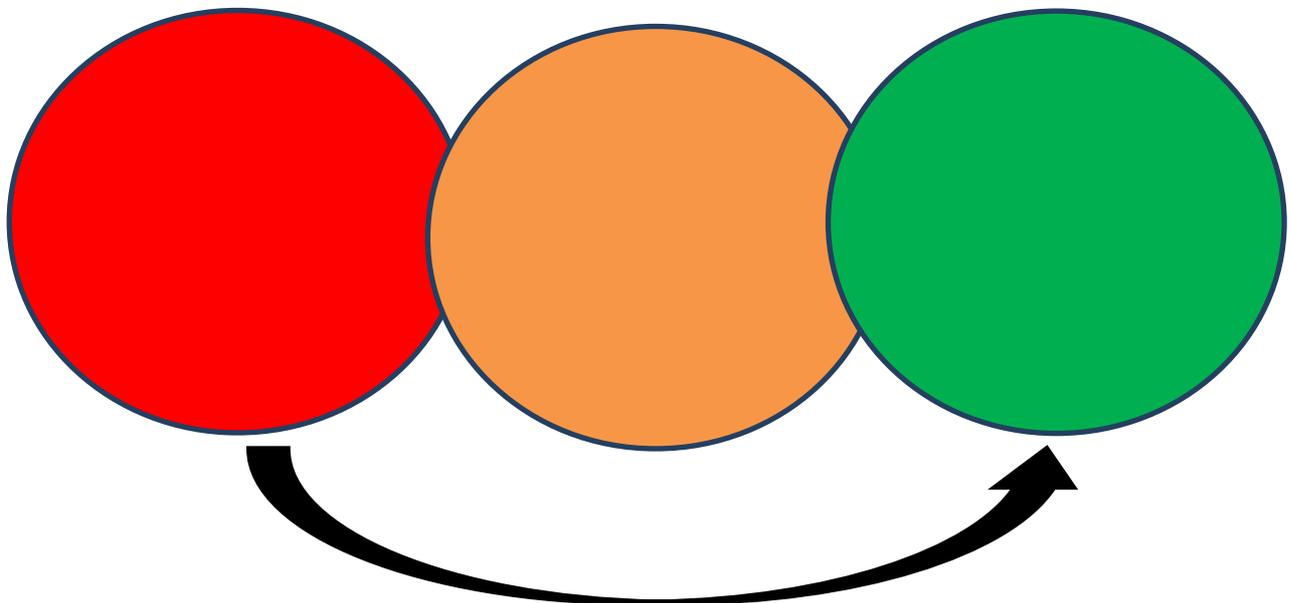


HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP



Strategy & Framework to Improve Outcomes
for Learners in Herefordshire

2013/2014

*“Good ideas come from talented people
working together”*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This document has been developed with the full participation of a Working Group. We thank all members of the group for their thoughtful and constructive contributions and for the significant time commitment they made for meetings, reading and editing.

Members of the Working Group are:

Chris Baird, Assistant Director Children's Wellbeing Directorate - Commissioning
Malcolm Robertson, School Improvement Lead
Judith Tinsley, Senior School Improvement Advisor
Fran Lennon, Business Support Officer

Chris Bandfield, Ashperton Primary Academy
Peter Box, Lord Scudamore School Academy
Angela Daniel, Kingsland CE Primary School
Andy Evans, John Masefield Academy
Oremi Evans, Brookfield School
Liz Farr, Bosbury CE Primary School
Nigel Griffiths, John Kyrle High School & Sixth Form Centre
Tracey Kneale, Marlbrook Primary School
Kristian Phillips, John Kyrle High School
Julie Powell, Lugwardine Primary Academy
Andy Shaw, Wigmore School Academy
Denise Strutt, Whitecross Hereford, High School & Specialist Sports College
Andrew Teale, St Pauls CE Primary School,
Dean Williams, Weobley High School

Anne Robertson, Archdiocese of Cardiff
Philip Sell, Hereford Diocese

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Consultation Note

This document has been subject to detailed consideration by the Working Group and we now welcome comments from all head teachers, governing bodies and stakeholders. The intention is that it starts to take effect from September 2013.

It is not intended to be a definitive document but as a guide to the direction the Working Group believes we must travel together if we are to meet the accountability we have to our children, young people and their parents/carers.

As such the structures and procedures will be subject to on-going review, comment and revision with a full review in the summer term 2014.

SECTION 1

STRATEGIC POSITION: “Partners in Learning” to improve outcomes for learners in Herefordshire

1.1 Introduction

Leaders, governors and staff of learning establishments, Herefordshire Council, the Diocese of Hereford and Archdiocese of Cardiff are committed to working as partners with children and young people, parents and carers, and other organisations /stakeholders to improve outcomes for children and young people and their transition into adulthood.

This commitment is an acknowledgement of our collective accountability to all our children and young people.

Our mission statement and guiding principles are explicit about what we wish to achieve.

1.2 Mission statement of the Herefordshire Learning Community

“Our business is about educating and developing EVERY child and young person within a cost effective and sustainable learning community.

We will have the highest expectation and belief in every individual’s talents and abilities - we will not turn our back on anyone.”

1.3 Guiding Principles of the Herefordshire Learning Community:

- Have the highest expectations and aspirations for every child and young person;
- Educate and develop the intellectual, physical, social and spiritual needs of every child and young person to help them achieve their best and enable them to make a positive contribution;
- Provide high quality teaching and learning, care, guidance and support;
- Have a curriculum and other learning opportunities that meet the needs of Herefordshire children and young people;
- Contribute to mutually supportive relationships with parents, carers and other agencies that put the needs and aspirations of children and young people first;
- Work with businesses to create learning experiences that are relevant to the world of work and the economic needs of Herefordshire;
- Work with partners to ensure every child and young person has barriers to their learning identified early then reduce or remove the impact;
- Implement and commission appropriate collaborative partnerships within and across education phases to deliver high quality, cost-effective, education provision;
- Ensure that all providers of education contribute to the development of their communities and to the wider community of Herefordshire.

1.4 Herefordshire School Improvement Partnership

The concept of a Herefordshire School Improvement Partnership is the response of schools and the local authority and the dioceses to develop a local model to promote school improvement suited to schools needs against a background of rapid change in the national education agenda.

While a key driver is the greater autonomy of schools and an evolving relationship with the local authority it is also recognition of the significant change agenda for schools, particularly concerning the curriculum and assessment. Schools and the Council believe this is best managed through collective support and shared learning.

There are a number of strong partnership approaches across Herefordshire; some such as Activate have built up a successful approach to shared learning over a number of years. Others such as the Wigmore Teaching School Alliance, have only recently come into existence, but build on a successful foundation of improvement, recognised by the national agenda and approval process to be a teaching school. There are also talented and committed head teachers, governors and leadership arrangements across schools that have successfully driven improvement.

The Partnership is open to all schools in Herefordshire and will evolve in how it operates in a school-led improvement framework.

The first underlying theme of this strategic approach is mutual trust between the local authority and schools that relies on collective accountability for the outcomes of children and young people across the County. It assumes that all schools and the local authority are independent and valued partners who may have different statutory accountabilities but share the same moral purpose.

The second underlying theme is the respect for the autonomy of schools. All schools, even where supported by intervention, are responsible for their improvement. Schools will achieve this through knowledge of their children and young people, their relationship with their parents/carers and local community, committed governors and staff, strong evidence based self-evaluation, and use of external support and challenge.

The third theme is that all schools will seek continual improvement for all their children and young people. This is best achieved by sharing knowledge, expertise and experience rather than working in isolation.

The Partnership will promote and value diversity among schools, support a range of networks and alliances so that there is a breadth of expertise to provide challenge to thinking, promote the development of expertise within governors, promote shared practice development within and across schools and improve learning outcomes for all our children and young people, in particular accelerated progress by vulnerable groups.

1.5 Policy and Framework for School Improvement

This document sets out the main principles and processes to support a collaborative approach to school improvement for all schools. Initially the local authority will work with a group of head teachers who have chosen to develop their role as system leaders or who have a track record of school improvement. The underlying premise of the school improvement policy and framework is that through school alliances, school-to-school support, and schools not operating in isolation that this will develop as a partnership involving all schools with common accountabilities and shared responsibilities.

1.6 Strategic Objectives

(To be developed further in consultation with the Strategic Education Group and the School Improvement Group)

- Good or outstanding schools as judged by Ofsted;
- Top quartile performance including vulnerable groups;
- Top three of statistical neighbours where in top quartile.

SECTION 2

FRAMEWORK AND POLICY FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

2.1 Improvement through Collaboration and Partnering

This framework and policy for school improvement is applicable to all state funded schools (local authority maintained, academies, and free schools) in Herefordshire. To develop, implement and monitor its effectiveness the local authority will work with a group of head teachers who have chosen to develop their role as system leaders and/or have a track record of improving schools. This group will be known as the School Improvement Group.

Every learner in Herefordshire has the right to participate fully in learning in schools and other settings and to achieve high standards in as many areas of her/his education as possible. We (the local authority) believe this will be achieved in schools and settings where there is strong leadership and management, high quality teaching and learning, and the participation and engagement of children and young people. We support the autonomy of schools so they are in the main responsible for their own improvement. Autonomy does not mean isolation and we believe in a school-led improvement system, where schools, the local authority and other stakeholders work together as independent, valued partners, sharing a collective accountability to children, young people and their parents/carers.

The framework and policy for school improvement is based on the premise that all schools seek to continually improve outcomes for their children and young people. We believe that self-improving schools welcome challenge to support their continuous improvement. Challenge comes from within: leadership/ management, practitioners, students and the governing body. It should also come from an externally commissioned source. This framework is intended to support a collaborative, school-led improvement system that:

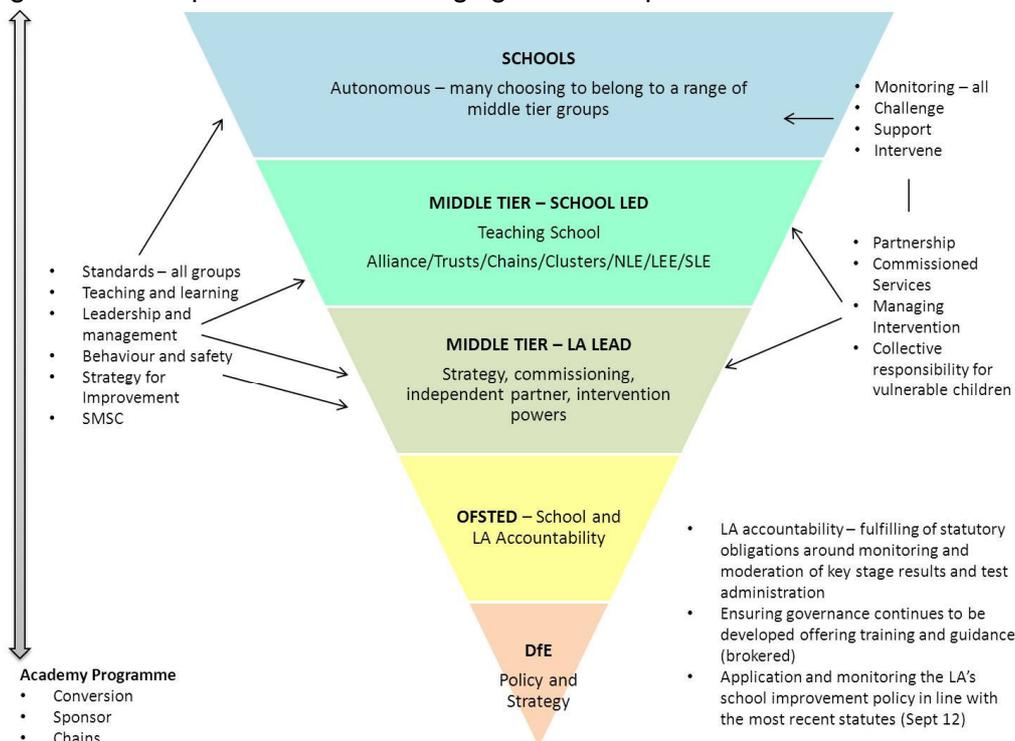
- provides a supportive and challenging environment for school leadership and governance;
- moves high performing schools or groups of children and young people to the next level of achievement and success;
- challenges underperformance and/or low achievement by schools and/ or groups of children and young people (for example Free School Meals (FSM), High Mobility);
- promotes autonomy but schools choose to work collaboratively for innovation and practice development so as to improve leadership, management, teaching and learning;
- shares information on practice and professional development and makes this is available to all schools;
- expects high performing schools to support the development of the wider school community.

We recognise that as part of the culture of autonomy schools are seeking a range of alliances to support their own improvement. The local authority, school-led alliances and other groups (for example the Diocesan Board of Education) are now known as the “middle tier”¹ and the local authority will seek to work in partnership with these groups in order to provide a coherent

¹ Mourshed, Chioke, Barber: How the World’s most improved school systems keep getting better McKinsey November 2010

improvement framework for schools and ensure that no school operates in isolation.

The diagram below represents these emerging relationships:



2.2 The School Improvement Group

To oversee the development, application and evaluation of the school improvement framework and policy there will be a School Improvement Group. The group needs to be small enough to operate effectively but also of a size to be representative of the school community in Herefordshire. The local authority will nominate head teachers from the National and Local Leaders of Education, the Teaching School Alliance and head teachers with a record of improving schools and outcomes for children and young people to be members of the group. The proposed membership is:

- Local authority;
- Diocesan Board of Education representative;
- Archdiocese representative;
- Teaching School 1 representative;
- National Leaders in Education x 3 (primary / secondary / special);
- Local Leaders in Education x 2 (primary/ secondary);
- Head teachers with a record of school improvement and /or a specific area of expertise as required.

While consistency in attendance is important, so is the spread of experience in the meetings, so members of the group will be able to send an agreed substitute from their group /phase if they are unable to attend a meeting. Membership will normally run for two academic years and will be reviewed after 18 months.

2.3 Functions of the School Improvement Group

The School Improvement Group will have a cycle of meetings throughout the year (Appendix 1) which will be planned around key performance dates and a local review cycle. The main function of the School Improvement Group is to work in collaboration with the local authority to support the self-improvement of all schools and the local authority so that all children and young people achieve good outcomes from their time in schooling and can access further educational opportunities.

The areas of work of the group will be to:

- develop and implement a risk assessment approach to the monitoring of schools which supports schools in their own self-evaluation and identifies where the local authority needs a more detailed conversation with a school;
- review performance, management information and practice on thematic issues to enable schools to review their own performance, for example the rate of progress of vulnerable groups;
- develop a system to identify effective practice within the County and through schools' membership of national networks and facilitates the dissemination of this practice;
- promote research and joint practice development around standards of teaching and learning and leadership and management;
- promote school-to-school support and collaboration, including evaluation and guidance on effective collaboration;
- review the support available to schools to enable them to improve;
- advise on effective practice where it is agreed that the local authority needs to support and intervene with a school to bring about rapid improvement;
- feed into the reporting process for elected members on the performance of schools (Appendix 2);
- inform and challenge the local authority so that it works to improve its performance.

The School Improvement Group may add further functions or activities and review its relationship with other groups in the County (Appendix 3) as it develops its role.

2.4 Managing Change and Risk: Monitoring, Challenge, Support and Intervention

The statutory basis for monitoring, challenging, support and intervention for both schools and the local authority is contained in Appendix 4. The underlying aim is achieved through our collective moral purpose to provide schooling that achieves the best possible outcomes for all children and young people in Herefordshire. It also recognises that the next few years will see significant changes for schools including in the curriculum and assessment process. This is best managed through shared expertise, talented people working together and achieving system wide improvement (i.e. all schools).

2.4.1 Monitoring

The local authority will carry out a desktop risk assessment of all schools and share this with the School Improvement Group. It is important to remember that a risk assessment is not a judgement rather it is a tool to identify factors that may affect performance especially where there is organisational or nationally introduced change.

The areas covered by the risk assessment are attached in Appendix 5. The initial risk assessment will be carried out and agreed with the School Improvement Group in the Autumn Term each year. It will be reviewed and updated each term to reflect organisational changes and performance data publication. At the beginning of the Autumn Term schools will be invited to share their own assessment based on self-evaluation, including external reviews, as part of the risk assessment process.

On the basis of the headline assessment the risk to schools and outcomes for children and young people will be identified as per the table below:

Risk level	Description
Low	Performance data good or showing an improving trend (above floor standards) – progress data Vulnerable groups – accelerated progress No significant organisational or Ofsted factors
Medium	Performance data shows significant variation over three years or a downward trend – emphasis on progress data Vulnerable groups –progress below authority average and gap not closing One or two organisational /Ofsted factors (other than category)
High	Performance data on downward trend / below floor standard – emphasis on progress data Vulnerable groups –progress is worsening Several organisational / Ofsted factors

Once the risk assessment has been agreed with the School Improvement Group the local Authority and relevant authority (for example Diocesan Board) will notify each school of the assessment. The aim of the risk assessment is to ensure the attention of the head teacher and governing body is drawn to any issues or combination of factors which are or could affect performance and to take actions to mitigate the risk.

Notification to schools of the risk assessment will lead to the following actions:

Where it is low risk, it will be for the school to decide if it wishes further clarification or support.

Where the risk assessment is medium for maintained schools the local authority will arrange a meeting with the head teacher by a School Improvement Adviser or NLE to discuss whether there are risks and the potential impact on outcomes. An academy will be able to commission a similar conversation or use the assessment to inform its own arrangement for external challenge.

Where the risk assessment is high for a maintained school the local authority will draw up a more detailed risk assessment (Appendix 6). This will be the subject of a conversation by an SIA /NLE with the head teacher and chair of the governing body against the school's own self-evaluation. This will lead to second level risk assessment based around the Ofsted framework for schools and may lead to a support plan or intervention. There will be additional monitoring visits in this case. For an academy the Director and/or Director of the Diocesan Board of Education will invite the chair of governors and head teacher to comment on the assessment and advise her/him of any actions the school intends to take to mitigate the risk.

2.4.2 Challenge

Schools within a self-improving system will welcome challenge as a driver for development. The local authority working with head teachers and middle tier alliances will provide challenge in three ways:

- with individual schools by agreeing the headline risk assessment of schools and the process of conversations where medium and high risks are identified for schools, in particular the progress of all and specific groups of children and young people. It will also assist in reviewing the evidence of impact of support and/or intervention packages in schools with high risk factors;
- with all schools by thematic reviews based on performance data for specific key stages, subjects or groups of children and young people and reviews of effective practice to address under-performance/ low-achievement;
- by reviewing the effectiveness of collaborative working and the role of middle tier bodies including the local authority and its self-evaluation evidence.

2.4.3 Support and Intervention

Schools are responsible for commissioning their own support. This will be part of the self-evaluation / external review process and a planned approach to the internal interventions. Investing in support to address areas for improvement is important as the cost of not taking action can be significantly higher: financially, in lack of progress by children and young people, staff morale and the reputation of the school. Information on and access to appropriate support is integral to a school's improvement planning and its internal interventions to improve leadership, management, teaching and learning. The School Improvement Group will assist this process by signposting:

- expertise and support available from schools in the County; for example NLE/LLE/SLE, the teaching school, local groups such as Activate;
- expertise and support available including continuing professional development through school alliances;
- access to national networks and expertise in schools outside of the County through the School Improvement Group members;
- Higher Education links.

Working with the School Improvement Group, the Teaching School Alliance and other alliances the local authority will support the web-enabled access to information on support and professional development by school based staff (www.hereteach.org.uk).

Where appropriate the local authority, School Improvement Group or member body will help broker school-to-school support. The School Improvement Group will also promote shared practice development including evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of joint working.

The aim of the risk assessment is to support schools in the early identification of potential or real and issues that impact on performance so that the school can plan its own interventions or work in a partnership with other schools so that concern does not become a crisis.

Where there is a charge to schools for example for NLE time, there will be an agreed and published rate.

2.4.4 Statutory Intervention

Effective intervention needs to be early and sharply targeted so as to achieve swift improvement where necessary and prevent a decline in outcomes for the children and young people and an Ofsted inspection placing the school in category. The local authority will always aim to work with the leadership and governing body of a school to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Where a maintained school does not wish work with us or there are judged to be significant barriers to improvement the local authority will use the statutory intervention powers.

While the local authority has no power with regards to academies there is an expectation from the termly meetings with DfE and Ofsted that the local authority will inform the school and if appropriate the sponsor of any concerns, and thereafter the DfE. The local authority's aim will be to work with schools in such circumstances. Where we believe concerns are not being addressed we will inform the Department for Education (Academies and Performance Division) and they may decide on advising the Secretary of State to use her/his statutory powers.

The School Improvement Group does has a key role in ensuring that the intervention process is transparent, applied fairly and that intervention is speedy (and early if possible) so as to enable rapid improvement by the school. The School Improvement Group may be asked through its support role to advise on appropriate support programmes.

SECTION 3

SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION

3.1 Introduction

The sections of the document above set out how leaders, governors and staff of learning establishments, Herefordshire Council and the dioceses are committed to working as a partner with children and young people, the parents and carers, and other organisations /stakeholders to improve outcomes for children and young people. The policy and framework for school improvement sets out how this will work in practice including support for, and where appropriate intervention in, the development and continuous improvement

3.2 Support and Intervention - Maintained Schools

Schools are responsible for commissioning their own support. This will be part of the self-evaluation / external review process and a planned approach to the internal interventions so as to enable their children and young people to meet the challenges of academic excellence, responsibility and leadership, spiritual awareness and participation in a wide variety of activities.

The local authority, working with the School Improvement Group, will signpost where schools can obtain support from. Where the risk assessment process identifies areas of serious concern the local authority will discuss with the governing body and school leadership the actions that need to be taken to bring about rapid improvement and where appropriate help broker that support and monitor its impact. Where the school is a controlled or aided faith school the local authority will also consult with the Diocesan Board of Education or the Archdiocese.

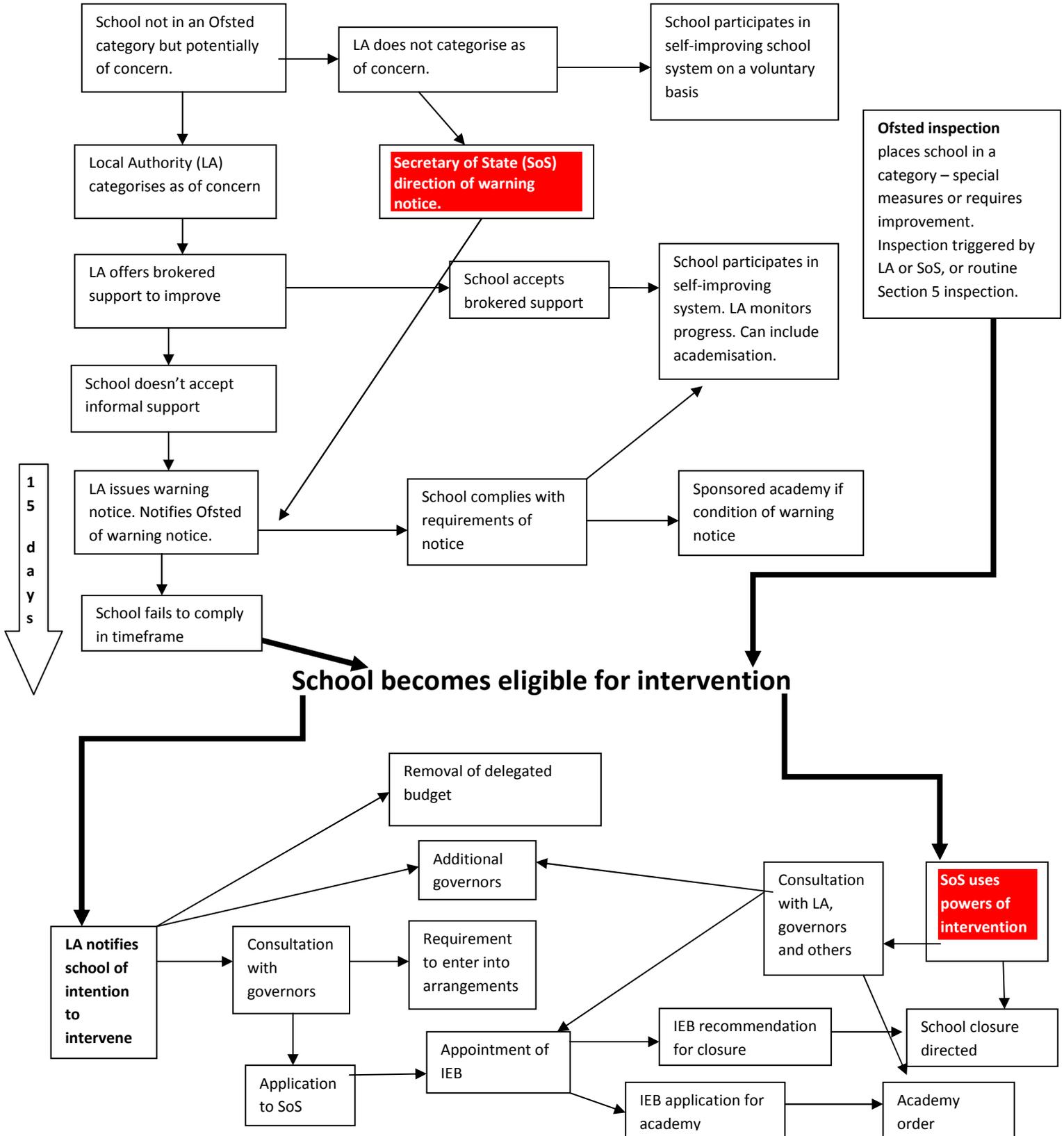
The aim is to ensure early intervention so that if possible no school is classed by Ofsted as requiring special measures. Where a school governing body decides not to follow the local authority advice / guidance then the local authority will consider the statutory powers available to it and intervene speedily so as to protect the interests of the children and young people at the school. These powers are shown in the diagram over-page and their use explained in following sections.

3.3 Support and Intervention - Academies

As previously stated the local authority has no power with regards to academies though there is an expectation (DfE and Ofsted) that the local authority will inform the school and if appropriate the sponsor of any concerns, and thereafter the DfE. The local authority would wish to work with an academy over which it had concerns. Where the school does not take actions to address concerns then the local authority will liaise with the DfE. Any intervention will be determined by the Secretary of State and are similar to those in the diagram below with the following modifications:

- the Secretary of State could change or appoint a sponsor;
- will not appoint additional governors.

3.4 Diagram Illustrating Support and Intervention



3.5 Implementing Intervention

The local authority will issue a warning notice to the governing body, copied to the head teacher, setting out the concerns, the expected actions by the governing body, the timescale in which action is expected to bring about improvement. The Governing Body have fifteen days in which to accept the warning notice or appeal, including an appeal to the Secretary of State / Ofsted.

Then local authority, working with the Diocesan Board of Education or the Archdiocese where the school is aided or controlled, will then use which powers it believes is most appropriate.

Where Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decides a school requires special measures and the Secretary of state has been notified (prior to publication of the report) the local authority has the power to take action immediately, for example the appointment of an Interim Executive Board.

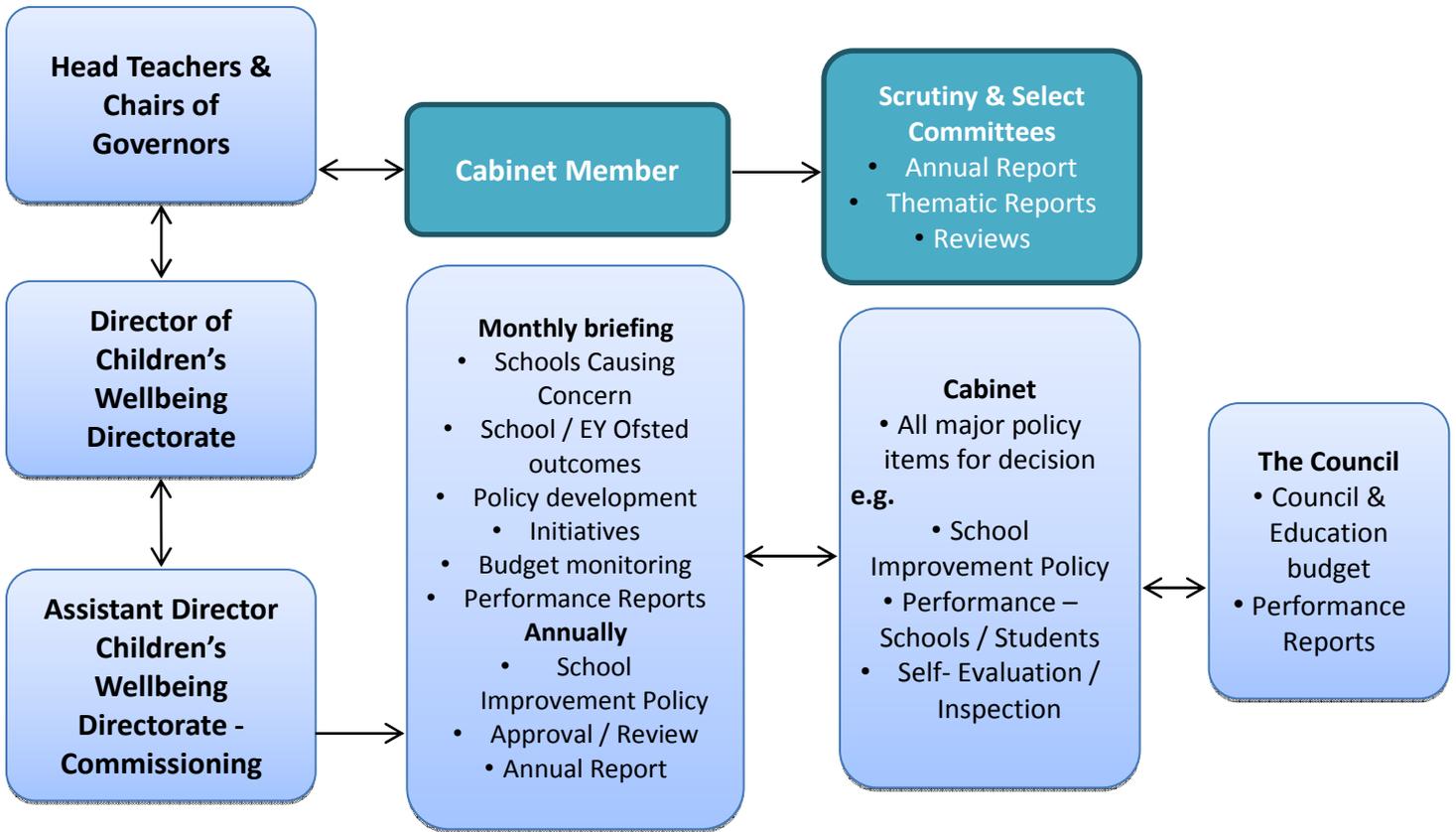
The intention is for intervention to be speedy and the use of intervention powers to be withdrawn as soon as improvement at the school has been secured.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Work Programme for the School Improvement Partnership

When	Items
10 October (9.00am-12.00 Noon)	Risk assessment – schools and actions Developing the directory School-to-school support / development work November conference
8 November	Ofsted Conference on closing the gap for vulnerable groups
21 November (2.00pm-5.00pm)	Feedback on risk assessment Update on risk assessment e.g. changes with validated data Conference feedback and resulting actions Directory Feedback on first and second stage risk assessment Report on Ofsted inspection outcomes Any issues from publication of performance data
February / March	Review of any changes to for individual school risk assessment Progress with practice directory Thematic report e.g. good governance with external input Any issues from publication of performance data
May	Review of any changes to for individual school risk assessment Report on Ofsted inspection outcomes Thematic report Practice development
June	Review year and plan programme for next academic year

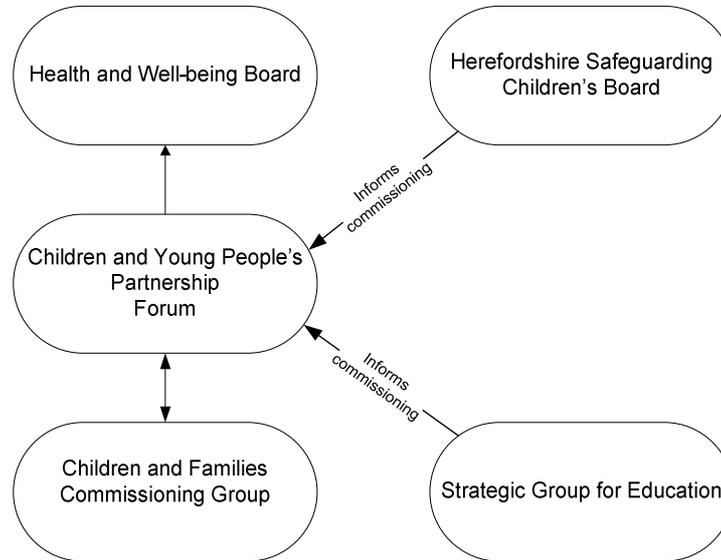
Appendix 2 – Reporting to Elected Members on School Improvement.



Appendix 3: Consultative and Strategic Groups

Our approach to school improvement forms a critical part of Herefordshire's drive to improve outcomes for our children and young people, particularly for vulnerable groups.

The diagram below sets out the overall partnership governance structure within Herefordshire



The purpose of the Strategic Group for Education is:

- I. To give strategic leadership to improving education across Herefordshire.
- II. To recognise and celebrate high achievement and progress.
- III. Test out and develop priorities that will support improvement.
- IV. To constructively challenge areas and aspects of underperformance.

The group considers issues from a whole county perspective and covers the whole range of issues including for example overall achievement, vulnerable and minority groups, admissions, sufficiency, planning, performance, and does this from early years through school age and into higher education.

The Strategic Group is supported by three sub groups

- Early Years Group;
- School Improvement Group;
- 11-19 Group.

Underpinning the work of these groups is Herefordshire Learning Communities approach to Closing the Gap.

The role of Schools Forum

Schools Forum is made up of representatives from schools and academies, but with some representation from other non-school organisations, such as nursery and post-16. The forum acts as a consultative body on some issues and a decision making body on others.

The forum acts in a consultative role for:

- Changes to the local funding formula. (The local authority is responsible for the final decision, although in some cases it may delegate the decision-making power to the Schools Forum);
- Proposed changes to the operation of the minimum funding guarantee;
- Changes to or new contracts affecting schools (e.g. school meals);
- Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in pupil referral units and in early year's provision.

The forum is responsible for decisions on:

- How much funding may be centrally retained within the Dedicated Schools Grant (e.g. for the Admissions Service, prudential borrowing costs, additional funding available for growing schools);
- Any proposed carry forward of deficits on central spend from one year to the next;
- Proposals to de-delegate funding from maintained primary and secondary schools (e.g. for staff supply cover, insurance, behaviour support);
- Changes to the scheme of financial management.

Schools' representation

Schools and academies representatives on the forum should be roughly proportionate to the number of pupils in each sector and would generally include representatives from:

- Maintained primary, secondary and special schools;
- Maintained pupil referral units;
- Academies and free schools.

Where there is at least one school in a particular category, there must be at least one representative for that group on the forum.

Representatives should be elected by their peer group. In the case of maintained schools, representatives should be head teachers (or their representatives) or governors, elected by their appropriate phase. Academies members should be elected by the Academy Trusts in the local authority area.

Appendix 4 – Statutory Framework for Schools and the Local Authority

Under section 13A of the Education Act 1996, as amended by section 1 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the council has a legal duty to promote high standards and the fulfilment of potential in relation to all its education functions. This section applies to education for children of compulsory school age, whether at school or otherwise; and children under or over that age who are registered as pupils at schools maintained by the council. A child is defined as a person under the age of 20.

Section 13A places a legal duty on the council to ensure that all its education functions are (so far as they are capable of being so exercised) exercised by the authority with a view to:

- (a) promoting high standards;
- (b) ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training; and
- (c) promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person to whom the section applies.

This duty applies to community schools, but not to academies. While the council has no direct responsibility for academies, there is an expectation that there will be a relationship whereby the local authority is aware of standards and in a position to raise concerns directly with the school, or with Ofsted, if there is not a satisfactory response.

Various Education Acts define the responsibility of schools and governors with respect to financial management, staffing, the curriculum and inspection. There are also prescribed general responsibilities around specific groups of children and young people.

Appendix 5 – High Level Risk assessment of schools

Notes:

1. The risk assessment process is being aligned with that used by Ofsted and will be modified in the light of any changes to Ofsted frameworks
2. The initial assessment will be carried out at the start of the academic year but it is a rolling process so that changes (for example publication of final validated data, Ofsted anniversaries) may lead to revised assessments during the year.
3. The focus is on attainment and progress of children and young people
4. In the primary phase attainment / progress data has been translated into quartiles (county data)

High Risk

Primary Schools

- Below Floor targets (with 11 or more children in cohort) for progress measures:
- Below 60% with combined scores for Reading, writing, maths;
- Less than 92% median percentage in English; and
- Less than 90% median percentage in Maths.

Five or more of the eight measures in fourth quartile (lowest) within county.

- EYFS;
- Phonics;
- Year two reading;
- Year two writing;
- Year two maths;
- Year six reading;
- Year six writing;
- Year six maths.

Secondary Schools

- Below floor standard (40%) for 5+ GCSE A* - C incl E & M;
- Poor level of progress in English and mathematics.

All schools

- Ofsted category or Requiring Improvement;
- Inequalities gaps in attainment and progress for vulnerable pupils are high, not reducing and /or a trend of low attainment over at least three years This includes Free School Meals (FSM), Black Minority Ethnic (BME) , Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT), English as an Additional Language (EAL), Special Educational Needs (SEN) children;
- Imminence of Ofsted inspection (relative to last inspection date):
 - Over three years for Good / Outstanding schools
 - Over twelve months for Satisfactory.

Medium risk

Enhanced priority

Schools with

- Ofsted Anniversary dependent on date and grading;
- Four of the eight measures in fourth quartile (primary);

- Significant variation in performance between English / mathematics and/or year-on-year and/or boys / girls (secondary);
- A declining trend in attainment/progress over 2 and/or 3 year;
- Significant gaps in attainment and progress for vulnerable pupils with little improvement. year-on-year.

Timetabled support

Schools with:

- Significant gaps in attainment and progress for vulnerable pupils but with trend of improvement;
- New heads/federation/amalgamation/governor support necessary;
- Leadership issues (e.g. recruitment of senior leaders);
- Low attendance;
- Falling roles.

Low risk (at least three indicators)

- Experienced leadership and governance;
- Good or Outstanding grading in a recent inspection last two years;
- Consistent trend of achievement and attainment: actual and progress measures;
- The achievement of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support at least matches that of other pupils in the school or has risen rapidly, including in English and mathematics;
- The standards of attainment of all groups of pupils are likely to be at least in line with national averages or a trend in that direction over 2 – 3 years.

Appendix 6: Support and Intervention

a. The Legal Basis for Intervention

Various Education Acts have detailed and developed the statutory powers of the local authority for intervention in schools:

Standards and Framework Act 1998 Sections 16 and 17 Schedule 15

- Issue a formal warning notice to the governing body;
- Power for the local authority to appoint additional governors;
- Suspend the school's delegated budget;
- Replace the governing body with an Interim Executive Board.

Education Act 2002 Sections 54- 59 and Schedules 3, 5 and 6

The Act confirmed the above powers but also provides a framework to allow them to be applied more rapidly, in particular establishing an Interim Executive Board where a governing body has not complied with a warning notice or the school is deemed by Ofsted to require special measures.

Education and Inspection Act 2006

- Part 1 Section 1: the duty of the local authority in relation to promoting high standards and fulfilment of potential;
- Part 4 Sections 59-66: reiteration of the local authority powers of intervention. Section 63 enables the local authority to direct a governing body to work with another nominated school to bring about improvement;
- Part 4 Sections 67-69: sets out the authority for the Secretary of State to intervene when it is thought the local authority has not taken action. It is also the enabling legislation for the Secretary of State to intervene in academies or free schools.

b. Formal Warning Notice

Where the governing body of a maintained school has refused to work with the local authority to address areas of serious concern identified by the risk assessment process a warning notice will be issued. The warning notice will be to the governing body, copied to the head teacher, and will set out:

- the nature of and basis for concerns;
- action taken to date by the local authority to support the school;
- action the Director of Children's Wellbeing requires the governing body to take and the period for this action (not more than six months) to bring about improvement;
- criteria to assess improvement (focus on student progress);
- establishing a project group to review and monitor progress.

The governing body has fifteen days in which to consider the warning notice and either accept the proposed actions or appeal to the Secretary of State.

c. Suspending the School's Delegated Budget

The Director of Children's Wellbeing may suspend governing body powers under financial delegation. This action will be taken where the governing body has:

- failed to comply with the agreed scheme;
- action is needed to safeguard the financial position of the school or local authority.

The last point can be interpreted widely and include the need to address around staffing.

Where delegation is to be removed the governing body should be given written notice outline the reasons for such action and a period of time in which to agree or to appeal to the Secretary of State. Where the Director has serious concerns the suspension may take effect of the date of the written notice.

Once delegation has been removed the local authority will work with the governing body and head teacher to address the areas of concern with the aim at returning delegated powers at the earliest possible date.

d. Interim Executive Board

Where governance is identified as a key issues and a barrier to improvement the Director may decide to replace the governing body with an Interim Executive Board (IEB). The IEB will be appointed by the local authority and normally consist of three or five members who have the expertise to work with the leadership of the school to bring about rapid improvement. The aim of a small group is to speed decision making.

Where an IEB is to be established the Director will consult with the governing body and other stakeholders.

The aim will be to return to normal governance arrangements as soon as possible (normally within twelve months).

e. Establish Arrangements to Work with another School

The basic premise of this school improvement policy and framework is a school-led self-improving system where sharing and collaboration is the norm. Where there are serious concerns over a school the Director may determine that more formal arrangements for collaboration and support are required. The exact arrangement will be based on particular need and experience of what is effective (the School Improvement Group will gather case studies as part of its work).

f. Project Group

When a school is high risk following the headline and detailed risk assessment or in an Ofsted category there will be a requirement from the Director to instigate a Project Group to monitor the actions taken by the school against agreed outcomes recorded in the Rapid Recovery Plan within an agreed timeframe.

Aims:

- To liaise on the Rapid Recovery Plan and the support for delivery;
- To monitor progress against the outcomes in the Rapid Recovery Plan and to measure the impact of these actions;
- To agree the next steps;
- To challenge lack of progress.

Timescale:

- The Project Group will meet at regular intervals of no more than one month.

Key Personnel:

The School Improvement Adviser (or commissioned NLE) will coordinate the Project Group.

The core members will include:

- Head teacher;
- Chair of Governors;
- School Improvement Adviser;
- and /or NLE/LLE (as appropriate);
- any other person who will bring required expertise to the discussion.

Procedures:

- The Head Teacher will produce a Rapid Recovery Plan with the support of the School Improvement Adviser (NLE/LLE as appropriate) and Chair of Governors. The plan will outline the remedial actions needed to address the areas identified. It will include agreed outcomes and timescales. This is copied to the Assistant Director (Commissioning) and Director for People's Services;
- The appropriate officer will liaise with the head teacher and the School Improvement Group so that targeted support can be commissioned;
- At each Project Group meeting, the head teacher will report back on progress made against each key issue. Progress will be evaluated and new actions agreed as appropriate.

Roles of the Project Group:

- To evaluate progress on any actions identified at the previous meeting;
- To identify barriers to improvement and what is to be done to overcome them or tackle them;
- To formulate bids for resources and monitor and evaluate the impact of these;
- To agree any amendments or add to the identified concern;
- To ensure minutes of each meeting are kept and copied to the appropriate bodies.