

POLICY COMMISSION BLUE PAPER

DRAFT

RESPONSIBLE BODY	
Policy Commission for Children and School Results	
PROJECT NAME	REFERENCE NUMBER
School Improvement Strategy	SC01/05
1 PURPOSE OF ENQUIRY AND PROPOSED OUTCOME	
<p>1.1 To examine the issues surrounding school improvement and the raising of educational standards. To provide a strategy of accountability and support which will sharpen the skills and understanding of how school improvement works, from those working external to the school, such as inspectors and advisers, to those working inside the school, such as headteachers, teachers, and governors.</p>	
2 RECOMMENDATIONS	
<p>2.1 The Cabinet Member for Children be recommended that in order to ensure that the Local Authority is meeting its statutory duties and to raise standards in education that the School Improvement Strategy and the Procedures and Protocols for monitoring, support, challenge and intervention be adopted for implementation.</p>	
<p>This body of work and the above recommendations were agreed and accepted by the Members of the Policy Commission for Children and School Results.</p>	
<p>Cllr Melanie Swan <i>Commissioner</i></p>	
3 BACKGROUND TO PROJECT	
THE NATIONAL CONTEXT:	
<p>3.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to raise standards in schools. Where performance is inadequate or the school is a cause for concern the Local Authority should have in place robust protocols for challenge and intervention.</p>	
<p>3.2 The Local Authority protocols must be clear in the actions to be taken at all stages of intervention and meet the requirements of the OFSTED/DfES guidance on schools causing concern of November 2005.</p>	
<p>3.3 Schools designated as causing concern must have returned to at least a satisfactory level of performance within two years. Their progress must be regularly reported to</p>	

THE LOCAL CONTEXT:

DRAFT

- 3.4 Raising educational standards is the first priority of the Island's Children and Young People's Plan. Each priority of the Plan is underpinned by key strategies of which the School Improvement Strategy is one.
- 3.5 The Annual Performance assessment (APA) of 2005 identified the 'Enjoy and Achieve' outcome as the one, out of the 5 outcomes for children and young people, which needs the most urgent and substantial attention. The recent Joint Area review (JAR) is likely to further endorse the APA outcome.
- 3.6 The issues surrounding school improvement are partly cultural and partly technical. It would be fair to say that many of those working in, with and for our schools have been focused on the success of the school as an institution, rather than focusing more directly on the short, medium and longer term progress of each and every pupil. This lack of accountability for progress has been too often accompanied by a lack of follow-through in performance, from start to finish, and from strategy to assessed delivery. This has been further compounded by a culture of relationships, which have emphasised support over challenge; with the result that underperformance has not been noticed and rectified quickly enough.
- 3.7 The technical issues follow on. There is a need to sharpen skills and understanding around how school improvement works, from those working external to the school, such as inspectors and advisers, to those working inside the school, such as headteachers, teachers, and governors. The particular issues which have been identified form the main strands of the strategy:
- Monitoring, support, challenge and intervention
 - School self-evaluation
 - The use of data
 - Assessment for learning and the quality of teaching
 - Leadership and management
 - The quality of governance
 - The quality of local authority support and challenge
- 3.8 The Local Procedures and Protocols for monitoring, support, challenge and intervention start from the same core principles as the school improvement strategy, as they need to address the same cultural issues. They meet the statutory requirements placed on the Local Authority and comply with the OFSTED/DfES guidance of 2005. Beyond this, the Procedures and Protocols seek to clarify exactly what each different person involved is responsible for; and to clarify the entitlements of schools when they find themselves in one of the four different categories of need.
- 3.9 Agreement of the School Improvement Strategy and the Procedures and Protocols for monitoring, support, challenge and intervention will clarify the rules of engagement with schools and provide a public accountability, which ensures that underperformance never passes unnoticed and unchallenged and that good performance is always noticed and built upon. This will consolidate the developing robustness of the challenge to school underperformance and see significant improvements in standards.

4 CONSULTATION EVIDENCE

DRAFT

4.1 The Commission has consulted and taken evidence from a wide range of stakeholders in respect of this enquiry. In particular the following meetings of the Commission have been used to gather evidence.

- July 6 2005 - Scoping of the enquiry. Examination of the relationship between schools and the Local Authority, roles and responsibilities. Evidence from the Standards not Tiers parent group.
- August 3 2005 - Evidence gathered on the current procedures for school categorisation and the relationship of school improvement to the EDP. View taken by the Commission on the use of school partnerships and federation to improve standards.
- September 7 2005 - Evidence gathered from governors as key stakeholders.
- October 5 2005 - Impact of Extended Schools initiative on the overall improvement of schools and standards.
- November 2 2005 - report of school performance in the summer 2005 national tests and GCSE and Post 16 examinations.
- December 7 2005 - Evidence gathered from Headteachers and the Isle of Wight Teachers Council as key stakeholders.
- Results of consultation and draft recommendations reported to the Policy Commission for Children and School Results on June 7 2006 leading to the commissioning of this Blue Paper.

4.2 In addition the Commission have gathered further evidence by school visits, visits to other Local Authorities and through consultation with young people at events such as Wight 2B Heard

5 ISSUES IDENTIFIED

5.1 FINANCIAL:

5.1.1 The costs of implementing the School Improvement Strategy and the associated Protocols and Procedures are included in the current budget. In addition significant contributions of staff time are being received from the National Primary and Secondary Strategies.

5.1.2 However, when in 2007 the new DfES School Improvement Partner (SIP) scheme is fully implemented on the Island, there will be an additional £70,000 cost to the local budget. These costs will need to be factored into future Children's Services budgets and any other additional costs that might follow the implementation of the Joint Area Review Action Plan.

5.2 STRATEGIC:

5.2.1 The Children and Young People's Plan is a statutory plan. The School Improvement Strategy and the Procedures and Protocols for monitoring, support, challenge and intervention are key elements in this plan.

5.3 OPERATIONAL:

5.3.1 The raising of educational standards is a key priority for the Council.

5.4 LEGAL:

5.4.1 Local Authorities also have a statutory duty to raise standards in schools. The School Improvement Strategy is the mechanism by which this is achieved.

DRAFT

6 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

6.1 Option A

The Commission endorses the School Improvement Strategy and the Procedures and Protocols for monitoring, support, challenge and intervention.

6.2 Option B

The Commission requires further investigation and/or work on the School Improvement Strategy and the Procedures and Protocols for monitoring, support, challenge and intervention.

7 CUSTOMER IMPACT (VALUE FOR MONEY)

7.1 Improvement in the educational standards achieved by schools and the Council will provide a higher value for money outcome for the spend on education. Improvement in the achievement of children and young people offers them more life choices and the opportunity to achieve economic well-being and make a positive contribution to their community and society.

8 Financial / Reputational Risk Assessment by (Keith Simmonds - Head of Learning Effectiveness)

Nature of Risk	Option A	Option B	Option C	Possible controls
Failure to improve school outcomes	2			Better performance management of school improvement strategy
Failure to improve school outcomes		8		Control measure is implementation of new school improvement strategy

Risk score methodology:

Impact
1 – Low, under £250,000
2 – Medium, under £500,000
3 – High, under £1m
4 – Catastrophic, over £1m

X

Likelihood
1 – Very unlikely
2 – Possible
3 – Probable
4 – Very likely

=

Risk

9 Operational Risk Assessment by (Keith Simmonds - Head of Learning Effectiveness)

DRAFT

Nature of Risk	Option A	Option B	Option C	Possible controls
Failure to improve school outcomes	2			Better performance management of school improvement strategy
Failure to improve school outcomes		8		Control measure is implementation of new school improvement strategy

Risk score methodology:

Impact	X	Likelihood	=	Risk
1 – Low		1 – Very unlikely		
2 – Medium		2 – Possible		
3 – High		3 – Probable		
4 – Problematic		4 – Very likely		

10 EVIDENCE / BACKGROUND PAPERS / ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- OFSTED/DFES Guidance on schools causing concern - November 2005
- Draft School improvement Strategy and Procedures and Protocols for the Isle of Wight Council
- Isle of Wight Council Children's and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP)
- The Annual performance Assessment 2005

Consultation:

Meetings:

- Meetings as described in 4.1 above. Further Officer consultation has been held with Headteachers as key stakeholders.

Responses by Correspondence:

- N/A

Prepared by: Cllr Melanie Swan and Mr Keith Simmonds – Head of Learning Effectiveness

Date: