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# School and Settings Improvement Strategy

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## London Borough of Barnet

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2020 – 2024  
Updated February 2024

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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 132 schools serving 63,099 pupils (May 2023). Note this figure was 62,282 pupils in May 2022.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
All-Through	5021
Nursery	443
Pupil referral unit (PRU) / alternative provision (AP)	167
Primary	31059
Special	757
Secondary	25652
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>63099</b>

There are 28 secondary schools (inc two Sixth Form Academies and one Sixth Form SEN Provision), 89 primary schools, three all through schools, four nursery schools, eight special schools (inc one Early Years provision) 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 95% 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 three 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.

Part C outlines our approach to monitoring, challenging and supporting our Early Years in schools and settings and how we give intensive support and close monitoring to our Settings 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 continues to be 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.*

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 to diminish the difference between them and their peers.
- Every child receives high quality education through a robust curriculum, which is delivered and assessed by expert practitioners. This is done by ensuring that:
  - There are enough school places
  - All schools are good or outstanding
  - There are high levels of achievement 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 (2020–2024 - revised) 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 6 – 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.

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 and Academies who purchase the School Improvement Team Traded Service. The large percentage of School Improvement Team costs comes from the agreed de-delegation of the DSG (agreed by Schools Forum). If necessary, LNI support services will be offered as a traded service to all schools not just academies.
- 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 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's Partnership Board and the Council's Cabinet. 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 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:
  - school standards
  - standards in EY settings
  - pupil progress, attainment and attendance
  - narrowing gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers
  - achievement of vulnerable groups (ie LAC/CiN/SEND)
  - the authority's monitoring, challenge and support of maintained schools and EY settings
  - information on the quality of education, using evidence from Ofsted reports as well as intelligence gained from School Effectiveness Visits
  - information on destinations at KS4 (using such evidence as 'NEET' figures)
  - high quality careers education and guidance in schools and colleges
  - 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 2023 we have created a sub-board of the SSSPB focused on Independent Schools

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

At the end of July 2023 the number of good and outstanding schools at each phase was:

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

**Primary** – 83 of the 89 schools 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 (6) 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:**

Of the 131 PVI's on non-domestic premises; 21 were Outstanding at their last inspection and 92 were Good. 7 settings Require Improvement and 1 settings was Inadequate. 10 settings were awaiting their first Ofsted Inspection.

Of the 7 PVI's on domestic premises; 2 were Outstanding at their last inspection and 3 were Good. No settings Require Improvement and 2 settings were Inadequate.

For the 129 childminders in receipt of funding 10 are Outstanding, 101 are Good (or Met), 1 Requires Improvement and none are Inadequate. 17 are awaiting their first inspection.

## **F Context: Achievement in Barnet Schools and Settings 2023/2024**

(See separate report entitled Summary of Educational Standards in Barnet 2022/23)

### **G Key Strengths:**

#### **1. Arising from the 2023 achievement data**

- EYFSP levels have greatly improved from 2022 to 2023, across Foundation Stage Profile Good Levels of Development (GLD) particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Key stage 2 attainment: In 2023, Barnet ranked within the top 10% of local authorities across the expected standard (EXS+) in all subjects.
- Key stage 2 average progress score: In 2023, Barnet ranked within the top 10% of Reading, Maths and Writing progress scores. Writing progress also increased significantly from 2022.
- KS2 disadvantaged pupils: Barnet's disadvantaged pupils outperform London's disadvantaged pupils in all subjects.
- SEN pupil performance at KS2 and KS4: At KS2, pupils on SEN Support in Barnet attain very well, ranked in the top 15%. Progress is particularly strong for Writing and Maths (12th and 7th), and within the top 10% of LAs nationally. Attainment and progress for SEN Support pupils at KS4 is in the top 15% of pupils across those with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), those with SEN Support, and those with no SEN.
- KS4 performance: Performance in all of the attainment and progress KS4 measures is within the top 5-10% for both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.
- Academic attainment at KS5: This remains in the top 5-10% for all headline measures.
- Educational readiness for adulthood: Attainment by the age of 19 for both FSM and non-FSM pupils is very high, with an above average proportion of pupils holding at least two A Levels by the age of 19.
- Attendance is strong comparatively: Low percentage of both Absence and Persistent Absence compared to national.

#### **2. Other Strengths**

- Percentage of Good and Outstanding schools above National and in line with London
- Over 95% of pupils attending a Good or Outstanding school
- Positive and productive relationship with schools

- 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)
- Strong relationships between BELS, local Teaching Schools and North West London Teaching School Hub in order to deliver popular ECT programme with rigorous Appropriate Body intervention
- Continued delivery of a governor training programme
- 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 to meet the diverse needs of schools

## **H Schools and Settings Standards Partnership Board Priorities**

Based on the education performance data from 2023 and our information about schools, the following areas have been identified as a priority for improvement by the Schools and Settings Standards Partnership Board.

- **Attendance and Exclusions**

Raising the attendance of pupils in Barnet Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units is a priority this year.

There has been an increase in suspensions and pupils at risk of permanent exclusion particularly at primary and a rise in the total number of permanent exclusions in 2022/23.

There is a multi-agency approach to reducing exclusions in Barnet including forming part of the Action Plans in both the Youth Justice Plan and Serious Violence Strategy.

- **KS2 Reading**

Reading was the only subject at KS2 where attainment dropped between 2022 and 2023. However this drop was not as great as the drops nationally, in Outer London and Statistical Neighbours. The national ranking for Reading remains in the top 10% but is below the rankings for Writing, Maths, Science and GPS.

- **Vocational results at KS5**

The percentage of examinations awarded a Distinction\* or Distinction is lower than the national average in a lot of our schools. We need to continue to work with schools to raise aspirations and further improve the quality of provision.

- **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. This is particularly a concern with the recent changes to the vocational routes and the uncertainty about the continuation of BTECs and

the recent commencement of T Levels. We will continue to support schools to try and ensure the options available for students are as wide ranging as possible.

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

Although Barnet's Disadvantaged pupils perform better than national Disadvantaged pupils, there are still significant gaps in achievement between those pupils who are Disadvantaged and those who are not. SEND pupils achieve well compared to SEND pupils nationally at all Key Stages but we prioritise the achievement of SEND pupils in order to try to reduce the gap between their achievement and pupils with no SEN. We are still awaiting more detailed information on Children in Need pupils. This remains an important priority.

- **Looked After Children**

Provisional results indicate that the attainment of LAC children in Barnet is still a concern. The overall achievement of LAC remains a priority. The BELS Virtual School and Post 16 Teams, along with Family Services prioritise the achievement and outcomes of all Looked After Children.

- **Pupils' Mental Health**

Following the pandemic, which is backed up by a recent survey of secondary pupils, the mental health of all pupils still needs to be a priority, including support for pupils with managing test and exam stress.

- **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**

Findings from Ofsted continue to identify that children in state schools are effectively safeguarded. We are establishing a group focusing on Independent Schools to ensure effective safeguarding in all Barnet schools. We facilitate a group of Designated Safeguarding Leads and work effectively with them through our BELS School Safeguarding Lead are effective.

- **Curriculum**

To support all schools in the effective planning and delivery of 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 skills they need to succeed in life. This is a priority to reflect the changes introduced in the 2019 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 to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. In this way, it can powerfully address social disadvantage.
- That each school's own curriculum builds towards clearly defined end points, matched to the requirements of the National Curriculum. All schools carefully select the knowledge that pupils acquire and the age-related expectations they need to reach.
- The school's curriculum is well planned and carefully 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 unique 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.
- Schools understand that pupils need solid foundations in the basic skills of communication, reading, writing and maths in order to succeed across the curriculum.
- School leaders are supporting staff to implement the intended curriculum as designed so that children achieve well.
- Assessment, both formative and summative, remains key to determining the success of the 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.

In addition, the following remain as 'monitoring' priorities due to the fact that attainment, although improved, is not in the top 10% of the country:

- **Early Years (Please see EY Improvement Strategy in Part C of this document)**
- **Phonics**
- **Key Stage 1 Achievement**
- **KS2 Writing**
- **Attendance in Mainstream Schools**

We will review these areas on a regular basis, particularly when more data/information becomes available. We may decide to increase the focus if data and intelligence suggests that the area needs to be a higher priority.

## 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, 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 2023-24 (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	HOSIs / LNIs	See Schools and Settings Improvement Strategy and Monitoring, Challenge and Support Action Plan	Schools and settings, Early Years Standards Team	July 2024	<p>Percentage of primary schools and settings rated as 'good' or better</p> <p>Percentage of secondary schools rated as 'good' or better</p> <p>Target to be in top 10% of Good and Outstanding schools nationally</p> <p>For settings our target is 90%, but with an aspiration to be above the national average within 3 years (currently 95%).</p>	SRG, SSSPB
Ensure all Schools and Settings Causing Concern are	HOSIs / Lead Officers	See School Improvement Strategy and Monitoring,	Schools and settings, BPSI Advisers, Early Years	July 2024	Produce an action plan for each school and setting causing concern and	SRG, SSSPB

Outcome	Owned by	Action	Key partner/s	Deadline	Target for actions in 2023-24 (include KPIs, SKPIs & OKPIs as required)	Monitored via (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)
effectively supported and closely monitored		Challenge and Support Action Plan	Standards Team		progress reports on each SCC at least once a term.	
Achievement of pupils at end of KS2, KS4 and KS5 to be in top 10% nationally	HOSIs / LNIs	See School Improvement Strategy and Monitoring, Challenge and Support Action Plan	Schools, BPSI Advisers	July 2024	<p>The percentage of primary pupils achieving the 'expected standard' in English Reading, English Writing and Mathematics (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)</p>	SRG, SSSPB

Outcome	Owned by	Action	Key partner/s	Deadline	Target for actions in 2023-24 (include KPIs, SKPIs & OKPIs as required)	Monitored via (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)
					6d Percentage of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate	
Improve outcomes in reading at KS2, particularly at the higher levels	HOSI/LNIs	See reading action plan	BPSI advisors	July 2024	Move back in to the top 10% nationally, focus on higher level	SSSPB
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	HOSIs / LNIs/SEND and Virtual School	See School Improvement Strategy and Narrowing the Gap Action Plan	Schools and Settings, BPSI Advisors, Early Years Standards Team, Teaching Schools	July 2024	<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 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</p>	Data collection Census

Outcome	Owned by	Action	Key partner/s	Deadline	Target for actions in 2023-24 (include KPIs, SKPIs & OKPIs as required)	Monitored via (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)
					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	
Improve achievement of Looked After Children particularly at Secondary	Sarah Deale	See Virtual School Action Plan	Schools, Social Care, Placements	July 2024	a) 20% - Average Attainment 8 score of looked after children b) 20% - Average Progress 8 score of looked after children c) 10% - Closing the gap between Barnet LAC and Barnet average on Attainment 8 and Progress 8 d) 20% - the quality of PEPs	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 2023-24 (include KPIs, SKPIs &amp; OKPIs as required)</b>	<b>Monitored via (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)</b>
					e) 10% - KS2 performance (expected standards in RWM) f) 10% - 16-18 year old NEETs g) 5% - Attendance of LACs h) 5% - Exclusions	
To ensure schools are accessing appropriate support (eg Resilient Schools/CAMHs/Early Help/BICs as appropriate) to support children and YP's mental health	HOSI/LNIs	See Mental Health action plan	BICs, BPH, EPs, Early Help, Resilient Schools	July 2024	Pupil voice (through children's partnership board) indicates that children and YP are confident that their anxieties are being addressed Ofsted outcomes indicate that schools manage pupil well-being effectively	SSSPB/ Children's Partnership Board
Recruitment of high-quality staff in schools improved	HOSI	See Recruitment and Retention Action Plan	Schools, Agencies, Media Team, Housing, Parking, HTs, Teach Now	July 2024	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	HOSI	See Progress and Progression Pathways Action Plan	Schools, Colleges, Post 16, SEN Team	July 2024	Improved achievement in vocational qualifications	SSSPB

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Owned by</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key partner/s</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Target for actions in 2023-24 (include KPIs, SKPIs &amp; OKPIs as required)</b>	<b>Monitored via</b> (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)
To ensure schools meet statutory requirements for safeguarding	HOSI/Safeguarding Lead	See Safeguarding Action Plan	Schools, LADO, Social Care, BPSI	July 2024	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
Following the pandemic, which is backed up by a recent survey of secondary pupils, the mental health of all pupils still needs to be a priority, including support for pupils with managing test and exam stress	HOSIs / EPs/ LNIs/	See separate Behaviour Action Plan	BPSI, SEN Teams, BICS, Resilience in Schools and Healthy Schools team, Children's Partnership Board as appropriate	July 2024	Increased offer of support to schools	SEND Partnership Board, SSSPB
To monitor and challenge schools to reduce the numbers of fixed term suspensions and exclusions specifically for black pupils (with a focus on Caribbean pupils)	HOSIs / EWT	See Exclusions Working Party Action Plan	Schools, BICS, Family Services	July 2024	Reduce the proportion of suspensions and exclusions between black pupils when compared to other groups	SSSPB Attendance and Exclusions Sub Board SRG
To support schools to plan and deliver a relevant and ambitious curriculum	HOSIs / LNIs	See separate Wider Curriculum Action Plan	BPSI, Teaching Schools	July 2024	Schools judged by Ofsted to have a high quality and inclusive education for all pupils	SSSPB

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Owned by</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key partner/s</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Target for actions in 2023-24 (include KPIs, SKPIs &amp; OKPIs as required)</b>	<b>Monitored via</b> (e.g. SLT or Team meeting)
for all pupils, including the most vulnerable.						
To further develop Traded Services (see Section 3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BPSI</li> <li>• Governor Services</li> <li>• ECT</li> <li>• Appropriate Body</li> <li>• EYFS Traded Service</li> </ul>	HOSIs / Carrie Waldren/EY Leads	See separate Action Plans	Schools, Advisers, NGA, School Bus,	July 2024	Increased trading and income  Improved service as demonstrated through satisfaction surveys  Development of BELS website	SMT  BPSI Steering Group  Connect Steering Group  “BELS and Whistles” Task and Finish Group
Improve achievement at Early Years	HOSIs / Louise Jennings / Helen Cheung	See Early Years Action Plan	Schools and Settings, Early Years Standards Team, BPSI Early Years Adviser, BEYA	July 2024	GLD to be in top 10% nationally	SSSPB
Improve achievement at KS1 and in phonics	HOSIs / LNIs	See KS1 Achievement Action Plan	Schools, BPSI, Teaching Schools	July 2024	Attainment at KS1 in top 10% of LAs and progress (as demonstrated in FFT) to be above estimates	SSSPB
Improve attainment in writing at KS2	HOSIs / LNIs	See Writing Action Plan	Schools, BPSI, Teaching Schools	July 2024	Attainment in writing at KS2 further above national and in top 20% nationally	SSSPB

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
- Phonics
- Recruitment and retention
- Attendance
- KS1 Science and Greater Depth in all subjects (New)
- KS2 Reading
- Post 16 – progression and pathways (New)
- Curriculum – intent, implementation and impact (New)
- Students' Mental Health and Well-Being

## **Associated resources**

- Barnet Education Strategy 2020-2023
- School Improvement Overall Team Plan 2023/24
- School Improvement Individual Action Plans 2023/24
- SEND Strategy 2020-23

# Barnet Local Authority – School Improvement Strategy

## Part B

### Monitoring, Challenge and Support - 2023/24

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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 can 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 July 2023, the Government updated statutory guidance for local authorities in fulfilling their duties with Schools Causing Concern:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1168367/Schools\\_causing\\_concern\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1168367/Schools_causing_concern_guidance.pdf)

- 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 2023 which states:

“We are building a supportive schools culture in which local authorities and RDs (Regional Directors) 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, is not making necessary improvements, or where there is financial mismanagement or failure of governance. Interventions are about acting decisively to address underperformance and financial or governance failures and helping schools to deliver the best outcomes for their pupils.”

“Local authorities and RDs 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.”

**Other Local Authority Duties (as laid out in the School Causing Concern Guidance 2023):**

“A local authority must exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards.”

“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 RD, 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 RD, 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 was previously provided to local authorities to assist them in fulfilling these core school improvement activities for the maintained schools in their area. The grant completely ceased in 2023-24. From 2022- 23, local authorities were permitted to de-delegate from maintained schools’ budget shares to fund this core

school improvement activity. The Schools Forum agreed to increase the de-delegation from the schools' budget shares in both 2023-24 and 2024-25. This means that the team are almost fully funded by this de-delegation.

As set out above, these core school improvement activities extend beyond exercising of statutory intervention powers but do not extend to a duty to provide or fund school improvement services themselves; and relate only to 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 RD."

## **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:

<b>Judgement of school based on a combination of their current Ofsted grading and LA RAG Rating</b>	<b>Number of Visits</b>
<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
<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.

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.

### **Visits to Academies:**

#### **Primary:**

Primary academies will receive the same offer of support as maintained primary schools, if they buy in to the 'primary package' available through BELS Traded Services. If they choose not to buy in, then we will undertake safeguarding and SEND, and EYFS statutory duties only.

#### **Secondary:**

The Academy may request a visit from the CEO of BELs. We undertake safeguarding and SEND statutory duties.

### **School Effectiveness Visits (SEV) for maintained schools and for academies who buy in to the traded services:**

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.

With the return of external performance information, it is expected that self-evaluation will include rigorous analysis of outcomes (both internal and external) to inform curriculum and school improvement. As the first nationally published data since the pandemic, the 22/23 performance information will form part of the wider discussion between the LNI and school leaders. 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. The strength of the curriculum and its effective implementation is still a crucial focus for improvement visits.

### **In the 2023/24 academic year, the SEV visits will focus on:**

#### **First Visit:**

- how leaders have ensured that the intended curriculum is being implemented in lesson delivery
- the quality of lesson delivery
- the quality of assessment and how this informs the next steps in learning: i.e. how well pupils are learning the curriculum
- how well leaders are equipping staff to teach and support pupils so that they are becoming expert practitioners
- how leaders are using end of 22/23 data to inform school improvement priorities
- the school's current safeguarding procedures and its response to the current context
- how schools have implemented actions from school improvement visits in 21/22 or any Ofsted areas for improvement

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 further scrutiny 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.

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.

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.

LNIs use visits and other intelligence to review whether a school will be judged at least good at its next inspection. Those schools that are at risk of not being judged good are discussed at the Schools Review Group meeting (SRG). It will then be agreed whether a school will be classified by Barnet as Causing Concern and will receive extra support in order to help them to overcome their difficulties (see Section C).

### **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/BSIP 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 three 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.
- **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. The funding of these reviews is agreed with the school based on the circumstances.
- **BPSI School Reviews** – led by a BPSI Adviser( who has a current in-depth understanding of the Ofsted framework), supplemented by peer headteachers on the team, these reviews are commissioned and paid for by the school (e.g. using BPSI hours).

Any 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 School Improvement team 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
- Regular updates sent by the Director of Education and Learning to 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
- Internal ‘Notes of Visit’ system 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, ECT 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 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 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 (July 2023)** states:

“Warning notices can be given to schools that are causing concern but are not currently eligible for intervention. Both RDs 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.

In general, RDs will only issue a warning notice to maintained schools under the following circumstances:

1. Where there has been a serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed, which is prejudicing, or likely to prejudice, standards of performance; or
2. Where the safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).

Failure to comply with a warning notice will make a maintained school 'eligible for intervention' under Sections 60 and 60A of the 2006 Act. Local authorities and RDs will use their discretion to decide whether the use of formal powers is necessary.

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

## **New Intervention Measures (taken from the statutory School Causing Concern Guidance 2023):**

“The Secretary of State has chosen to update the existing coasting schools regulations so that schools judged less than Good in their two most recent Ofsted inspections will now be covered by the coasting definition. Schools that meet this definition are referred to in this guidance as schools that are not making necessary improvements. Schools that are not making necessary improvements will be eligible for intervention action to support them to improve. Once eligible, the relevant Regional Director (RDs, formally known as regional schools commissioners) will assess each school on a case by case basis and take into account any representations a maintained school’s governing body and local authority or an academy’s trust and, where relevant, the religious body, wish to make, before deciding whether intervention and further support are necessary.”

The Dfe outline how accountability will operate in light of the new intervention measures:

- RDs (formally known as regional schools commissioners)<sup>3</sup> will only mandate academy conversion, leadership change or academy trust transfer of a school in relation to educational standards if Ofsted has judged it Inadequate, or if the school has met the new coasting definition (Schools that are not making necessary improvements) and the relevant RD has assessed that the school would benefit from such interventions
- RDs will not use warning notices on the grounds of low standards of pupil performance apart from in exceptional circumstances.
- RDs will not conduct uninvited visits to schools.
- High quality, effective governance is key to the success of any school. As such, the department is committed to ensuring robust governance in all schools. Where breakdowns in governance occur, the RD and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will continue to use their powers to hold schools to account for their governance and financial management regardless of the school’s Ofsted rating. Both maintained schools and academies will be held to account equally and RDs will continue to challenge underperformance in both types of school.
- Unless a school is subject to intervention action or is run by a single academy trust, RDs will continue to approach academy trusts, local authorities and (in the case of schools with a religious character) the relevant religious body, rather than individual schools.

See the following pages in the Schools Causing Concern Statutory Guidance July 2023 for further detail:

P. 5 – 7

P. 13 - 14

### **Barnet’s Policy in Designating a School ‘Causing Concern’:**

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, including those with two successive Requires Improvement judgements (as outlined above)
- 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 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 Head of School Improvement. See Appendix 1 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 Monitoring and Challenge Meetings with the 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 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 one of 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. The Head of School Improvement may undertake joint SEV visits with the LO to further quality assure rates of improvement.

### **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 progress review 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**

Governors should also reference the Governance Handbook.

The Schools Causing Concern Guidance 2023 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 RD.”



## 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. 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 RD 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 2023)
- 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

# Barnet Local Authority – Early Years Improvement Strategy

## Part C

### Monitoring, Challenge and Support - 2023/24

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#### Introduction

This document links to both the Education Strategy and the School and Settings Improvement Strategy 2023-2024 and sets out how the local authority will fulfil its statutory duties in relation to Early Years in schools and Private, Voluntary and Independent Nurseries (PVI) and Childminders.

#### Relevant Key Performance Indicators

- Percentage of primary schools and settings 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 94%).

#### Relevant Ambition and Aims

Barnet is a changing and growing borough in which 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 in Early Years is to strive for:

- Every **school or setting** is **good or outstanding**, as judged by Ofsted
- The attainment of children in Barnet schools at the end of EYFS to be **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 in a school or setting receives a high quality Early Years education through clear **curriculum intent and effective implementation**.

To do this we need:

- Enough places in schools and settings
- All settings to be good or outstanding
- High quality provision available to all
- A relentless focus on meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND, children looked after and children in need (in partnership with other Barnet teams)
- Support for the mental health and well-being of staff and children in schools and settings
- Maximising the number of children attending EYFS provision
- Support for the Recovery Curriculum, including for SEN pupils, and for ensuring high quality teaching and learning in the schools and settings
- Good relationships with schools and settings enabling rigorous monitoring, challenge, and support for all learning that they undertake with their children
- Effective partnership with council services and with external agencies and organisations including Brokerage, pre-school inclusion, MASH, Public Health and other health services
- An Early Years Standards Team to monitor and challenge, and, where necessary, intervene in EYFS provision and to continue a strong collaboration between this team, schools and settings to ensure high quality Early Years provision and effective transitions

**Strengths:**

- 86% of PVI's who have been inspected (Sept 22-Aug 23) have achieved good or outstanding Ofsted ratings.
- 100% Childminders who have been inspected (Sept 22-Aug 23) have achieved good or outstanding Ofsted ratings
- 98.3% of schools with EYFS provision have achieved a good or Outstanding Ofsted rating.
- Strong relationships built with the early years in schools and settings. 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 School Early years, PVI's and Childminders in Barnet
- Knowledge, skills and experience of Early Years Standards Team
- Links, contacts and involvement with key organisations e.g. Ofsted, DfE, EEF, London LA Early Years Leads
- Strong communication and teamwork between members of the team and with partners
- Robust procedures for monitoring, challenging and supporting Early Years schools and settings
- Successful rollout, supported through training and consultancy, of the Revised EYFS and the Revised EYFS Profile
- Good impact of improvement projects delivered to schools and settings through the Early Years Standards Team 2022- 2023
- Comprehensive and well attended EYFS training programme, for schools and settings, delivered through BPSI and EY Standards.
- Engagement in recent Early Years research to promote and embed evidence-based practice.

**Development Areas:**

Based on the education performance data from 2023 (figures are currently provisional but are not expected to change significantly), the following area was identified as a priority for improvement by the Schools and Settings Standards Partnership Board.

- In 2023 the percentage of pupils who achieved a GLD in the new EYFS Profile was 70.4%, this is 3.2% above National outcomes. Barnet's national ranking for percentage of pupils achieving a GLD was in the 18<sup>th</sup> percentile. As this is below the top 10% of LA's it remains a priority.
- There is no longer any requirement for EYFSP data to be moderated by the LA. Schools are entirely responsible for the data which they submit based on teacher judgements. Free training and voluntary moderation sessions are provided by the Standards Teams to support teachers and headteachers in making accurate judgements. Barnet's GLD significantly improved with the 2023 outcomes as Barnet's data now exceeds national outcomes. Please note that EY Profile data is not to be used as an accountability measure for schools as documented in the statutory guidance.
- The Free Early Education for 2-year-olds (FEE2) uptake currently sits at 60% The aim of children receiving FEE2 funding is to improve disadvantaged children's social and cognitive outcomes, and in ensuring by the age of five they are as ready as the more advantaged peers to start and fully benefit from school. Therefore, the Standards Team will support the brokerage team in trying to raise the uptake of places.
- Between 2023-2025, there will be a significant increase in childcare place provision, required to meet Government announcement in the 2023 Chancellors Budget. The Early Standards

Team will be working in close collaboration with the Early Years Sufficiency Team to facilitate this increase in places required, through Childminders, PVI's and Schools.

- Our aim is for no PVIs or childminders to be below good or outstanding in their Ofsted ratings.
- To continue to liaise with Schools, PVIs and childminders to work towards a more streamline transition when children move from an early years setting to school
- To implement a permanent structure for the leadership within the Early Years Standards Team. From Sept 2023, there's a temporary arrangement in place with two of the Advisory Teachers job sharing the Early Years Standards Lead in PVI's and Childminder. The post of Early Years Standards Lead in Schools is being covered by the Strategic Lead for Early Years in Schools. This arrangement covers the vacancy, which is a result of the standards lead, leaving the service in June 2023.

### **Monitoring, Challenge and Support to PVIs and Childminders 2023-2024:**

There are 350 Early Years Registered settings in Barnet. Each PVI setting, in receipt of funding are assigned an Advisory Teacher and all childminders are assigned a Childminding Quality and Support Officer (CQSO) from the Early Years Standards Team, who will visit the setting.

Visits and Support is determined by:

- Buy back of Traded Services (Packages)
- Ofsted rating
- Safeguarding concerns
- New setting
- Change in management or large turnover of staff
- Management or leadership issues
- Due an Ofsted inspection
- Changes to the premises
- Standards and quality concern
- Settings causing concern
- Childminding settings with SEND concerns

Depending on the PVI buyback of traded services, all settings are visited at least once a year, up to 3 times a year. Childminders will still contact Childminding Quality and Support Officer's as and when needed. Telephone, virtual and email contact continues for registered PVI's and Childminders.

Managers are also invited to attend termly network meetings where the team provides updates on local and national initiatives as well as discussing recent Ofsted inspections.

More frequent visits will be organised if any of the points listed above are raised.

When settings are due Ofsted, the Early Years Standards Team delivers bespoke training on preparing for an Ofsted inspection and exploring the 4 areas of judgment.

If the setting is graded Inadequate or Requires Improvement, the Advisory Teacher/Childminding Quality and Support Officer will visit more frequently to monitor and support their progress in raising standards and improving outcomes for children.

### **Monitoring:**

Monitoring will be through visits and engagement with the Early Years Standards Team. Settings which continue to be graded RI or I by Ofsted will continue to be offered intensive support and further monitoring through the settings causing concern termly meetings.

Settings will be offered visits to:

- Monitor practice
- Ensure standards are raised

- AT meetings to focus interventions
- Identity training needs
- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning within the setting or home learning
- Ensure positive parent partnerships are in place
- Implement EYFS and safeguarding requirements
- Review the learning environments
- Ensure recommendations or actions raised in the last Ofsted inspection have been fully implemented
- Provide childminders with SENDCO support and to make relevant referrals

Other ways settings are being supported:

- 1-1 meetings
- Inset training bespoke to the settings needs
- The Early Years Standards Team Central training programme
- Interventions and projects
- Dissemination of national and local guidelines and ensure they are understood and implemented
- Reviewing policies and procedures
- Network meetings
- Early Years Standards Conferences for PVI's and Schools
- Ofsted preparation visits
- Bespoke Ofsted training sessions
- Liaise with Area SENDCo team to ensure a 'joined up approach'
- Support with Healthy Early Years London and cross agency quality assurance (HEYL)

### **Settings Causing Concern:**

Settings are causing concern if:

- they are graded by Ofsted as Requires Improvement or Inadequate.
- the Standards Team have concerns with the leadership and management of the setting
- there is a poor learning environment
- there is a poor quality of teaching
- there are safeguarding concerns and the children's safety is compromised
- there is a failure to meet the EYFS requirements
- children's development needs are not being supported

Half termly, the Early Years team in Barnet, including Standards Lead, Pre-school Inclusion Team Lead, Registration Officer, Service Manager and Strategy and Sufficiency Officer, meet to discuss any settings which are causing concern. This information is cascaded to the relevant teams to effect change.

The Standards Team meet to discuss settings which are causing them concern. The information and data are consolidated to inform action and recommendations to support the settings to drive improvement.

Typical actions might include:

- focussed frequent visits
- networking settings and schools to view good practice and offer a system of mutual support
- bespoke training to enhance practitioner knowledge and improve practice
- close monitoring and contact with the setting maintained over time
- joined up working with SENDCo and the inclusion team
- partnership working with Ofsted, MASH, LADO and the police if a there is safeguarding concern

Settings remain on the 'Settings causing concern' list until the practice improves or grade changes.

There are half termly updates given about the quality of settings to the Schools Review Group (SRG) and four times a year to the School and Settings Standards Partnership Board (SSSPB).

### **Early Years within Schools:**

There are 90 maintained schools and 4 special schools, with EYFS provision in Barnet. These schools receive monitoring, support and challenge for all key stages through the LNI team and BSIPs. Bespoke early years support and challenge is provided by the Standards Team (0.4 Strategic Lead for Early Years in Schools and an additional 0.5 advisory teacher support is shared between schools and PVI's). Liaison between the Early Years Standards Lead and the Strategic Lead for schools is close and effective to ensure continuity for the children in Barnet. This is further complemented by training and consultancy which schools opt for through BPSI. There is a comprehensive training programme and bespoke consultancy available through an annual buy in package or pay as you go model. Schools can also access the traded EY Standards training through BPSI.

Independent school providers of EYFS receive monitoring, support and challenge through the Standards Team although several buy into the BPSI service as well.

Forensic work on data has been commissioned through the School Improvement Leads which will result in action plans being created and will inform the work of future projects and training.

### **Visits:**

The usual programme of visits to schools, continues through School Effectiveness Visits (SEV), led by LNI's which reflect the need to monitor quality of provision, curriculum adaptations, outcomes and keep up programmes for all children learning within the EYFS in schools and those children who did not achieve GLD and are currently in Year One. Any concerns raised through these visits are filtered through the Strategic Lead for Schools who, in collaboration with the EY Advisory Teacher, follows up either with visits, phone calls, Teams meetings and offers of training or signposting for additional support. There is not sufficient capacity for universal support visits specifically from the Standards Team, for all EY in schools and so this LNI referral system has to be relied upon to broker appropriate support.

Schools Causing Concern have additional priority and most frequently receive support through EYFS BPSI. In exceptional cases the support is funded through the standards team for free. This is limited by the team's allocated standards capacity in schools.

Further EY Standards visits are arranged in response to informal intelligence which includes data outcomes, Ofsted outcomes, requests from headteachers and attendance at courses. BPSI hours fund the majority of these visits at a cost to the schools themselves.

### **Monitoring:**

SRG is the primary opportunity for information gathering around monitoring as all education services come together. LNI weekly meetings provide further pathways to identify the need for further support for EYFS in schools. All Schools Causing Concern are considered for EY support, and this is delivered through the EY Standards Team and BPSI. This is the second data set post the pandemic which adds to the monitoring process, whilst not being used as an accountability measure.

Relationships with schools are very positive and many headteachers and Early Years Leaders come to the team to ask for support as needed.

School reviews provide detailed insight into EYFS provision, and the Strategic Lead often forms part of the team to deliver these.

### **Training and Support:**

Most training for Early Years in Schools is provided by a very comprehensive BPSI offer which is traded. These courses are well attended, although we are aware that with school's limited budgets, cover costs for releasing staff may reduce attendance going forward. Bespoke training in school settings is also provided through BPSI and can be both virtual and face to face.

All schools are also invited to the universal Early Years Standards training, without cost, for example, for changes to the EYFS and preparing for the profile.



EYFS Leadership Network Meetings for Schools are now free to all schools and are well attended. These meetings, along with regular Early Years updates to leaders through email, provide universal support to all schools with Early Years provision. Targeted support through training and school visits, are effectively delivered through longitudinal projects which have previously shown good impact, as well as being efficient in terms of access to training and support. This year's project will involve up to 15 schools and will be launched in late November.

## 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)

#### 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

### 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*

**SCHOOLS  
CAUSING  
CONCERN**