



# **Bradford School Improvement Strategy 2018-2019**

**Building Capacity  
Accelerating Improvement**

## FOREWORD

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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 Bradford 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 city 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 Bradford's children and young people. We all acknowledge that there is still more work to do. We want Bradford's schools to be recognised across the country as some of the best places in which to work, teach and learn. 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.

Signatory

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\_\_\_\_\_ Marium Haque

Deputy Director, Children's  
Service

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# VISION AND PRIORITIES

## INTRODUCTION

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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 Bradford 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 from 2 to 18 years; additional funding is available through the Pupil Premium to support “closing the gap” nationally 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

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We believe the city of Bradford Metropolitan District is a fine place to grow up and we have the highest expectations for the achievement of children and young people in the city. 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 develop and broker school-to-school support using high quality performing leaders from Bradford and beyond, to work alongside schools requiring assistance to be good.

### Through partnership working we will:

- ensure every child and young person in Bradford’s district has an excellent education
- raise educational standards and outcomes in schools
- improve the quality of provision so that the percentage of schools judged to be at least good by Ofsted, is in line with national figures

## PRINCIPLES

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| The local authority is committed to:   | The local authority will:  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>effective partnership working with all schools</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work together with all stakeholders including parents, teachers, head teachers and governors</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>intervening swiftly with those schools in danger of failing to provide a good standard of education for children and young people.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strive to build effective, constructive and productive relationships with partners to secure school improvement. These include DfE, the Diocese, FE Colleges and other providers, Teaching Regulation Agency, Teaching Schools, the RSC and local trusts</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying early those providers requiring early support</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indicate how schools can improve provision in a variety of suitable, appropriate and manageable ways</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that excellent practice in providing a good education for all is shared across the District</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>challenge schools where provision falls below expectations and use its intervention powers as necessary for the best interests of the pupils</li> </ul>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>act openly and with transparency in all matters</li> </ul>  |

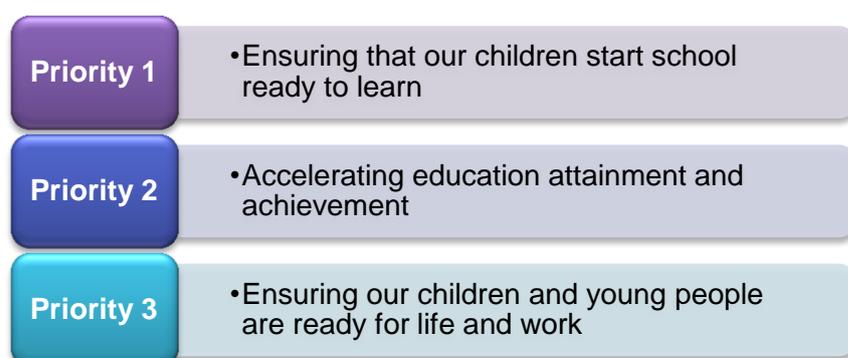
**All actions will be taken in the best interests of the children and young people served by the school**

## PRIORITIES

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The Bradford *Children, Young People and Families Plan 2017-2020* sets out the priorities which the Council has identified in order to improve the life chances of children and young people across the district.

Although all are closely interlinked, three are specifically within the remit of the School Improvement Strategy. They sit under the key priority headings of “A great start and good schools for all our children” and “Better skills, good jobs and a growing economy”.



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.



Promote high standards of achievement across all phases from Early Years to Key Stage 5 and increase the percentage of students attending good or better schools as judged by Ofsted.



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 knows' in the city



Improve outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including CLA, in all phases and close the gaps between them and other students in the district and nationally



Continue to explore alternative models of delivery where appropriate and work with traded areas to ensure competitive services that provide value for money and are fit for purpose

## PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

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In order to achieve these we must work in partnership and use our resources more wisely.

**The Bradford Education Covenant** is developing strong links with the communities and business which are committed to helping schools to improve the chances of the children and young people of the district.



**The DfE Opportunity Area funding** is focusing on four key areas:

- Strengthening school leadership and the quality of teaching
- Parents and Place: Literacy and Learning
- Improving access to rewarding careers
- Using evidence and research to remove barriers to learning





## **ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

## ACTION

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Six outstanding schools in Bradford 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.

The successful applications of the Dixons Academies to be a Research School and Burley and Woodhead CE Primary School to be an English Hub, have been a welcome addition to the support and analysis which is available to the whole partnership of schools.

Bradford Local Authority is working closely with an increasing number of partners to shape the local vision and strategy for school improvement and the development of a shared local vision for education. These include the Opportunity Area; school partnerships; school leaders; the teaching school alliances; the English Hub; the White Rose Maths Hub; the West Yorkshire Strategic Partnership Group and the Research School Partnership.

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

The success of the self-improving system in Bradford 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.

## THE THREE KEY PRINCIPLES

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The consensus is for all City of Bradford MDC educational establishments, the local authority, the Teaching School Alliances and other partners to adopt the three key principles that:

- Ours is a sector led school improvement system whereby all key stakeholders have a shared vision for improving educational outcomes. This implies that every child has a school place, that the needs of vulnerable children are catered for, that no school is left behind, that schools and academies are challenged to work together, that weak or declining performance is quickly identified and corrected, that data and knowledge are shared across schools and that there is accountability to local communities.
- 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-aware and professional connections.
- Schools will be performing in line with, or above, national measures in all key performance indicators by September 2021. In order to achieve this ambition, underperformance will be dealt with promptly and weak leadership and teaching immediately tackled so that we increase the opportunity of every child is able to attend a good or outstanding school.

## THE ROLE OF THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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### **The Local Authority (in conjunction with the Opportunity Area) will:**

- Be more of a commissioning and less a delivering organisation, subcontracting where necessary or appropriate
- Challenge, monitor, quality assure and intervene in Schools Causing Concern i.e Priority 4, high risk Priority 3 schools and schools in Ofsted category
- Provide support and challenge to the school partnerships that operate within the district and work with the most vulnerable and high risk schools by providing them with a targeted intervention programme of support
- Provide advice, training and a clerking service to governors through a traded service
- 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 or the Opportunity Area

### **The Teaching School Alliances will:**

- Provide leadership and management professional development opportunities 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 NLEs, LLEs and SLEs as well as working with the partnerships utilising non-accredited good and outstanding professionals
- Lead on workforce development including the professional development of NQTs
- Ensure practitioners are actively engaged in research and development

### **The School Partnerships will :**

- Promote the district as the place to come and work
- Risk assess and categorise schools in their partnerships
- Monitor, support and challenge schools judged to be of medium, low or no risk
- Support the move to a sector led model by developing high quality system leaders
- Provide leadership support and relevant professional development programmes



## MONITORING AND CHALLENGE

## MONITORING AND CHALLENGE

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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.

Bradford Council's Children's Services Department 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.

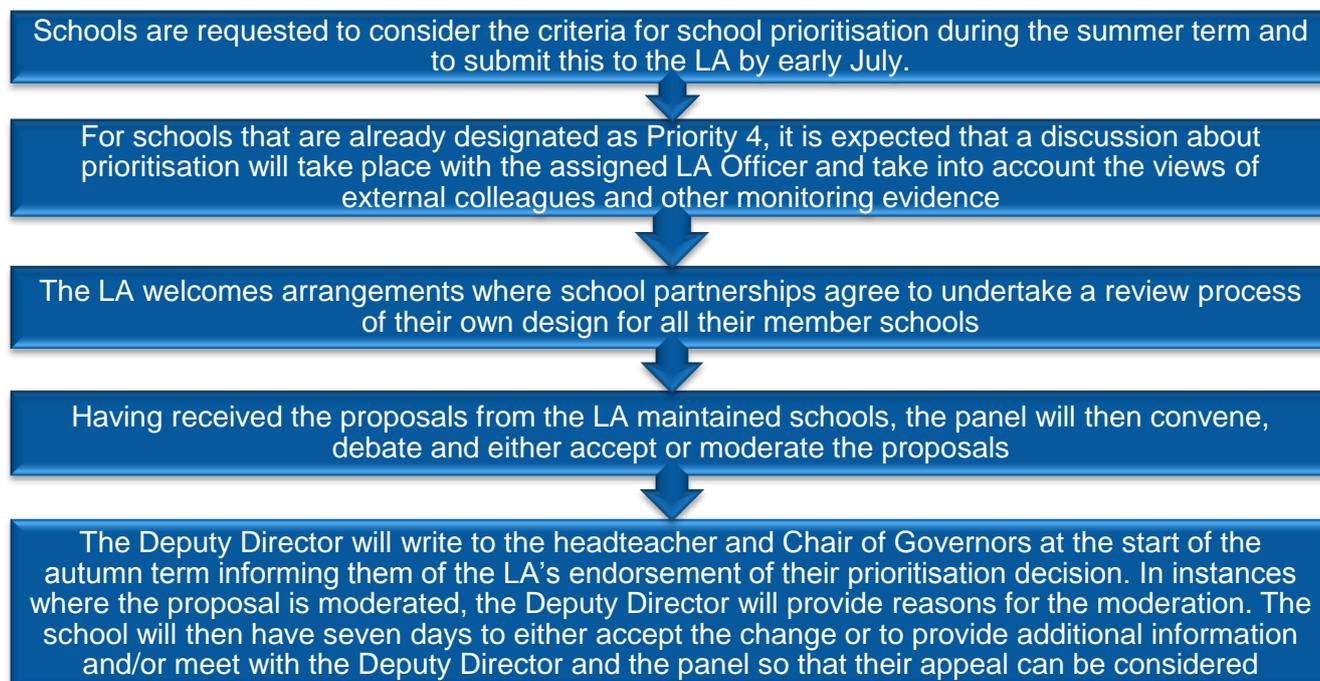
In order to carry out this function in an effective and transparent way, the LA operates a system of School Prioritisation whereby LA officers and school partnerships assess the performance of schools and educational institutions, to judge the degree of risk in the quality of education being provided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

Academies across the district are also invited to engage with the prioritisation should they wish to participate as part of the district's family of schools.

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

## ANNUAL RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

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## PRIORITISATION CRITERIA

In applying the following criteria a 'best fit' approach will be used.

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>PRIORITY<br/>1</b> | <p>A priority one school is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ judged to be 'good' or 'outstanding' in its last Ofsted inspection.</li> <li>▪ highly likely to be judged 'good' or 'outstanding' if inspected or evaluated by external consultants</li> <li>▪ close to, or above, floor standards<sup>1</sup>/national averages and has good value added scores including those of vulnerable groups of pupils</li> <li>▪ led by highly effective system leaders and governors with the capacity to support other schools and undertake outreach work</li> <li>▪ currently delivering successful school to school support</li> <li>▪ one in which safeguarding is effective</li> </ul>   |
| <b>PRIORITY<br/>2</b> | <p>A priority two school is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ judged to be 'good' in its last Ofsted inspection</li> <li>▪ currently judged to be 'requiring improvement' and is highly likely to be judged 'good' if inspected or evaluated by external consultants</li> <li>▪ performing below, or close to, floor standards/national averages and current progress measures demonstrate improvements and vulnerable groups are performing as well as, or better than, other pupils</li> <li>▪ one which has good leadership and governance, and has some capacity to support another school</li> <li>▪ one in which safeguarding is effective</li> </ul>   |
| <b>PRIORITY<br/>3</b> | <p>A priority three school is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ judged to be 'requires improvement' (RI) by Ofsted in its last inspection</li> <li>▪ currently judged as 'good' but is highly likely to be judged 'RI' if inspected or evaluated by external consultants</li> <li>▪ one where there are concerns about leadership and/or governance e.g. finance, attendance</li> <li>▪ one where there is a decline in pupil performance over time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ vulnerable groups of pupils make slow or limited progress</li> <li>○ overall performance is below the standards of comparable schools</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ one which has been 'causing concern' and is showing <i>early</i> signs of improvement, but is not yet consistently performing well</li> <li>▪ one in which safeguarding is effective</li> </ul>  |
| <b>PRIORITY<br/>4</b> | <p>A priority four school is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ judged to be 'special measures' or 'serious weaknesses' in its last Ofsted inspection</li> <li>▪ likely to be judged 'inadequate' if inspected or evaluated by external consultants</li> <li>▪ one with complex weaknesses including leadership/governance issues</li> <li>▪ one where there is continued, significant, under-performance over time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ pupils, including vulnerable groups, make little or no progress</li> <li>○ overall performance is significantly below the standards of comparable schools</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ one which requires significant improvement and has limited capacity to do so</li> <li>▪ one in which safeguarding is not effective</li> <li>▪ one with high persistence absence (PA) and attendance is significantly below the national average</li> <li>▪ one with serious financial concerns</li> </ul> |

<sup>1</sup> A primary school is below the Floor Standard if less than 65% of pupils achieve either the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined or make insufficient progress in reading, writing and mathematics.  
To be above the Floor Standard a school needs to meet either the attainment or all of the progress elements.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

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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 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 will 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 measures for assessing the impact of partnership activity.

## THE DELIVERY FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN 2018-19

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The sector led model for school improvement, with the teaching schools and partnerships taking the key lead, is now well embedded 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.

### P4 and P3 schools

- **Intervention:** This will involve the implementation of a focused and timely intervention programme led by a local authority achievement 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 intervention. It will also include the offer of a further School Improvement traded package brokered and commissioned by the LA Achievement Officer.

### High risk Good schools

- **Targeted:** This will involve a Keeping in Touch (KIT) visit in the Autumn term and subsequent conversations or visits in the Spring and Summer terms, from a Headteacher Associate or LA Achievement 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. It will also include the offer of a School Improvement traded package brokered and commissioned by the Headteacher Associate or LA Achievement Officer.

### P2 and P1 schools

- **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 for other schools. Teaching Schools will lead on Initial Teacher Training programmes, Newly Qualified Teacher CPD, research and high quality development support for partner schools.
- The LA will undertake a KIT visit during the academic year and offer a traded school improvement package to complement the other developments in the school's plan

## THE 2018-19 SUPPORT OFFER

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|                         |  |                         |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| <b>P4 schools</b>       | • School Improvement visits - 4 days per term    | subsidised              |
|                         | • Option to buy additional support – single days | £500 per day            |
|                         | • 3 day package of support                       | £1350 for 3 day package |
| <hr/>                   |  |                         |
| <b>P3 schools</b>       | • School improvement visits - 3 days per term    | subsidised              |
|                         | • Option to buy additional support – single days | £500 per day            |
|                         | • 3 day package of support                       | £1350 for 3 day package |
| <hr/>                   |  |                         |
| <b>P1 and 2 schools</b> | • One annual KEEPING IN TOUCH (KIT) visit        | subsidised              |
|                         | • Option to buy additional support – single days | £500 per day            |
|                         | • 3 day package of support                       | £1350 for 3 day package |

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## SUPPORTING THE FRAMEWORK

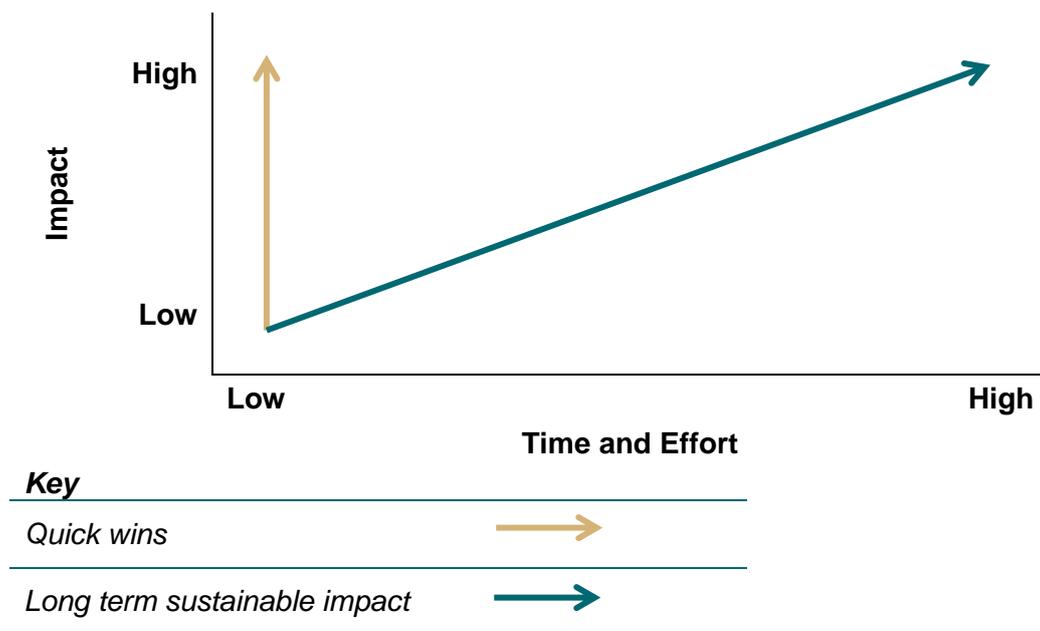
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The challenge for 2018-19 is to reduce the number of schools receiving Requires Improvement Ofsted judgements, maintain the number with Good outcomes and to have no schools receive Inadequate judgements.

In order to achieve this, the School Improvement team will offer training and support packages with the emphasis on “Keeping Good, Getting to Good”.

Leadership and Management will be a primary focus for the team, with support being offered in traded packages for leaders and governors to understand fully their role in developing self-sustaining and reflective school practices.

The impact of support and any development programmes will be analysed and schools will be encouraged to question whether their choices are making a difference to the outcomes and progress of the children and young people in their care or whether they should change direction and make brave decisions to alter their approaches.



More robust self-analysis and accountability from leaders and governors can bring about significant change and this is a key priority for the School Improvement team this year in all school phases and establishments.



# 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.

As a precursor to these, and in the hope of averting them, the Deputy Director of Education and Learning will invite the head teacher 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 head teacher 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 directly with the Regional Schools Commissioner.**

### Process

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Stage 1</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LA works with the school to improve and sets out its concerns and intentions</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Stage 2</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LA issues a pre-warning notice to the Governing Body</li> <li>• Action Plan from Governing Body is required by the LA within 15 days.</li> <li>• Increased Achievement Officer time.</li> <li>• Focused intensive school to school support</li> </ul> |
| <b>Stage 3</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School takes focused action to bring about rapid improvement</li> <li>• LA review to assess progress</li> </ul> <p><b>Improvement secured –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LA removes pre-formal warning notice</li> </ul>          |
| <b>Stage 4</b> | <p><b>Improvement not secured –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal Warning Notice issued by LA to the Governing Body</li> <li>• Action plan from the Governing Body is required by the LA within 15 days</li> <li>• IEB or additional governors installed</li> </ul>      |

## STATUTORY GUIDANCE

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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

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- Bradford Children, young People and Families Plan 2017-2020
- Bradford Education Covenant
- Bradford Opportunity Area 2017-2020
- Bradford Schools Causing Concern document v5 2017-18
- Bradford SEND Strategy document 2018-2021
- DfE: Schools causing concern: Statutory guidance for local authorities (February 2018)
- Prioritisation Process 2018-19

## GLOSSARY

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|         |  |
|---------|--|
| 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) |
| KIT     | Keeping In Touch   |
| 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   |
| RI      | Requires Improvement   |
| RSC     | Regional Schools Commissioner  |
| SEND    | Special Educational Needs and Disabilities                             |
| SLE     | Specialist Leader of Education   |
| TSA     | Teaching School Alliance   |