

**North Yorkshire County Council**  
**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**12 April 2019**

**School Improvement: Supporting Underperforming Schools**

**1 Purpose of the report**

1.1 To inform Members of the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee of:

- Support for underperforming primary, secondary, special and PRUs according to the school improvement strategy prioritisation categories
  - the current position in April 2019
  - a North Yorkshire area profile: underperforming schools in the four locality areas

**2 Background**

2.1 The School Improvement Strategy 2019- 21 recognises that it is the responsibility of school leaders to secure improvement in their schools. As part of the working partnership with schools the local authority will act as champions of educational excellence for children and young people, working with early years settings, maintained schools, academies, free and independent schools to forge strong professional relationships through school networks and teaching school alliances.

2.2 We have strengthened our quality assurance role to ensure that all schools strive to improve. We broker school to school support using high quality performing leaders to work alongside those schools requiring support to be good or better.

2.3 Through partnership working we will:

- Ensure every child and young person in North Yorkshire's county has an excellent education.
- Raise educational standards and outcomes in schools and settings.
- Improve the quality of provision so that all schools and settings are judged at least good by Ofsted.
- Ensure safeguarding and the promotion of the welfare of children and young people is central to our work.

**3 Monitoring and Challenge**

- 3.1 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.

- 3.2 We are 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 safeguarding and the outcomes achieved by pupils.
- 3.3 In order to carry out this function in an effective and transparent way, we operate 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.
- 3.4 The purpose of the school prioritisation process is to reach an agreement about maintained schools. 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 are meeting their responsibilities for continuous improvement.

## 4 Prioritisation

- 4.1 We operate a system of school prioritisation whereby local authority 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 respond to these risks.
- 4.2 There are four prioritisation categories:
- **Priority 1:** School likely to be good or outstanding with strong capacity for improvement; effective safeguarding; effective leadership; effective teaching and learning; consistently high outcomes for all groups of pupils.
  - **Priority 2:** School judged to be good in last Ofsted inspection or requiring improvement but with good capacity to improve; effective safeguarding; effective leadership; effective teaching and learning; outcomes for all groups of pupils are close to national. Concerns about attendance/HR/Finance may have been identified and require close monitoring
  - **Priority 3:** School likely to be judged as Requiring Improvement in its last Ofsted inspection but is likely to be judged as Requiring Improvement in its next inspection; effective safeguarding; concerns about leadership and/or governance; vulnerable groups/disadvantaged outcomes are below national; teaching and learning is inconsistent; in

the past the school has been causing concern but is showing signs of improvement which are not yet secure.

- **Priority 4:** School considered high risk and vulnerable; judged RI for last two inspections or serious weaknesses/special measures; leadership capacity limited; vulnerable groups not effectively supported; teaching and learning inconsistent; significant concerns about attendance/exclusions, behaviour, complaints; likely to be judged as inadequate if inspected or evaluated by external consultants; serious financial concerns; safeguarding ineffective.

4.3 The purpose of the school prioritisation process is to reach an agreement about the intervention required, enabling the local authority to deliver its statutory functions, manage risks, target appropriate interventions and help those schools and institutions who are causing concern.

## **5 Annual Review Process**

5.1 The annual review process consists of gathering information, including provisional outcome data (July for primary schools and August for secondary schools) and considering with schools and settings, the prioritisation criteria. Locality Partnership Boards will then convene, debate and agree categorisation.

## **6 Intervention for Schools Causing Concern**

6.1 We have a well-established process for identifying schools causing concern. When school improvement or safeguarding concerns are raised, contact is made with the school through a school improvement officer employed by the local authority to discuss and identify support required.

6.2 There are three identified types of schools causing concern eligible for intervention by either the local authority, Regional Schools' Commissioner or the Secretary of State: schools inspected and graded as inadequate, schools not meeting floor standards over a period of time and schools failing to comply with a warning notice.

6.3 Local authority powers of intervention are covered within the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (amended). This gives local authorities the power to issue a warning notice to the governing board of a maintained school where the LA is satisfied that the standards of performance of pupils is unacceptably low and are likely to remain so unless the LA exercises its statutory powers under the act.

## **7 Schools in receipt of support and intervention**

7.1 This will involve the implementation of a focused and timely intervention programme, led by a local authority (LA) officer who will broker, commission and coordinate the support package offered to a high risk school. This may include support from Teaching School Alliances, National Leaders of Education, School Partnerships and Multi-Academy Trusts. The support

package is recorded and monitored in a school partnership improvement plan (SPIP). 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 that the strategic plan is clear and understood by all providers. The principal advisers quality assure the support.

7.2 The current position area profile in April 2019 is as follows:

|           | Priority 4 | Priority 3 |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Primary   | 13         | 38         |
| Secondary | 3          |            |
| Special   | 1          |            |

| Primary Schools | Priority 4 | Priority 3 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|
| North           | 3          | 7          |
| South           | 3          | 13         |
| East            | 3          | 10         |
| West            | 4          | 8          |

## 8 Recommendations

8.1 Members of the Committee are requested to note and comment on the information in this report.

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12<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Background Documents –

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- DfE schools causing concern: Statutory guidance for local authorities(February 2018)
- North Yorkshire School Improvement Strategy 2019 - 2021
- Quality Assurance : school improvement for all working in schools and settings