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# School and Settings Improvement Strategy

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London Borough  
of Barnet

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2020 – 2023  
Updated September  
2021

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# Barnet Local Authority – School and Settings Improvement Strategy

## Part A

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### A Introduction

Barnet is well known for the excellent quality of its schools and settings and the diversity of its educational offer. These are at the heart of Barnet’s continuing success as a desirable place where people want to live, work and study. Excellent educational outcomes and ensuring children and young people are equipped to meet the needs of employers are vital to Barnet’s future success.

Barnet has 130 schools serving 60,574 pupils (January 2021).

Phase or type of establishment	Number of pupils
All-through	4725
Special and Alternative Provision	725
Nursery	430
Primary	30826
Secondary	23868
<b>Total Number of pupils</b>	<b>60,574</b>

There are 26 secondary schools (inc one Sixth Form Academy), 90 primary schools, three all through schools, four nursery schools, six special schools and two pupil referral units. There is also one General Further Education College.

In recent years children’s achievements in Barnet’s schools have been among the best in the country and a high proportion of Barnet’s young people progress on to higher education. Over 96% of Barnet pupils are at schools which were graded good or better at their last Ofsted inspection.

This School and Settings Improvement Strategy sets out the priorities for ensuring that children and young people continue to benefit from an excellent, high quality education offer.

It is set out in two parts:

Part A (this part) sets out our vision and aims, current achievement in Barnet, the strengths, areas for development and priorities for improvement, and the plans for how we are going to address these.

Part B outlines our approach to monitoring, challenging and supporting all of our schools and how we give intensive support and close monitoring to our Schools Causing Concern.

### B Resilience

Barnet is a Family Friendly Borough. Our approach to achieving this is to focus on developing families’ resilience, which evidence tells us is pivotal to delivering the best outcomes for children and young people. The role that schools play in the day to day life of children and their families provides a unique opportunity to promote and embed resilience. Resilience based practice sits at the heart of improving outcomes for children and young people; an approach that is based on looking for strengths and opportunities to build on, rather than for issues or problems to treat.

At the same time our education vision recognises the barriers facing many disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people and includes a clear commitment to accelerating their progress and closing the gap between them and their peers.

## C Ambition and Aims

Barnet is a growing borough and the quality of education plays a crucial part in making the borough a popular and desirable place to live.

Our strategic vision for education in Barnet is:

*Resilient schools – resilient communities: We want Barnet to be the most successful place for high quality education where excellent school standards result in all children achieving their best, being safe and happy and able to progress to become successful adults.*

In order to achieve this, our mission is: To ensure:

- Every child attends a **good or outstanding school**, as judged by Ofsted
- The attainment and progress of children in Barnet schools is **within the top 10%** nationally
- There is accelerating progress of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils in order to diminish the difference between them and their peers.
- Every child receives a high-quality education through clear curriculum intent and effective implementation

To do this we need:

- Enough school places
- All schools to be good or outstanding
- High levels of attainment and progress in all phases
- A relentless focus on meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND, children looked after, children in need and children eligible for free school meals.
- Good relationships with schools enabling rigorous monitoring, challenge and support for all schools including the face-to-face and remote learning that they undertake with their pupils
- Effective partnership with council services and with external agencies and organisations.

The Barnet Education Strategy (2020–2023) sets the framework for the overall direction of travel for all education and learning services in the London Borough of Barnet. The Strategy outlines 5 overall strategic goals:

- **Strategic goal 1 - Access**

To ensure there are sufficient high-quality school places to meet the needs of Barnet residents, including local specialist provision when required for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and that school organisation and governance arrangements are financially sustainable.

- **Strategic goal 2 - Inclusion**

To ensure the provision of high quality local placements and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged from 3 to 25.

- **Strategic goal 3 – Achievement - School Improvement**

To ensure that every school is good or outstanding.

- **Strategic goal 4 – Achievement - Educational outcomes**

To improve the educational progress and outcomes for all children and young people across all phases and types of institution from early years to post-16, including progress into Higher Education, Apprenticeships or employment.

- **Strategic goal 5 – Achievement and Inclusion – Diminishing the differences and building resilience**

To diminish the differences in attainment and progress between the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils and their peers by accelerating their progress and building resilience.

In order to achieve these, a number of key drivers need to be taken into account. The full list is within the Education Strategy but those relevant to School Improvement are:

### **Achievement**

- Maintaining a core Learning Network Inspector service to monitor and challenge, and, where necessary, intervene in, maintained schools, whilst keeping in touch with Academies. If necessary, LNI support services will be offered as a traded service to schools.
- Maintaining an Early Years Standards Team to monitor, challenge and support Private, Voluntary and Independent Nurseries (PVI) and childminders
- The continuing development of quality traded services in order to support school improvement.
- Building on the work of local partnerships and Teaching Schools.
- Working with schools on strategies for recruiting and retaining the best teachers and headteachers. This includes supporting governing bodies with the recruitment of new headteachers/principals and supporting headteachers with the recruitment of deputy headteachers/vice principals.
- Focus on highly effective leadership and governance
- Active promotion of good behaviour, pupil well-being and effective safeguarding practices
- A strong focus on attendance
- Collaboration between our Early Years Standards Team, schools and settings to ensure high quality Early Years provision in all of our settings and effective transition.
- Continued intervention to support young people at risk of being Not in Employment, Education or Training and work with providers to ensure suitable progression pathways including high quality technical and vocational provision.

### **D Governance**

The Education Strategy is developed by Barnet Education and Learning Service in consultation with schools and is reported to and approved by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board and the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee. Barnet Education and Learning Service is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Education Strategy.

The Schools and Settings Standards Partnership Board is part of the wider governance structure for the partnership between the council, Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) and schools, overseen by the Children's and Young People's Partnership Board. The Schools and Settings Standards Partnership Board undertakes its duties on behalf of the partnership. This includes developing the Schools and Settings Improvement Strategy, monitoring its implementation and keeping it under review.

The SSSPB is responsible for the strategic approach to promote the continuous improvement of standards in Barnet schools and settings.

The SSSPB acts as a forum:

- To keep under review those aspects of the Barnet Education Strategy that relate to:

- standards in schools and settings
  - pupil attainment, attendance and progress
  - narrowing gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers
  - the authority's monitoring, challenge and support of maintained schools
  - other relevant statutory functions.
- To review performance data across all Barnet schools and settings for all stages and to consider areas where joint and targeted work is needed to secure improvements.
  - To identify and review priorities for improvement each year and assist in communicating these priorities across the partnership of schools and settings.
  - To identify and overcome any systemic barriers to continuous improvement.
  - To support and embed a secure and sustainable system of school to school, school to setting, setting to setting support.
  - To consider ways to promote a positive image of Barnet schools and settings as high-performing and highly-aspirational schools and settings that provide excellent standards of education and childcare for all pupils.
  - From time to time the SSSPB will also assume responsibility for specific commissioned projects to support the strategy.

From September 2021 we have created a sub-board of the SSSPB focused on Equalities, Exclusions and Attendance.

## E Context: Number of Good and Outstanding Schools and Settings

At the end of July 2021 the number of good and outstanding schools at each phase was:

**Nursery** - All 4 of the Nursery Schools are rated Outstanding

**Primary** - 85 of the 89 schools that have had an Ofsted Inspection are rated Good or Outstanding

**Secondary/All Through** – All of the 26 schools that have had an Ofsted Inspection are rated Good or Outstanding

**Special** – All of the Special Schools (5) that have had an Ofsted Inspection are rated Good or Outstanding

**PRUs** – Both Pupil Referral Units are rated Good or Outstanding

**Private and Voluntary Early Years settings:** xxxx

## F Context: Achievement in Barnet Schools and Settings 2020

Following the closure of schools from 23 March 2020 the DfE stated “As part of steps taken to fight the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), the government announced that all exams due to take place in schools and colleges in England in summer 2020 are cancelled and that it will not publish any school or college level educational performance data based on tests, assessments or exams for 2020.... We will not hold schools and colleges to account on the basis of exams and assessment data from summer 2020 and that data will not be used by others, such as Ofsted and local authorities, to hold schools and colleges to account.... We will not be publishing school, college or multi-academy trust (MAT) level performance data based on summer 2020 tests, assessments and exams at any phase.... All those working with schools and colleges, such as Ofsted, Department for Education regional teams **and local authorities**, should use data from previous years when assessing school and college performance, and not the 2020 data”

This was repeated in 2021.

Secondary school students still received their A-level, GCSE and BTEC results but the grades were determined **again** in a different way because of the Covid-19 pandemic. With exams cancelled this year because of Coronavirus, pupils were allocated their results based on the school's teacher assessments, known as Centre Assessed Grades. We are confident that schools in Barnet followed a robust and appropriate process in order to get to a Centre Assessed Grade for each student. They used information such as previous classwork, homework, results in assignments and any mock exams in order to arrive at that grade.

In primary schools the DfE are not publishing any national, regional, local or constituency statistics for any primary school assessments for the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

This includes:

- early years foundation stage profile
- phonics
- key stage 1
- multiplication tables check
- key stage 2

Primary schools will have completed end of year assessments on each pupil to support the curriculum planning for the following year and to support the next teachers in adapting the learning appropriately.

As there was no requirement to publish any data or to hold schools to account for the 2021 assessment data, we did not collect any assessment information from schools. However, schools who purchase Fischer Family Trust (FFT) services were able to upload their assessment information into their database if they wished.

The last time there was published data was in 2019. As a reminder the headlines from that year were:

- Early Years above national. Increase slightly below national increase although ranking increased
- Year 1 Phonics attainment above national. Decrease less than national. Ranking improved
- Key Stage 1 attainment shows increases at EXS+ (pupils reaching the expected standard) in each subject with increases greater than national. Ranking improved in each subject
- Key Stage 1 attainment shows decreases at GDS (Greater Depth) in all subjects, with decreases greater than national in reading and maths. Rankings dropped
- Overall, for RWM (Reading, Writing and Maths) at KS1, attainment in Barnet increased but nationally there was a decrease for EXS+. Ranking improved. At GDS the decrease in Barnet matched the decrease nationally
- Overall, for RWMS (RWM and Science) at KS1, attainment increased in Barnet but dropped nationally.
- At Key Stage 2 attainment is above national at all measures in all subjects
- At KS2 there has been an increase in attainment in Maths but a drop in Reading, Writing and in RWM (Reading, Writing and Maths combined) and GPS (grammar, punctuation and spelling). Nationally there was also a drop in these areas
- At KS2 the increase in Maths was below the national increase and drops in Reading, Writing and RWM combined were greater than national decreases. The decrease in Barnet in GPS was less than the national decrease

- Progress made between KS1 and KS2 is significantly better than national in all subjects and was an improvement on the progress the previous year in Writing and Maths
- At Key Stage 4 both Attainment 8 and Progress 8 are very strong (ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> respectively)
- At Key Stage 5 achievement at A Level is above national at all thresholds but attainment dipped in 2019 in Barnet, with these dips being greater than national. Consequently the rankings dropped marginally.

## **G Key Strengths**

### **1. Arising from the 2019 achievement data**

- Low percentage of Persistent Absence
- Year 1 Phonics – achievement in top 10% nationally
- End of KS1 attainment in Reading, Writing and Maths in top 10% nationally
- End of KS2 attainment in Reading, GPS and Maths and RWM combined – in top 10% nationally
- Progress between KS1 and KS2 in all subjects – significantly better than national
- End of KS4 GCSE achievement – in top 2% nationally
- End of KS5 A Level achievement – in top 5% nationally

### **2. Other particular strengths**

- Percentage of Good and Outstanding schools above National, Inner London and Outer London
- Over 96% of pupils attending a Good or Outstanding school
- Positive and productive relationship with schools, enhanced even further during the Covid-19 period
- Know our schools and settings well. Accurate identification of vulnerable schools and settings.
- Strong track record of supporting Schools and Settings Causing Concern to make the necessary improvements
- High expectations and aspirations for schools and settings in Barnet
- Thriving and popular school improvement traded service (BPSI)
- Successful NQT Induction programme
- Continued delivery of a governor training programme and associate clerking service
- Knowledge, skills and successful experience of School Improvement Team – credibility and track record of success
- Links, contacts and involvement with key organisations e.g. Ofsted, Teaching Schools, DfE, Diocesan Boards, Academy Trusts
- Strong communication and teamwork between members of the team
- Robust procedures for monitoring, challenging and supporting schools (see School Improvement Strategy Part B – Monitoring, Challenge and Support including Schools Causing Concern Policy)

- Processes and structures are dynamic in order to meet the diverse needs of schools

## H Areas for Development – Schools and Settings Standards Partnership Board Priorities

Based on the education performance data from 2019, the following areas were identified as a priority for improvement by the Schools and Settings Standards Partnership Board. These remain priorities in 2020/21

- **Early Years**

In 2019 the percentage of pupils who achieved a GLD exceeded the national average by over 2% and our achievement was equal to London Statistical Neighbour averages. Barnet's national ranking for percentage of pupils achieving a GLD was 33<sup>rd</sup> in 2019 (up from 35<sup>th</sup> in 2018). However, as this is still below the top 10% of LAs, it remains a priority. The percentage of girls achieving a GLD in 2019 was above national, London and Statistical Neighbours and was ranked 27<sup>th</sup>. The percentage of boys achieving a GLD is above National, London and narrowly below Statistical Neighbours and was ranked 37<sup>th</sup>. Therefore raising attainment of boys at EYFS is a priority. Our Average Point Score is now above national and London but this still remains a priority for us.

- **Key Stage 1 Achievement**

KS1 relative attainment (ranking) in Expected Standard or above is now in the top 10% in Reading, Writing and Maths. Science is ranked lower though (24<sup>th</sup>) for the proportion of pupils achieving at least the expected standard, so remains a priority. The percentage achieving Greater Depth, although above national, is comparatively lower, ranked 39<sup>th</sup>, 44<sup>th</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> respectively for Reading, Writing and Maths and so remains a priority.

- **KS2 Writing**

Despite attainment in 2019 being above the national and statistical neighbour averages, our ranking, although improved from 2018, is still 26<sup>th</sup>. Although it is clear that there are inconsistencies nationally with teacher assessment of writing, we still need to maintain a focus on this subject in order to continue to raise relative attainment. The performance of girls in writing rose in 2019 by 1% but the performance of boys dropped by 3% and their ranking dropped from 15<sup>th</sup> to 37<sup>th</sup>. Therefore the attainment of boys' writing is a priority this year.

- **Progress and Progression Pathways of low attaining pupils across all key stages**

It remains a priority for us to ensure that sufficient quality and learning opportunities (e.g. vocational qualifications) exist for children and young people to succeed across a range of skills and abilities, particularly those with SEND.

- **Achievement of Disadvantaged Pupils, pupils with SEND and other Vulnerable Groups (including Children in Need)**

This remains a priority for improvement to eliminate differences in the performance of groups of pupils. The North London Disproportionality Dataset shows, for 2019, the ratio of black pupils in Barnet attaining the expected standard at KS2 and 4 compared to white pupils is low (a negative Relative Rate Index RRI) and in some cases being the lowest or second lowest in North London.

- **Looked After Children**

In Secondary School Progress 8 in 2019 was ranked 18<sup>th</sup> and Attainment 8 49<sup>th</sup>. In the school year 2018-2019, Barnet LAC had a higher absence rate than the similar group national (6.40% compared with 4.70%) and a higher unauthorised rate (3.60% compared with 1.40%). Persistent absence was almost in line (10.50% compared with 10.90%). Attendance is therefore a priority for 2020-21



- **Recruitment**

Recruiting and retaining good quality teachers, school leaders and support staff is a challenge for schools across Barnet. Supporting recruitment of staff and giving the necessary support to staff at all levels remains a priority for us.

- **Safeguarding**

We continue to support schools in ensuring that their safeguarding arrangements are effective.

- **Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact**

To support schools to plan coherently and deliver effectively a broad and balanced curriculum which is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and including pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. This is a priority to reflect the changes introduced in the new Ofsted inspection framework.

The factors that both research and Ofsted inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to an effective education where pupils achieve highly are:

- The school's curriculum is rooted in the solid consensus of the school's leaders about the knowledge and skills that pupils need in order to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. In this way, it can powerfully address social disadvantage.
- It is clear what end points the curriculum is building towards and what pupils need to know and be able to do to reach those end points.
- The school's curriculum is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and towards its clearly defined end points.
- The curriculum reflects the school's local context by addressing typical gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.
- The curriculum remains as broad as possible for as long as possible. Pupils are able to study a strong academic core of subjects, such as those offered by the EBacc.
- There is high academic/vocational/technical ambition for all pupils, and the school does not offer disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND a reduced curriculum.

The above priorities are underpinned by:

- A curriculum which also contributes well to pupils' behaviour and welfare, including their physical, mental and personal well-being, safety and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- School leaders who take effective steps to secure good behaviour from pupils and a consistent approach to discipline.

It is recognised that schools are having to manage pupils with more complex behaviour challenges. We work closely with colleagues from the SEND and Inclusion Teams to offer support to schools in managing more complex behaviour.

## **Additional Priorities added in 2020**

### **Minimising the impact of the covid19 pandemic on learning**

The School Improvement Team has given considerable support to schools before, during and after the school closure period. A new priority for this year is to minimise the impact of Covid-19 on learning and progress. This includes:

- Continuing support by BELS to schools with their blended learning approaches, recognising that the approaches need to be both flexible and adaptable
- Continuing BELS support to schools regarding the impact on mental health and well-being of school closures and partial closures arising from covid19.

- Continuing BELS support to school leaders and school staff regarding the impact on mental health and well-being of the pandemic on staff
- Continuing to support schools in establishing reliable baseline data for pupils and ensuring the curriculum meets the needs of all the pupils and is diminishing the expected wider differences between groups of pupils

### **Attendance**

A key challenge as schools re-opened in September 2020 is to get attendance rates back to the levels they were at before schools were closed as a result of the pandemic.

### **Exclusions**

With the huge majority of pupils being at home between March and September and the resultant challenges faced by schools regarding the behaviour of pupils when they returned to school, we want to support schools to ensure that there is not a significant rise in both fixed term and permanent exclusions in Barnet schools. The RRI rate in the North London Disproportionality Dataset shows that historically there has been an over-representation of Black and Mixed Pupils in Barnet for fixed term exclusions and black pupils for permanent exclusions. This also needs to be addressed.

## I Key Actions arising from these priorities

The School Improvement Team Plan is allied to the priorities and objectives set out in the Education and Skills Business Plan and the agreed schedule of performance indicators.

Elements of the team's activities are traded, e.g. BPSI, Governor Services, NQT support, Connect, and we are looking to expand our offer to Barnet schools as well as trading beyond the Borough boundary.

Outcome	Owned by	Action	Key partner/s	Deadline	Target for actions in 2020/21 (include KPIs, SKPIs & OKPIs as required)	Monitored via (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)
All schools and settings successfully monitored, challenged and supported by Learning Network Inspectors and the EY Standards Team	Neil Marlow / LNIs	See Schools and Settings Improvement Strategy and Monitoring, Challenge and Support Action Plan	Schools and settings, Early Years Standards Team	July 2022	Percentage of primary schools and settings rated as 'good' or better  Percentage of secondary schools rated as 'good' or better  Target to be in top 10% of Good and Outstanding schools nationally  For settings our target is 90%, but with an aspiration to be above the national average within 3 years (currently 95%).	SRG, SSSPB
Ensure all Schools and Settings Causing Concern are effectively supported and closely monitored	Neil Marlow / Lead Officers	See School Improvement Strategy and Monitoring, Challenge and Support Action Plan	Schools and settings, BPSI Advisers, Early Years Standards Team	July 2022	Produce an action plan for each school and setting causing concern and progress reports on each SCC at least once a term.	SRG, SSSPB
Continue to support to schools during Covid-19	Neil Marlow	Adapt Monitoring and Challenge visits in	EP Team Family Services	December 2021	October Satisfaction Surveys demonstrate schools feel well	SSSPB

Outcome	Owned by	Action	Key partner/s	Deadline	Target for actions in 2020/21 (include KPIs, SKPIs & OKPIs as required)	Monitored via (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)
<p>period in order to minimise the impact of Covid-19 on learning and progress. This includes continuing to give support to schools regarding the mental health and well-being implications of the situation</p> <p>Support schools with their Recovery, Reset and Renaissance</p> <p>To get attendance rates back to the levels they were at before schools were closed as a result of the pandemic.</p>		<p>order to support schools with return to school, health and safety, recovery curriculum etc</p> <p>Launch BPSI Covid Learning Recovery Project (CLRP)</p> <p>Adapt DfE Well Being for Education Return programme and deliver to schools.</p> <p>See Mental Health and Well Being Action Plan, BPSI Action Plan</p>	BICS Resilient Schools Public Health	<p>July 2022</p> <p>July 2022</p>	<p>supported</p> <p>Positive response (numbers and evaluation) to RRR programme</p> <p>DfE Well Being for Education Recovery programme delivered</p> <p>Attendance back to pre Covid levels</p>	<p>SRG</p> <p>Attendance and Exclusions Sub Board</p>
Improve achievement at Early Years	Neil Marlow / Beth Patrick / Helen Cheung	See Early Years Action Plan	Schools and Settings, Early Years Standards Team, BPSI Early Years Adviser, BEYA	July 2022	GLD to be in top 10% nationally	SSSPB
Improve achievement at KS1 and maintain achievement in phonics	Neil Marlow / LNIs	See KS1 Achievement Action Plan	Schools, BPSI, Teaching Schools	July 2022	Attainment at KS1 in top 10% of LAs and progress (as demonstrated in FFT) to be above estimates	SSSPB
Achievement of pupils at end of KS2, KS4 and KS5 to be in top 10% nationally	Neil Marlow / LNIs	See School Improvement Strategy and Monitoring, Challenge and Support	Schools, BPSI Advisers	July 2022	The percentage of primary pupils achieving the 'expected standard' in English Reading, English Writing and Mathematics	SRG, SSSPB

Outcome	Owned by	Action	Key partner/s	Deadline	Target for actions in 2020/21 (include KPIs, SKPIs & OKPIs as required)	Monitored via (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)
		Action Plan			<p>(combined) at the end of Key Stage 2</p> <p>The average of: a) Primary pupils' average progress in English Reading b) Primary pupils' average progress in English Writing c) Primary pupils' average progress in Mathematics</p> <p>Secondary achievement Points allocated; 6a 15pts (37.5%); 6b 15pts (37.5%); 6c 7pts (17.5%); 6d 3pts (7.5%): 6a Average Attainment 8 Score 6b Average Progress 8 Score 6c Percentage of pupils achieving the threshold in English and mathematics (Grade 5) 6d Percentage of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate</p>	
Progress of the most disadvantaged, pupils with SEND and vulnerable pupils (inc Children In Need) accelerated in order to <b>close the achievement gap</b> between them and their peers	Neil Marlow / LNIs	See School Improvement Strategy and Narrowing the Gap Action Plan	Schools and Settings, BPSI Advisers, Early Years Standards Team, Teaching Schools	July 2022	<p><b>Primary</b> 50% of points each to: 5a: % of pupils eligible for disadvantaged pupils (this includes Free School Meal 6 and Children Looked After pupils) achieving the 'expected standard' in English Reading, English Writing and Mathematics (combined) at the end of Key Stage 2 AND 5b: Difference between</p>	Data collection Census

Outcome	Owned by	Action	Key partner/s	Deadline	Target for actions in 2020/21 (include KPIs, SKPIs & OKPIs as required)	Monitored via (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)
					<p>attainment level of pupils on disadvantaged pupils (this includes FSM 6 and CLA pupils) and their peers ('expected standard' in RWM combined) at the end of Key Stage 2</p> <p><b>Secondary</b> 25% of points for each of 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d: 7a Average Attainment 8 Score for pupils eligible for FSM in the past 6 years (disadvantaged pupils) 7b Average Progress 8 Score for pupils eligible for FSM in the past 6 years (disadvantaged pupils) 7c Attainment gap between pupils eligible for FSM (disadvantaged) pupils (Average Attainment 8 Score for pupils on FSM - Average Attainment 8 Score for pupils not disadvantaged) 7d Achievement gap between pupils eligible for FSM (disadvantaged) pupils (Average Progress 8 Score for pupils on FSM - Average</p>	
Improve attainment in writing at KS2	Neil Marlow / LNIs	See Writing Action Plan	Schools, BPSI, Teaching Schools	July 2022	Attainment in writing at KS2 further above national and in top 20% nationally	SSSPB
Improve achievement of Looked After Children particularly at Secondary	Neil Marlow / Helen Morrison /	See Virtual School Action Plan	Schools, Social Care, Placements	July 2022	<p>a) 20% - Average Attainment 8 score of looked after children</p> <p>b) 20% - Average Progress 8 score of looked after children</p>	SSSPB, VS Challenge Committee

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Owned by</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key partner/s</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Target for actions in 2020/21 (include KPIs, SKPIs &amp; OKPIs as required)</b>	<b>Monitored via</b> (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)
	Paul Whitcombe				c) 10% - Closing the gap between Barnet LAC and Barnet average on Attainment 8 and Progress 8 d) 20% - the quality of PEPs e) 10% - KS2 performance (expected standards in RWM) f) 10% - 16-18 year old NEETs g) 5% - Attendance of LACs h) 5% - Exclusions	
Recruitment of high quality staff in schools improved	Neil Marlow / Helen Morrison	See Recruitment and Retention Action Plan	Schools, Agencies, Media Team, Housing, Parking, The Compton (SCITT)	July 2022	Reduced vacancy rate in schools (baseline 6%)	SSSPB, Recruitment and Retention Working Party, Compton SCITT Strategic Board
To ensure that sufficient quality and learning opportunities exist for children and young people to succeed across a range of skills and abilities	Neil Marlow	See Progress and Progression Pathways Action Plan	Schools, Colleges, Post 16, SEN Team	July 2022	Improved achievement in vocational qualifications	SSSPB
To ensure schools meet statutory requirements for safeguarding	Neil Marlow / Jane Morris	See Safeguarding Action Plan	Schools, LADO, Social Care, BPSI	July 2022	Produce an action plan for monitoring and improving arrangements for safeguarding in the Education and Skills service and in all Barnet schools and regular progress reports.	SMT
To support schools in dealing effectively with pupils with more challenging behaviour	Neil Marlow / Barley Birney/ LNIs	See separate Behaviour Action Plan	BPSI, SEN Teams	July 2022	Increased offer of support to schools	SEND Partnership Board, SSSPB

Outcome	Owned by	Action	Key partner/s	Deadline	Target for actions in 2020/21 (include KPIs, SKPIs & OKPIs as required)	Monitored via (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)
To support schools to ensure that there is not a significant rise in both fixed term and permanent exclusions in Barnet schools. The RRI rate in the North London Disproportionality Dataset shows that historically there has been an over-representation of Black and Mixed Pupils in Barnet for fixed term exclusions and black pupils for permanent exclusions. This also needs to be addressed.	Neil Marlow / Jane Morris	See Exclusions Working Party Action Plan	Schools, BICS, Family Services	July 2022	Reduced exclusions particularly for Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Black Caribbean and Black African students	SSSPB Equalities, Attendance and Exclusions Sub Board SRG
To support schools to plan coherently and deliver effectively a broad and balanced curriculum which is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and including pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. This is a priority to reflect the changes introduced in the new Ofsted inspection framework.	Neil Marlow / LNIs	See separate Wider Curriculum Action Plan	BPSI, Teaching Schools	July 2022	Schools judged by Ofsted to have an appropriate and effective curriculum	SSSPB
To further develop Traded Services (see Section 3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BPSI</li> <li>• Governor Services</li> <li>• NQT</li> </ul>	Neil Marlow / Carrie Waldren	See separate Action Plans	Schools, Advisers, NGA, School Bus,	July 2022	Increased trading and income  Improved service as demonstrated through satisfaction surveys	SMT BPSI Steering Group Connect Steering



Outcome	Owned by	Action	Key partner/s	Deadline	Target for actions in 2020/21 (include KPIs, SKPIs & OKPIs as required)	Monitored via (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect</li> </ul>					Development of BELS website  Recruitment of Social Media and PR Officer	Group  “BELS and Whistles” Task and Finish Group
To sell the services of the School Improvement Team more widely to independent schools within Barnet and schools outside Barnet	Neil Marlow	See separate Action Plan	BELS, Other LAs	March 2022	Increased income Positive feedback	SMT

Separate Action Plans for the following areas have been produced and are being monitored:

- Virtual School
- Exclusions
- Safeguarding
- Prevent
- Achievement of disadvantaged, SEND and other vulnerable groups
- EYFS
- Recruitment and retention
- Attendance
- KS1 Science and Greater Depth in all subjects (New)
- KS2 Writing
- Post 16 – progression and pathways (New)
- Curriculum – intent, implementation and impact (New)
- Covid Recovery support etc (New)

## **Associated resources**

- Barnet Education Strategy 2020-2023
- School Improvement Overall Team Plan 2021/22
- School Improvement Individual Action Plans 2021/22
- SEND Strategy 2020-23

# Barnet Local Authority – School Improvement Strategy

## Part B

### Monitoring, Challenge and Support - 2021/22

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#### A Introduction

- 1 This document sets out how the local authority will fulfil its statutory duties in relation to local authority maintained schools and provides the framework for engagement with Academies, Free Schools and Academy Sponsors in relation to standards and attainment. It supports the delivery of Barnet’s Education Strategy in delivering the vision which is for:

*“Barnet to be the most successful place for high quality education where excellent school standards result in all children achieving their best, being safe and happy and able to progress to become successful adults?”*

With the specific aims of:

- Every child attending a **good or outstanding school**, as judged by Ofsted
- The **attainment** and **progress** of children in Barnet schools is within the top 10% nationally
- Accelerating the progress of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils in order to **diminish the difference** between them and their peers
- Every child receives a high-quality education through clear curriculum intent and effective implementation

- 2 Barnet’s Education Strategy was developed during a period of significant change in the education landscape with increasing autonomy of schools and increased delegation of funding and responsibilities. Schools are now at the forefront in leading a more autonomous and self-improving school system.

The local authority retains a range of statutory responsibilities. In particular the Education and Inspection Act 2006 identifies a duty to promote high standards and requires local authorities to take early action to address school underperformance as well as absolute low attainment. It provides revised legislation in relation to the Performance Standards and Safety Warning Notice system so that local authorities are able to challenge and support those schools that are underperforming as well as those that do not achieve the minimum standards expected for all schools. The Education Act 2011 gives further powers to the Secretary of State to direct local authorities to intervene.

In September 2020, the Government updated statutory guidance for local authorities in fulfilling their duties with Schools Causing Concern.

- 3 The principles underpinning the council’s approach are:
- Every school is different and self-evaluation should reflect the values and beliefs of the school and its distinctive ethos.
  - Schools operate within a framework of autonomy with accountability. They are responsible for their own management and development and have the primary responsibility for their own performance. It is the responsibility of the LA to respect, encourage and support autonomy but also, through the LNI, or other commissioned professionals, to monitor, challenge and intervene where appropriate.
  - School improvement is based on building the capacity of the leadership and management of schools.
  - Barnet supports the principles of ‘intervention in inverse proportion to success’. Whilst LA monitoring and challenge is an entitlement for all LA maintained schools,

support is differentiated according to need and direct formal intervention in LA maintained schools should only be used in the most serious of cases and where other approaches have failed.

4 Our approach is in line with the guidance in the DfE Schools Causing Concern Guidance (last updated September 2020) which states:

“We are building a supportive schools’ culture in which local authorities and RSCs work with school leaders to drive school improvement for the benefit of pupils and parents. At the same time, it is essential that action is taken wherever a school is judged inadequate, or where there is financial mismanagement or failure of governance. Optional school support will be offered to schools that have been judged as ‘requires improvement’ by Ofsted. Intervention is different to school support and refers to the formal action taken by local authorities and RSCs in schools that are causing concern. Interventions are about acting swiftly to address underperformance and financial or governance failures, and helping schools to deliver the best outcomes for their pupils”:

“Local authorities and RSCs will work closely and co-operatively to support improvement in maintained schools that are causing concern. Where a maintained school is eligible for intervention there are a number of statutory powers the local authority and the Secretary of State may use to support school improvement.

The intervention powers in respect of **local authorities** are set out in sections 63-66 of the 2006 Act:

Section 63 – power to require the governing body to enter into arrangements;

Section 64 – power to appoint additional governors;

Section 65 – power to appoint an interim executive board (IEB);

Section 66 – power to suspend the delegated budget.”

“Beyond this statutory guidance, local authorities have considerable freedom as to how they deliver their statutory responsibilities. Local authorities should act as champions of high standards of education across their schools, and in doing so should:

- Understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data as a starting point to identify any that are underperforming, while working with them to explore ways to support progress;
- Work closely with the relevant RSC, diocese and other local partners to ensure schools receive the support they need to improve;
- Where underperformance has been recognised in a maintained school, proactively work with the relevant RSC, combining local and regional expertise to ensure the right approach, including sending warning notices and using intervention powers where this will improve leadership and standards; and
- Encourage good and outstanding maintained schools to take responsibility for their own improvement; support other schools; and enable other schools to access the support they need to improve.”

“The School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant is provided to local authorities to assist them to fulfil these responsibilities. Local authorities should focus their activity on the schools they maintain rather than academies which are accountable to the Secretary of State. However, should a local authority have any concerns about an academy’s standards, leadership or governance, they should raise these directly with the relevant RSC.

RSCs will apply the same rigour to the academies and free schools in their regions, as local authorities should apply to maintained schools in their area, and will similarly champion education excellence.”

## B Local Authority procedures for monitoring and challenging schools and for supporting and intervening where necessary

Much of the available expertise to support school improvement exists in schools. Self-evaluation is at the heart of effective school improvement and schools need to have a very clear knowledge of their own strengths and areas for development based on their own rigorous monitoring, evaluation and performance management. It is expected that all schools in Barnet will undertake regular self-evaluation that is:

- based on openness, honesty, robust feedback and respect
- follows systems and procedures which are shared and understood by all
- is evidence based and is fair and transparent
- leads to strategies to manage change
- is embedded in school improvement planning
- has a positive impact on outcomes for pupils

### Monitoring, challenge and support

The local authority monitoring and challenge function is undertaken by the School Improvement Team within BELS. Each school in Barnet is assigned a named Learning Network Inspector (LNI). In addition, some schools are assigned a Barnet School Improvement Partner (BSIP). These are BPSI Consultants who are commissioned by the Local Authority to conduct monitoring, challenge and support on behalf of the LA.

- a) For LA maintained schools, the LNI/BSIP visits to maintained schools are in line with the arrangements for differentiated support:

Judgement of school based on a combination of their current Ofsted grading and LA RAG Rating	Number of Visits
<b>Outstanding and Securely Good schools</b>	A minimum of two School Effectiveness Visits a year with the first of those visits focusing on all aspects of the Quality of Education in the school, as well as the school's response to contextual issues relating to management of the impact of Covid 19.
<b>Good but of concern and vulnerable to a judgement of RI at next inspection</b>	Regular visits or contact across the year (at least half termly) with the first of those visits looking at all aspects of the Quality of Education and a particular focus on the effectiveness of strategic leadership ensuring that there are clear and robust actions in place in order to bring about rapid improvement.
<b>Schools causing concern/Requiring Improvement where the local authority consider there is good or better capacity to improve</b>	A minimum of six visits a year with a particular focus on those aspects identified as in need of rapid improvement, following the Schools Causing Concern protocol.

<b>Schools requiring improvement where the capacity to make rapid and sustained improvement is not secure</b>	A programme of visits identified through the schools causing concern protocol. Approximately one visit or contact per fortnight with a particular focus on the effectiveness of leadership in bringing about rapid improvement.
<b>Schools that are deemed to require ‘special measures’ or to have ‘serious weaknesses’</b>	As above but following the LA’s Statement of Action

Secondary Maintained schools, that have a 6<sup>th</sup> form, will receive three visits. . PRUs receive two visits.

Schools in the following circumstances may receive additional visits:

- Schools recruiting a new headteacher or deputy headteacher
- New or Acting/Interim Headteachers
- A new school to the LA
- Schools with governance or leadership issues
- Schools expecting an Ofsted
- Schools who have experienced a Critical Incident
- Schools who are considering a change in organisational structure e.g. federation, MAT etc.

Additional visits will be conducted where safeguarding concerns have been identified.

b) For Academies, the authority will offer at least one keeping in touch visit a year

This is a guide and there may be circumstances where additional visits are undertaken because of a significant change in the school’s circumstances, for example where there is a change of Headteacher, or a marked change in performance indicators. These visits will be agreed between the LNI and Headteacher or Chair of Governors and will be within the spirit of intervention in inverse proportion to success.

### **School Effectiveness Visits (SEV)**

The LNI/BSIP team adjust the focus of school effectiveness visits according to DfE/Ofsted priorities and the national and local context. . This ensures support and challenge to schools is responsive and relevant.

**Therefore, in the Autumn term 2021 we will use the SEV visit to focus on:**

- the barriers the school still faces in managing the return to full education for pupils
- the school’s ability to articulate a clear curriculum intent that is systemic across all subjects and clearly understood by all leaders.
- how leaders have adapted the curriculum to ensure it is relevant and ambitious for pupils following the disruption to learning due to Covid 19
- how leaders have identified pupils at risk of falling behind and the actions leaders have taken to support these pupils to make more rapid progress

- how well pupils, particularly those that are disadvantaged, are being provided with the cultural capital that they need which they may have missed during the pandemic.
- how well pupils are learning the curriculum
- how well leaders are equipping staff to teach and support pupils within the current context.
- to explore the school's response to any identified health and well-being issues for particular pupils
- the school's current safeguarding procedures and its response to the current context.

School leaders are asked to complete a SEV form prior to the visit. This is evaluated by the LNI/BSIP and becomes part of the focus for discussion during the visit.

The LNI / BSIP will agree the focus of the second visit, which will take place in the spring or summer term, based on findings from the autumn term visit. This could result in a deep dive into a particular subject area or a focus on an aspect of the framework within the areas of Leadership and Management, Personal Development or Attitudes and Behaviour.

In normal circumstances, it is expected that self-evaluation will include rigorous analysis of school performance and has typically been the starting point for the LA monitoring of schools. The local authority expectation is that LA maintained schools have a form of self evaluation which is updated on an annual basis, utilising Ofsted categories. However, during this recovery period, we will expect leaders to have robust in-school pupil performance information measured from baseline assessment. LNIs/BSIP will explore the impact of the curriculum through discussing how leaders know that pupils are learning what has been intended.

The local authority produces a 'note of visit' report for each formal meeting held throughout the year. 'Notes of visit' are agreed with the Headteacher. For maintained schools, the Headteacher is required to share the report with their Governing Bodies. For Academies, it would be the expectation of the local authority that the Headteacher would share it with their Chair.

Challenge is an integral part of the school improvement process and should be carried out in the true spirit of partnership. Evidence should be presented, searching questions asked and possible alternative approaches posed, with the LNI/BSIP operating as a critical friend. Challenge is a shared responsibility. Schools have a right and duty to challenge the LA when the provision of services does not meet their needs. Equally it is the duty of the LA to challenge schools to set targets that are ambitious as well as realistic and to secure high outcomes for all learners.

Challenge from the local authority will cover the following:

- the school's plans for the improvement of pupil performance including disadvantaged and pupils with SEND
- the school's self evaluation judgements against each aspect of the school's provision and outcomes
- any aspect of school performance where there are concerns

At all times challenge will be based on evidence where standards or aspects of provision are not as good as might be expected and/or to promote high expectations and continuous improvement.

All schools in Barnet grade themselves for overall effectiveness during their annual self-evaluation process. Following each School Effectiveness Visit the LNI/BSIP will make a judgement of the effectiveness of the school on each area of focus, judging each area to be either Emerging, Secure or Highly Effective. The LNI will agree this with the school and reflect this in the 'note of visit'. Where the LNI does not agree the grades in the self evaluation this will be made clear to the headteacher and recorded in the note of visit.

LA maintained schools in Barnet are placed (through the process above) in one of the following categories which are based on Ofsted grades and criteria. They are as follows:

- 1 Outstanding
- 2 Good
- 3 Requires Improvement
- 4a Inadequate – serious weaknesses
- 4b Special measures.

Schools placed in categories 3, 4a and 4b through the mechanism identified above, are classified by Barnet as Causing Concern and will receive extra support in order to help them to overcome their difficulties.

### **Local authority support**

LA maintained schools may receive support from the local authority (over and above the monitoring visits described above) according to the category agreed with the school. 'Outstanding' and 'Good' schools will only receive additional support which they broker (and for which they pay). The exception to this is in the recruitment of a Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher where, for all schools, the LNI assigned to the school will support the recruitment process.

Schools requiring improvement but with good capacity to improve (Ofsted or local authority judgement) will also be deemed to have the capacity to manage (and pay for) the support they need for their ongoing growth.

Schools in Ofsted categories and those designated by the local authority as causing concern will receive additional support as set out above and will be expected to commission (and pay for) additional support in accordance with the improvement plan they agree with the local authority. The local authority may broker this support on behalf of the school, but the school will be required to pay for it other than in exceptional circumstances where the school is facing significant financial difficulties. The local authority's strategy for working with Schools Causing Concern is outlined below.

For all schools, the local authority will signpost and facilitate the sharing of good practice and access to a range of local sources of expertise.

### **School Reviews**

There are two types of whole School Review available in the local authority:

- **LA School Review for schools with new headteachers** - an in-depth local authority commissioned review, carried out in a spirit of partnership, with senior leaders from the school involved in the process. Peer headteachers will form part of the review team. These reviews are funded by the local authority.
- **BPSI School Reviews** – led by a BPSI Adviser/Ofsted Inspector, supplemented by peer headteachers on the team, these reviews are commissioned and paid for by the school (e.g. using BPSI hours). For Schools Causing Concern or schools of concern to the LA, the school will be advised to commission a BPSI Review at a time deemed most appropriate and helpful.

Either of the above reviews may be preceded by a separate SEND Review if felt appropriate

### **Recruitment of a new headteacher**

We encourage governing bodies to work closely with the LA throughout the recruitment and selection process for headteachers. In the case of voluntary aided schools, the diocesan board or relevant body will also have advisory rights. The following outlines the key points in the legislation which must be followed.

Governing bodies of maintained schools must notify the LA of a headteacher or deputy headteacher vacancy. The LA has a statutory right to an advisory place on the selection panel of



Community Schools. Governing bodies of voluntary aided schools, which have not accorded advisory rights to the LA for the appointment of head and deputy headteachers must:

- Send a list of shortlisted candidates to the LA
- Provide as much information as possible to the LA on each person selected for interview, to enable the LA to determine their suitability for appointment
- Consider any representations the LA may make within 14 days regarding shortlisted candidates and notify the LA in writing of its response to those representations
- Take the final decision on who to recommend for appointment
- Take steps to ensure that the appointee meets the regulations regarding qualifications, health, fitness, safeguarding requirements and other grounds

The LA produces a “Toolkit for Governing Bodies in the Recruitment of a New Headteacher” and a “Handover Checklist for a New Headteacher” which we encourage all schools to use. In addition, BPSI offer a “Collection” of additional support to governing bodies if required.

### **Formal mechanisms for maintaining a positive relationship and a strong partnership with schools**

- School Circular sent by e mail weekly from the LA to schools
- Every school has a named Learning Network Inspector (with secondary, nursery and special schools having an additional BSIP to carry out formal monitoring and challenge visits)
- Half-termly Network Meetings with primary headteachers led by the relevant Learning Network Inspector
- Termly Meeting with Deputy and Assistant Headteachers (all phases) led by the Learning Network Inspectors
- Attendance by an LNI at the SENCO Termly Conference
- Termly Newsletter sent by the Assistant Director – Head of School Improvement to secondary school headteachers
- Termly Directors Meeting with all headteachers
- Termly Director’s Meeting with chairs and vice chairs of governors
- Welcome Event for New Headteachers, Deputy Heads and Assistant Heads
- New Headteacher Forum and New Deputy Headteacher Forum
- Termly Safeguarding Breakfast Briefing for leaders and Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Notes of Visit system (Perspective Lite) recording all school improvement visits to a school
- Encouraging schools to purchase School Improvement Traded Services e.g. Barnet Partnership for School Improvement (BPSI), Governor Services, Data Services, NQT support etc. and other traded services e.g. Inclusion Advisory Team Support

### **Towards a schools-led school improvement system**

#### **Vision**

The vision for our approach to school improvement in Barnet is:

Every Barnet school is encouraged to be part of school partnerships with a number of other schools. Within these partnerships schools will work together and share best practice and the best schools and best headteachers will play a key role in enabling other schools in the partnership to improve towards outstanding. A self-managing, self-improving school system will become established, working in collaboration with, and in addition to, the local authority

monitoring, challenge and support. Co-operation and structured and planned improvement are driven by school leaders, every school benefits and standards are continuously raised.

- Schools should be **responsible for their own improvement** and so we need a self-improving school system
- **System leaders** in schools (e.g NLEs, experienced school leaders) should be driving improvement across schools
- All schools need to have **regular external challenge** in order to identify key areas for development and to improve continuously. This external challenge will come from the local authority and any other appropriate organisations
- The **local authority** will continue to have a named Learning Network Inspector (LNI) for each school and either the LNI, the Assistant Director – Head of School Improvement or a Barnet School Improvement Partner (BSIP) will conduct monitoring, challenge and support activities to each school and each partnership. This may need to be charged for.
- Schools that work in **isolation** are likely to be putting their own school improvement at risk. This is especially the case with primary schools, which are generally too small to maintain a sufficiently robust internal challenge function. This means that the Local Authority encourages schools to join together in school improvement partnerships
- The Local Authority provides high quality consultancy and training to schools through the Barnet Partnership for School Improvement (BPSI)

To supplement the schools-led school improvement system, the LA may use other strategies to build capacity in schools. These may include the following:

- the use of experienced Barnet Headteachers to act as coaches for inexperienced new Headteachers especially where they are taking over fragile schools
- the secondment of Headteachers and experienced Deputy Headteachers to cover Headteacher vacancies in fragile schools
- creative use of teaching expertise identified in other schools in the LA to build capacity in challenging schools.
- the use of National Leaders of Education (NLEs), National Support Schools (NSS), Local Leaders of Education (LLEs) or Teaching Schools to support, monitor and challenge schools
- the use of other recognised school improvement programmes
- the use of National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) to support Chairs of Governors and whole Governing Bodies in vulnerable schools
- the use of BPSI to deliver a range of monitoring, challenge and support activities including a range of reviews
- working in partnership with other LA departments and agencies e.g SEN, safeguarding, social care, education welfare

## **School Partnerships**

### **Loose partnerships**

Schools are encouraged and supported to be in loose partnerships. The make up of these partnerships is reviewed annually and schools are encouraged to discuss with their Learning Network Inspector if their partnership is not proving to be effective and demonstrate impact. Network Meetings and other forums, including Chairs and Vice Chairs Briefings, are used to disseminate good practice in partnerships and Learning Network Inspectors will attend partnership meetings and activities where necessary and resources allow.

## **More formal partnerships**

In June 2019 the School Improvement Team produced a document for schools entitled “Strategic Partnerships, Federations and Trusts – options for Barnet schools.” Our recommendation is that all governing bodies consider, on an annual basis, whether their school would benefit by being part of a strategic partnership, federation or trust. Having considered this, a governing body may decide to take their thinking further by getting advice and support from the Education and Skills service.

The Local Authority will support any schools or partnerships who want to explore the potential benefits of a more formal partnership arrangement i.e. federating or creating or joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

The resignation or retirement of a school’s serving headteacher can present the governing body with a good opportunity to review the school’s future leadership arrangements. The governors might want to consider new models of school leadership ranging from entering a federation or a multi-academy, through to becoming a co-operative trust, or remaining a standalone school or academy. The Local Authority will support a governing body with this decision-making process.

## C Schools Causing Concern

All schools that are not securely Good or Outstanding and who are at risk of receiving a judgement of Requiring Improvement or Inadequate by Ofsted are classified by the local authority as causing concern through the mechanism identified above. This is regarded by the local authority as an informal Warning Notice and rapid improvement is expected.

The **DfE guidance on Schools Causing Concern (September 2020)** states:

Warning notices can be given to schools that are causing concern but are not currently eligible for intervention. Both RSCs and local authorities may issue warning notices but there are differences in the circumstances under which they may be issued.

Local authorities may issue warning notices to their maintained schools under the following circumstances:

1. the standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so; or
2. there has been a serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed which is prejudicing, or likely to prejudice, such standards of performance; or
3. The safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise); or
4. The governing body have failed to comply with a provision of an order under section 122 of the Education Act 2002 (teachers' pay and conditions) that applies to a teacher at the school; or have failed to secure that the head teacher of the school complies with such a provision.

Local authorities should use warning notices to hold their schools to account and should work together with RSCs where they judge that a warning notice is necessary

Barnet's policy is to designate schools with unacceptably low standards as schools causing concern and to subject them to an improvement regime, as described below. We see this designation as an informal warning and an invitation to co-operate with the authority in taking the necessary steps to bring about the required improvements.

There is thus 'a particular reason' not to issue a warning notice to a Barnet SCC, which is that the LA has notified the school that they are a school causing concern and they are cooperating fully with the LA's approach to supporting and challenging such schools to improve.

The same approach would apply if the school were regarded as a cause of concern due to a serious breakdown of management or governance or where the safety of pupils is threatened. In these cases the LA will designate the school as a school causing concern in relation to these specific grounds and seek their full co-operation in remedying the situation.

The LA's policy is therefore to issue a warning notice:

- Where schools have not responded positively and fully co-operated with the LA's SCC framework as set out in this document.
- If a school does not take adequate action to secure a review of its use of the Pupil Premium or a review of governance when recommended by OfSTED
- Where a school has been a cause of concern for more than 12 months and still seems unlikely to become good within the next 6 months.

### Triggers for schools causing concern:

- All schools judged Inadequate or Requires Improvement by OfSTED
- All schools that the LA believes would be judged as RI or worse by OfSTED if inspected now or in the near future

- All schools where there is a serious breakdown of management/leadership or governance or where the LA believes overall leadership (governance and management/leadership) to be RI or worse
- All schools where the LA believes the safety of pupils is threatened, including any schools whose safeguarding arrangements are unsatisfactory
- All schools where achievement of pupils is unacceptably low, or where there has been a serious decline in performance and/or concerns about practice the LA has not been provided with sufficient evidence that the school has the capacity to reverse this trend.

### **Schools Review Group**

The list of schools causing concern is reviewed half termly at a local authority School Review Group meeting which considers the performance of all schools across the authority. The review body comprises senior local authority officers, including attendance by a representative from Family Services and the SEN Team, and is chaired by the Assistant Director - Head of School Improvement.

Concerns expressed at this meeting will already have been discussed with the headteacher of the school concerned. If the School Review Group identifies a school as causing concern, this will be communicated to the headteacher and Chair of Governors in writing. A Lead Officer (LO) is identified and an appropriate plan of support is set in place. Each school's progress is monitored and the need for the school's continuing categorisation is reviewed at each School Review Group meeting.

The support provided to Schools Causing Concern and the overall progress of each school is reported to the School Standards Partnership Board, which is a partnership board of council officers, BELS Officers and headteachers, chaired by the Assistant Director - Head of School Improvement. See Appendix A for a flowchart showing the processes followed for Schools Causing Concern.

### **a) LA maintained schools**

#### **Lead Officer Role**

When a school is placed in an OFSTED category or begins to cause the LA concern then a Lead Officer (LO) is appointed. The LO may be the school's Learning Network Inspector, or another suitably qualified professional.

The LO is the LA representative who will work in partnership with the Headteacher of the school which has been identified, either through the moderated school self review procedure or as a result of an OFSTED inspection, as requiring support.

In partnership with the Headteacher and senior colleagues the LO will:

- Identify key issues impacting on the school's capacity to improve through the following:
  - Focusing on substantial, current and unresolved issues that have an impact on standards
  - Identifying any underlying, hidden issues
  - Identifying blocks to progress
  - Identifying key areas for action.
- Help the Headteacher and senior colleagues to develop a future vision for the school by:
  - Identifying where they want the school to be in a year's time
  - Identifying interim milestones and goals
- Support the writing of an action plan which will translate the goals into a sequence of actions to address the key issues by:
  - planning the actions to be taken by both school and LA

- planning the involvement of others, including teachers and advisers brokered through Barnet Partnership for School Improvement, commissioned either by the school or the LA
  - planning systematic monitoring and evaluation so that all the actions agreed are kept under review
- Agree with the Headteacher that enough progress has been made so that the category can be withdrawn. This to be as a result of self review, LA review, BPSI Review or HMI review which acknowledges that sufficient progress has been made against key issues, that the school is sustaining improvement and no longer requires intensive support. A school judged as RI or inadequate by OfSTED will not be removed from the SCC list until a subsequent OfSTED inspection judges them to be good or better.

Throughout this process, the LO is responsible for co-ordinating the LA intervention. This involves:

- formulating and keeping updated a SCC Action Plan
- regular visits to school in order to monitor progress
- liaison between all those identified in joint school/LA action plan
- supporting aspects of the action plan
- liaison with relevant council officers, BPSI consultants and senior school staff to review progress and discuss next steps
- reporting on progress, making a judgement and suggesting next steps
- attending governing body meetings as appropriate
- attending regular (usually termly) Monitoring and Challenge Meetings with Assistant Director - Head of School Improvement

In addition to the measures identified above, the LA may use other strategies to build capacity in schools (see list in Section B above) and will look to the School Improvement Partnership that the school is a part of to deliver support and challenge.

### **Statement of Action (including the Action Plan)**

For each LA maintained school judged by Ofsted to be in 'Special Measures' or with 'Serious Weaknesses' the LA has to draw up a Statement of Action. In these cases the school will always be assigned a Lead Officer. The Statement of Action will be written by the Lead Officer the LA deploys to work with the school and who has the principal function of co-ordinating all of the LA support and challenge. An action plan will be written by the LO in partnership with the school detailing what the school will do and what the LA will do in order to move the school forward.

Progress with the plan will be kept under review by the Lead Officer either in individual meetings or at a formal School Progress Review Team Meeting which will take place at least termly. The meetings will be convened by the Lead Officer and will ensure that the LA and school resources are deployed effectively to help the school to be removed from the category as quickly as possible. Progress will be evaluated termly at a Monitoring and Challenge Meeting with the Head of School Improvement.

### **Review of The Action Plan**

The LO will convene a review of the action plan at regular intervals which will include the HT and any other relevant members of SLT as appropriate. The Chair of Governors and Voluntary Aided Board Officer may also attend where this is appropriate. The purpose of the meeting is to monitor and evaluate the progress made against the key priorities, and to ensure that the action plan is effective in bringing about the necessary rapid and sustained improvement and that there is measurable impact. A new action plan is also agreed at this meeting. Copies of the action plans and notes of the review of the previous action plan are stored in the secure area of the Education and Skills network.

## **Monitoring and Challenge Meeting**

Following a review of the action plan, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors of a School Causing Concern may be invited to attend a meeting with the Head of School Improvement. The Lead Officer will discuss the need for this meeting with the Head of School improvement and will also attend this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is:

- for the Head of School Improvement to evaluate the progress that the school is making to become a securely good school.
- to assess the quality of monitoring, challenge and support that the Local Authority has given to the school.

The notes of this meeting are also stored in the secure area of the Education and Skills network.

## **Quality Assurance Procedures**

The Head of School Improvement will meet regularly with LOs, and at least half termly, to discuss the improvement of the schools the LO is responsible for. Further quality assurance, for the programmes of support for all Schools Causing Concern, is carried out by the Schools Review Group which meets half termly and discusses support and progress of all schools which cause concern.

## **Informal Warning Notice**

A school which is designated by the LA as causing concern is regarded as having been issued with an informal Warning Notice. It is expected that the leadership of the school (including the governors) will engage with the Schools Causing Concern process and will work in partnership with the local authority. This partnership working includes:

- attendance at key meetings including School Progress Review Team Meetings and Monitoring and Challenge Meetings
- acceptance by the school that they are in a vulnerable position and are at risk of an adverse Ofsted judgement at their next inspection
- full and effective use of Lead Officer to support school improvement
- full and effective use of BPSI or other school improvement support
- full and effective use of governor support and training
- willingness to accept suggestions of further support needed to add to the capacity to improve e.g. support from an NLE/NSS, support from an Outstanding Headteacher, signing up to and engaging with the Securing Good Programme, support for governors from an NLG
- willingness to commission a Review to evaluate effectiveness e.g. LA Review, BPSI School Review, Challenge Partner Review, BPSI Governance Review, BPSI Pupil Premium Review
- demonstration at School Progress Review Team Meetings and Monitoring and Challenge Meetings that progress is being made

## **Formal Warning Notice**

If a school does not engage with the School Causing Concern process then the LA will issue a formal Warning Notice. Section 60 of the 2006 Act sets out the provisions relating to warning notices:

*“A warning notice should be used 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. Before deciding to give such a warning notice, local authorities must draw on a suitable range of quantitative and qualitative information to form a complete picture of a school’s performance.*”

*Warning notices should be used as an early form of intervention, particularly where standards are unacceptably low and other tools and strategies have not secured improvement.*

*A warning notice may be given by a local authority in one of three circumstances:*

- the standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so unless the authority exercise their powers under Part 4 of the 2006 Act; or,*
- there has been a serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed which is prejudicing, or likely to prejudice, such standards of performance; or,*
- the safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise)."*

### **Statutory powers of Intervention**

Where a school is eligible for intervention there are a number of powers the local authority may use to drive school improvement. These powers are set out in DfE guidance. Part 4 of, and Schedule 6 to, the 2006 Act set out that a (maintained) school is "eligible for intervention" where:

- "a warning notice has been given (section 60) with which the school has failed to comply or has failed to comply to the satisfaction of the local authority and the local authority have also given the governing body a written notice that they propose to exercise one or more of their powers under Part 4 of the 2006 Act;*
- teachers' pay and conditions warning notice has been given (section 60A)4 with which the school has failed to comply and the local authority have also given written notice to the governing body that they propose to exercise one or more of their powers under Part 4 of the 2006 Act;*
- a school requires significant improvement (section 61); and,*
- a school requires special measures (section 62)."*

The interventions that the LA may make are:

1. Power to suspend the delegated authority for the governing body to manage a school's budget
2. Power to appoint an Interim Executive Board (IEB)
3. Power to appoint additional governors
4. Power to require the governing body to enter into arrangements

Section 63 enables a local authority to require a school which is eligible for intervention to enter into arrangements with a view to improving the performance of the school. The local authority may give the governing body a notice requiring them:

- to enter into a contract or other arrangement for specified services of an advisory nature with a specified person (who may be the governing body of another school);*
- to make arrangements to collaborate with the governing body of another school;*
- to make arrangements to collaborate with a further education body; or,*
- to take specified steps for the purpose of creating or joining a federation.*



## **Governance**

The Schools Causing Concern statutory guidance includes some non-statutory guidance relating to governance. It states:

*Local authorities should take an active interest in the quality of governance in maintained schools. Local authorities should promote and support high standards of governance, recognising where a school could improve and encouraging governing bodies to do so. They should be champions for high quality school governance; help ensure that governors have the necessary skills; and have in place appropriate monitoring arrangements to identify signs of failure in relation to governing bodies' oversight of finance, safety or performance standards. Maintained schools should have a code of conduct setting high standards for the role, conduct and professionalism of their governors. This includes an expectation that they undertake any training or development activity needed to fill skills gaps to contribute to the effective governance of the school.*

*Section 22 of the Education Act 2002 provides that local authorities should ensure that training they consider necessary to discharge their duties is made available to every governor, free of charge. It is also possible for governing bodies to suspend governors who refuse to undertake necessary training.*

*As a result, local authorities should have arrangements in place for maintaining up to date records of governors in maintained schools. This should include contact details for chairs of governing bodies to aid direct communication with those who are accountable for schools. It should also enable them to carry out any necessary due diligence including identifying governors who sit on more than one governing body. Information held by the local authority should also be made available to the Department for Education upon request. Local authorities should also encourage transparency around school governance arrangements including through information published on school websites in line with statutory guidance and compliance with schools' duties under s538 of the Education Act 1996 to populate all of the governance fields on Get Information About Schools (GIAS).*

*In carrying out these responsibilities in respect of voluntary and foundation schools, local authorities will also need to work closely with religious bodies or other bodies who appoint the governors.*

*Where a local authority has concerns about the governance of an academy or free school in their area, they should raise this with the relevant RSC or the ESFA.*

## **Action on governance**

- we ensure that high quality training and information is provided to school governors, to prevent schools from becoming 'eligible for intervention'. To comply with the free of charge training element, we provide certain briefings (e.g. Director's briefing) free of charge, but no governor is charged directly to attend training as it is accessed through the school's subscription to Governor Support and Development
- we have arrangements in place for maintaining records of governors in all LA maintained schools to be used to aid communication with governors. Records include schools' registers of interests. To comply with the expectation to maintain up to date records (and to aid our own communication regarding circulating Director's Report and inviting Chairs and Vice-Chairs to briefings etc), we are maintaining the database to keep contact details of Chairs and Vice-Chairs. We have also advised Governing Bodies to publish information on their websites (including, register of business interests and whether governors are on more than one governing body). We use the school website to gain information on all Governors. We have never held information on governors' business interests, and even when clerking meetings and asking Governors to submit this information annually, we have advised the school office to maintain this information.

- we promote and support high standards of governance, act as a champion for high quality in school governance, help ensure that governors have the necessary skills, and have in place appropriate monitoring arrangements to identify signs of failure in relation to governors' oversight of finance, safety or performance standards.
- we consider recommending governing bodies of LA maintained schools to suspend governors who refuse to undertake necessary training
- we encourage schools to publish up to date and full details of their governors on the school website (in line with their statutory duties) to ensure transparency to parents and to aid oversight.
- in carrying out these responsibilities in respect of voluntary and foundation schools, we work closely with religious bodies or other bodies who appoint the governors including the London Diocesan Board for School (LDBS) and the Westminster Diocese.
- where a concern has been identified about governance within an academy in Barnet, we alert the academy to these concerns and raise it with the local Regional Schools Commissioner and the DfE.

### **Interim Leadership Models**

Barnet has adopted a range of creative leadership and management models in order, where required, to strengthen this aspect of schools in OFSTED categories and those causing Barnet concern. Various leadership models have been very successful, which were adapted to suit the needs of the school. All of the schools involved have made rapid progress.

Where concerns are around the capacity of senior leadership to bring about rapid and sustained improvement, the LA will follow the separate protocol that has been agreed with representatives of HT professional organisations.

### **b) Academies**

Where the council has particular concerns about the performance of an academy, it will ensure that the Academy Trust is fully informed of the concern. This will include any cases where the council has concerns about the Academy's arrangement for safeguarding children. In the first instance the council will contact the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. Where appropriate, the local authority will make the Academy Trust aware of its recommended actions to meet the concern. The Academy Trust will share its plans for improvement with the local authority e.g. through an appropriate statement of action. The local authority may offer advice about (or broker access to) locally recommended school improvement support services.

The Academy Trust should clearly set out where it requires support from the local authority to resolve any issues about services for which the local authority has responsibility. The local authority will seek to resolve any identified issues for which it is responsible.

The local authority recognises that there may be circumstances where this arrangement is not effective. Where serious concerns arise (such as the school is in an Ofsted category requiring intervention or improvement: the school meets the criteria set out in the section 60(2) of the 2006 Education and Inspections Act, 2006 where for a maintained school the local authority could consider a warning notice or there is evidence of poor leadership and/or governance) and the engagement has not been effective, the council will consider contacting the Regional Schools Commissioner, the ESFA and the Regional HMI setting out its concerns, and the attempts it has made to agree with the Academy Trust action to tackle the issues that have been identified. The local authority commits to informing the Academy Trust before taking this course of action.

### **Support strategies to build capacity in academies**

Where possible and at the academy's request, the LA will support the academy trust in building capacity in the school. These include the following:

- the use of experienced Barnet Headteachers to act as coaches for inexperienced new Headteachers especially where they are taking over fragile schools
- the secondment of Headteachers and experienced Deputy Headteachers to cover Headteacher vacancies in fragile schools
- creative use of teaching expertise identified in other schools in the LA to build capacity in challenging schools.
- the use of National Leaders of Education (NLEs), National Support Schools (NSS), Local Leaders of Education (LLEs) or Teaching Schools to support, monitor and challenge schools
- the use of other recognised school improvement programmes
- the use of National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) to support Chairs of Governors and whole Governing Bodies in vulnerable schools

The LA's role is to help broker and facilitate this support. The academy trust will need to fund any support.

## **Associated resources**

- Schools Causing Concern – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (DfE September 2020)
- The Academies Act 2010
- The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (amended the 2006 Act) - makes provision for apprenticeships, education, training and children's services.
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education Act 2011 (amended the 2006 Act and also the 2010 Academies Act in respect of land transfers to academies. Schedule 14 applies)
- Education and Adoption Act 2016 (which amends the 2006 Act and the Academies Act 2010)
- Education Act 2002 Schedule 2 Effect on Staffing on suspension of delegated budget
- Education Act 2005
- School Governance (Transition from an Interim Executive Board) (England) Regulations 2010 – you can download the School Governance Regulations 2010 from the Opsi website
- The School Governance (Role, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 – associated departmental guidance can be found here.
- The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 - contains provisions for schools and nursery education. This covers further education for young people at school, and in FE institutions across the UK.
- Ofsted: monitoring inspections for maintained schools and academies - information about the types of monitoring inspections carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- The framework for the inspection of local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement

## Appendix 1: SCC Flowchart

### Triggers for schools causing concern (page 25)

- School judged Inadequate by OfSTED
- School judged Requires Improvement by OfSTED
- School that the LA believes would be judged as RI or worse by OfSTED if inspected now
- School where there is a serious breakdown of management or governance or where the LA believes overall leadership (governance and management) to be RI or worse
- School where the LA believes the safety of pupils is threatened, including any schools whose safeguarding arrangements are unsatisfactory
- School where achievement of pupils is unacceptably low, because they fall under the government's definition of coasting schools or where there has been a serious decline in levels of attainment or progress and the LA has not been provided with sufficient evidence that the school has the capacity to reverse this trend.

### Statement of Action (page 27)

For each LA maintained school judged by Ofsted to be in 'Special Measures' or with 'Serious Weaknesses' the LA draws up a Statement of Action. The LA plan and the school plan will be written as complementary documents.

### Decision made by Schools Review Group (page 26)

LNI discusses concerns with HT of school

**SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN**

**Schools Review Group (SRG)**  
The list of schools causing concern is reviewed half termly at a local authority SRG Meeting.

#### Possible decisions by SRG:

- SRG identifies school as causing concern.
- SRG removes school as causing concern
- SRG decides to issue a Formal Warning Notice (see below and page 28)

### Formal Warning Notice (page 28)

### Statutory Powers of Intervention (page 29)

The interventions that the LA may make are:

- Power to suspend the delegated authority for the governing body to manage a school's budget
- Power to appoint an Interim Executive Board (IEB)
- Power to appoint additional governors
- Power to require the governing body to enter into arrangements

Decision in writing from Ed and Skills Director to HT and CoG

For a SCC - Lead Officer (LO) identified— plan of support is set in place.

Progress monitored and support evaluated

LNI reports decision verbally to Headteacher of school

### Review of the Action Plan (page 27)

Termly or half-termly (as appropriate) in school with HT, other members of the school SLT if appropriate, key officers from the LA, advisers who are providing support identified in the action plan, Chair of Governors and Voluntary Aided Board Officer (where appropriate)

### Monitoring and Challenge Meeting (page 28)

The Headteacher and Chair of Governors of a School Causing Concern may be invited to attend a meeting with the Head of School Improvement to evaluate the progress the school is making to become securely Good and to assess the quality of monitoring, challenge and support that the Local Authority has given to the school.

*The support provided to Schools Causing Concern and the overall progress of each school is reported to the Schools and Settings Standards Partnership Board which is comprised of BELS officers and headteachers, chaired by the AD—Head of School Improvement*