Education body, or join a Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

When a maintained school becomes an academy then the intervention role falls solely to the RSC.

Warning Notices

Section 60 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended) gives Local Authorities in England the power to issue a Warning Notice to the Governing Body of a maintained school where the LA is satisfied that the standards of performance of pupils at the school are "unacceptably low" and are likely to remain so unless the LA exercises its statutory powers under the Act.

If a maintained school is unable to address concerns rapidly and successfully, a Warning Notice may be issued after ensuring that the school has received significant support for improvement and every opportunity has been provided to review the effectiveness of that support and the progress achieved as a result.

Roles of local authorities and RSCs

Local authorities and RSCs work together analysing where performance standards and safety warning notices may be necessary. Local authorities are expected to continue to use warning notices to challenge maintained schools to improve.

Using the same powers RSCs will be able to issue a warning notice. The Secretary of State's power to issue a warning notice takes precedence over a local authority. Examples could be where the local authority has failed to act swiftly enough in a specific case; has generally not acted swiftly or robustly enough in the past; or lacks capacity to act. A copy of any warning notice issued by a local authority will be given to the relevant RSC and vice versa.

A Warning Notice may be issued where:

- the standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so;
- there has been a serious breakdown in management or governance, which is prejudicing, or is likely to prejudice, standards of performance; or the safety of staff or pupils is at risk (by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).

The detail of what constitutes “low standards of performance” includes reference to any one or more of the following:

- standards below the floor, on either attainment (including the 16-19 minimum standards) or progress by pupils;
- the standards that the pupils might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to attain; or where relevant, the standards previously attained by them; or the standards attained by pupils at comparable schools;
- an Ofsted judgement that the school requires improvement, where there are also additional factors to indicate that a warning notice is appropriate, including in types of schools where the coasting definition does not apply;
- in a school with a sixth form, an Ofsted judgement that the sixth form is inadequate, even though the school overall may not have been judged inadequate;
- performance data which show sustained historical underperformance, including where the coasting definition may not apply in particular circumstances, for example because two schools have recently merged to become one new school, but there is concern about persistent poor performance.

Local authorities and RSCs will consider the school in totality; take account of its context; and consider data and other evidence of the school’s performance and capacity to improve.

The following additional factors will also be considered by local authorities and RSCs in deciding whether or not to issue a warning notice:

- performance trends, such as a sudden drop in performance or conversely signs that a school is on a sharp upward trajectory;
- recent Ofsted judgements, or assessments of aspects of a school’s performance and its capacity to improve, particularly judgements of leadership and management;
- variations in performance data between pupils of different characteristics (including pupils of low, middle and high attainment) and/or low standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils, including where the school’s pupil premium spending is not used effectively.

Breakdown in the way a maintained school is managed or governed:

Another ground for issuing a performance standards and safety warning notice is that there has been a serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed which is prejudicing, or is likely to prejudice, the pupils' standards of performance.

Local authorities (or RSCs) can identify additional support or consider issuing a warning notice, depending on the severity of the case, to maintained schools where the governing body is failing to deliver one or more of its three core strategic roles resulting in a serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed, that will, or is likely to, adversely affect standards of pupils' performance.

Evidence that governors may be failing to deliver on one or more of their strategic roles could include, but is not restricted to:

- high governor turnover;
- a significant, unexplained change to their constitution;
- the governing body having an excessive involvement in the day to day running of the school.

These situations could all indicate a serious breakdown of management or governance that may prejudice standards. In such circumstances, the LA (or RSC) may want to investigate and where appropriate take action early by issuing a warning notice.

When formal intervention is used:

The LA will consider issuing a warning notice to schools that have not responded robustly or rapidly enough to a recommendation by Ofsted to commission an external review of the use and impact of the Pupil Premium and governance. Such recommendations are normally made as part of section 5 inspections in schools 'requiring improvement' where the standard of performance of disadvantaged pupils is unacceptably low or where governance is judged to be weak.

Since it is a core function of Governing Bodies to create robust accountability for the educational performance of the school, failure to address such recommendations by Ofsted is seen as an indication that the school is causing sufficient concern for the LA to issue a warning notice. This must set out:

- the matters on which the LA's concerns are based;
- the action which the Governing Body is required to take in order to address the concerns raised (e.g. specific actions if discipline has broken down);
- the initial compliance period, beginning with the day when the warning notice is given and ending 15 working days following that day, during which time the Governing Body is to address the concerns set out in the warning notice and send their action plan to the LA;
- the action the LA is minded to take using its statutory powers, if the Governing Body does not take the required action.

When a school is judged by Ofsted to require Special Measures the LA can apply for an Interim Executive Board (IEB) in all cases. This has to be approved by the Secretary of State for Education. Withdrawal of delegation may also be considered unless the LA has already intervened and has facilitated leadership change.

If an IEB is established, it is given full delegated powers to take the necessary action to improve the school.

As a consequence of the removal of delegation, a senior LA Officer would attend governing body meetings where financial and personnel decisions need to be made such as the appointment of staff, promotions, the use of the budget and Headteacher capability.

If a school is judged by Ofsted to be inadequate (i.e. requiring special measures, or judged to have serious weaknesses) the immediate action taken by the LA is to prepare a statement of action, and support the school to prepare its action plan.

Support available from the Local Authority for Headteachers;

Depending on supported packages which schools may have purchased with the LA, there is immediate support and advice for Legal HR support, Finance and Buildings along with many other traded services. For all Headteachers, support is only ever a phone call away. There are strong relationships between schools and key staff in Children and Young People Services and wider Local Authority services. Most services allocate named officers to liaise with schools in the county.

The LA promotes and supports partnership working to ensure schools benefit from school to school support and the sharing of best practice. Documentation shows that most North Yorkshire schools are in a partnership, federation and/or collaborative arrangements with other schools, which provide strong support for improvement. This work is supported by the established early years, primary, special and secondary partnerships.

The LA has supported the development opportunities for Executive Headship and System Leadership, with which many very able and experienced Headteachers are keen to engage. However, we recognise that undertaking the role of Executive Headship and System Leadership places more demands on some individuals.

Where Heads are taking responsibility for more than one school the LA carries out a risk assessment to ensure there is capacity in the “home” school of the Executive Head and to ensure the on-going development and management of all schools concerned in the arrangements.

Examples of Headteacher support:

- Induction for new Headteachers including the identification of a mentor or a coach;
- Termly LA briefings led by the Directorate;
- Support from the school finance team;
- Timely support from Legal, HR, Safeguarding and SEND Services in the event of a critical incident affecting the school. This would normally include providing support by working directly with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team;
- Support for managing complaints including parental complaints;
- Immediate press support for any Head managing enquiries from the media;
- Support from the School Improvement Team with Ofsted;
- Support from Governors Service;
- Support from the Virtual School;
- The provision of data to support school improvement;
- Access to a Local/National leader of Education for support through the Teaching School Alliances (TSAs);
- Regular communications and updates on local and national strategies and policies that inform the work of schools.

References

- DfE: Schools causing concern: Statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2018).



North Yorkshire School Improvement Strategy **2019-2020**

*Building Capacity
Accelerating Improvement*

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