

## **Agenda item 11 - Councillor Mrs Birch to Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning**

### **Can the Executive member share with the Council the different approaches that can be taken when Leadership and management concerns about a local authority or academy school are reported?**

The different approaches that can be taken when Leadership and management concerns about a local authority or academy school are reported:

- Broad concerns about the effectiveness of a school or academy

#### LA maintained schools

A number of mechanisms exist by which the performance of schools is closely monitored. The Standards and Effectiveness Team hold a fortnightly meeting, at which each STEP provides a brief update on each of their allocated schools (maintained and academies who purchase the SLA), and any concerns from the wider team, including governor services, are shared. In addition to this, teams from across Education and Learning attend the Schools of Concern meeting, usually held twice per year, at which all Bracknell Forest schools are discussed, and intelligence relating to each school is pooled to gather a holistic view, and to identify any emerging patterns or concerns. It is also common practice for specific concerns raised about schools, either by LA officers, elected members or parents, to be shared with the Assistant Director for Education and Learning and/or the Head of Standards.

Where a range of intelligence creates a broader picture of concern around a particular school, perhaps in relation to leadership or the quality of education, or where standards drop to unacceptably low levels, the Head of Standards and Assistant Director decide whether a Declaration of Concern is necessary. Where this is the case, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors are invited to meeting with the Assistant Director and Head of Standards, to explain the evidence underpinning the concerns and inform them that they are to be issued with a Declaration of Concern. School leaders are then required to produce an improvement plan, and are subject to 6-weekly Rapid Response Board (RRB) meetings, and have 12 weeks to demonstrate improvement. Where there is evidence to support improvement after this time, the school continues to be monitored via 6-weekly Standards Monitoring Board (SMB) meetings for a maximum of two further terms. If insufficient progress is seen after this time, a formal Performance and Standards Warning notice meeting is held. In line with the DfE's Schools of Concern guidance, a formal warning notice is issued to the school, and copied to Ofsted and the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC). At this stage, the school has 15 days to submit an action plan, and within a further 15 days, the LA intervene by implementing a number of possible additional measures, including removing the governing body and implementing an Interim Executive Board (IEB). Should these measures still not result in improvements, the final stage includes escalation to the Secretary of State.

In Bracknell Forest, since this strategy was implemented, the RRB/SMB process has been effective, and no schools have been issued with a formal Performance and Standards Warning notice. Our approach is to intervene early and avoid things reaching the point where this is necessary.

Through the Standards Monitoring Board process, the school are closely held to account, and are required to demonstrate their progress against the milestones identified within their plans. They are also eligible for additional support: additional STEP time beyond that set out within the Service Level Agreement; school to school leadership support brokered by the LA; additional reviews and monitoring activities to inform action planning; where appropriate,

funding to facilitate additional training, resources and support for staff and leaders to improve standards, etc.

### Academies

Where similar concerns exist regarding academies, the LA would write to the Chair of Governors, the Head of the Academy/MAT and the Regional Schools Commissioner, outlining the concerns requesting a Declaration of Concern meeting. The LA can either broker additional support for the school and agree to monitor its progress with the RSC, or if there are more significant concerns, the RSC will issue a formal Performance and Standards Notice.

This process is set out in the flow chart on pages 27 – 29 of the Bracknell Forest Learning Improvement Strategy:

[Learning Improvement Strategy \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/learning-improvement-strategy)

- Specific concerns

Where *specific* concerns are raised relating to a particular aspect of leadership and management of a school, these are usually referred to the appropriate LA team, e.g. Standards and Effectiveness, Early Years, Safeguarding and Inclusion, or SEND etc., and these are tackled directly with the school. The school STEP is often informed and involved in discussions about particular issues. This information feeds in to the wider view of leadership at the school, and can shape the school improvement work carried out in partnership with the school.

Where specific concerns are raised about academies, the Assistant Director or Head of Standards can address these directly with either the Headteacher or the CEO of the trust, as appropriate.