

TO: EXECUTIVE
14 FEBRUARY 2017

LEARNING IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY FRAMEWORK
Director of Children, Young People & Learning

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Historically the LA has not used its statutory powers with under performing schools.
- 1.2 The strategy needs updating to ensure the Headteacher and Governing body, on the leadership team of a school are held accountable for pupil outcomes through implementation of DfE guidance.
- 1.3 The purpose of the report is for the Executive to agree the development of the Learning Improvement Strategy Framework.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **For the Executive to AGREE the Learning Improvement Strategy Framework.**
- 2.2 **To agree the process of consultation and co-production of the Learning Improvement Strategy Framework.**
- 2.3 **To commence using statutory powers and intervention as stated within the Schools Causing Concern: Statutory guidance for local authorities, Department for Education (DfE) 2016 from 1 March 2017.**
- 2.4 **To consider governance arrangements for this statutory action.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 All LAs have a legal duty to promote high standards and the fulfilment of children and young people's potential. Under section 13A of the Education Act 1996 LAs must:
 - Promote high standards in schools and other providers
 - Ensure fair access to opportunity for education and training
 - Promote the fulfilment of learning potential
- 3.2 Additionally the Children Act 2004 established a statutory chief officer post (Director of Children's Services (DCS) and Lead Member for Children in every upper tier LA, with responsibilities for education as well as social care services. In respect of education the DCS must ensure:
 - Fair access to schools for every child
 - Provision of suitable home to school transport
 - Promote a diverse supply of strong schools
 - Promote high quality early years provision
 - Access to sufficient educational and recreational leisure time activities
 - Children and young people participate in decision making
 - Participation of children and young people in education or training
- 3.3 The proposed Learning Improvement Strategy Framework ensures working in partnership with schools to fulfil our statutory duties.

- 3.4 The Local Authority is consistently praised and recognised in Ofsted reports for its level of support to schools. It is now necessary to build on this work and ensure that DfE guidance with regard to schools causing concern is followed fully.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 Currently 67.2% of pupils are in good or better primary school. This places the LA 152 out of 152.
- 5.2 Secondary schools appear in a stronger position with 100% of pupils being in a good or better school.
- 5.3 Currently there are a number of schools that are vulnerable based upon pupil outcomes in July 2016.
- 5.4 The gap for disadvantaged pupils is not narrowing across all Key Stages.
- 5.5 The LA has a clear duty to intervene when standards in a school are not good enough. This duty is informed by Schools Causing Concern: Statutory guidance for local authorities, Department for Education (DfE) 2016. Triggers for intervention in a school can include:
- Unacceptably low standards – standards below the floor for either attainment or progress
 - Low standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils
 - A sudden drop in performance
 - Historic performance
 - Standards are unacceptably low in relation to expected outcomes or pupils' prior attainment
 - Standards at the school are below the expected standards of schools in similar circumstances
 - A serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed, where standards are, or are likely to be prejudiced
 - Evidence of very poor financial management
 - Circumstances where the safety of pupils and/or staff are compromised
- 5.6 When intervention is necessary the LA will work with school leaders (including governors) to develop a robust action plan that will achieve rapid progress. The LA will support and challenge the school to achieve progress against this action plan. Where underperformance persists and is not being rapidly addressed by school leaders a range of intervention approaches will be deployed.
- 5.7 Where school leadership is deemed to be weak and there is a lack of engagement with support that is offered, the LA will use the full range of statutory powers at its disposal to secure improvement. This could include the following: a pre warning notice, warning notice, additional governors, removal of the Governing Body and implementation of an Interim Executive Board to replace it.
- 5.8 The Council's priority is raising attainment and ensuring all school leaders provide high quality education for their pupils. This applies to all Bracknell Forest schools.

- 5.9 In the case of underperforming academies, the LA will liaise directly with the DfE's Academies Division, The Regional Schools Commissioner and the Education Funding Agency. The concerns will be raised following the same process as articulated in the Learning Improvement Strategy Framework, however, any follow up action will be led by The Regional Schools Commissioner.
- 5.10 Additionally the Council may use its democratic mandate to call academy leaders of underperforming schools to council scrutiny committees to account for performance in their schools to the elected representatives of the citizens of Bracknell Forest.
- 5.11 Schools will be aware of the key focus areas and how they can work in partnership with the LA.
- 5.12 There will be increased accountability of senior leaders including governors resulting in improved outcomes for all young people.
- 5.13 The LA is currently developing a strong package of support services to help schools deliver outcomes for children under this Framework.

6 RISKS

- 6.1 The new framework is preventing schools going into decline. If procedures are not followed rapidly then some schools may be inspected by Ofsted, fail an inspection and therefore become forced academies.
- 6.2 The current restructure of the School Improvement Team could result in not having all roles recruited to by April 2017 to carry out the required support and challenge as outlined in this Framework.

7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 7.1 S 13 A Education Act 1996 places the LA under a duty to promote high standards and fulfilment of potential in its schools and learning institutions in respect of education and training of children and young people. This Section applies to all children and young people up to age 20 and young people between 20 and 25 who have an education health and care plan maintained by the LA. Following the Children and families Act a pupil is classed as a child until statutory school leaving age then until, age 25 as a young person for the purpose of educational functions under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014. The LA has set out the powers at its disposal to make improvements , where necessary , within the main body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 7.2 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that no significant financial implications arise from this report.

8 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 8.1 Representatives from Headteacher groups, all senior leaders within Children, Young People & Learning.

Method of Consultation

- 8.2 Meeting and workshops.

Background Papers

Appendix A - Learning Improvement Strategy

Contact for further information

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