

WORKING DRAFT



**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
STRATEGY**

May 2006

“improving outcomes for children and young people”

Isle of Wight School Improvement Strategy –

Why do we need a school improvement strategy ?

Standards in the Island's schools are too low at key stages 2,3 and 4. Eight years ago, standards at 16+ were in line with the national average (45% achieving 5 higher grade GCSE passes). They have remained at 45% while the national average has climbed to 55%. Performance at KS1 and other data demonstrates that Island young people should be at the national average or higher at all key stages and that this is the minimum expectation of the LA.

Moreover, more than a quarter (27%) of the Island's schools are currently giving cause for concern in relation to the quality of education they provide.

We cannot continue to fail our young people in this way.

The principles on which the strategy is based:

- Learning is our business; progress is our product.
- All pupils should be encouraged to aim for the highest standards of achievement – there will be no excuse for low aspirations.
- School self-evaluation lies at the heart of school improvement.
- Every link in the delivery chain must be secure - from the Council's ambition to strategic aims to standards achieved.
- All schools must take full responsibility for the standards their pupils achieve.
- All schools must take ownership of the standards achieved in shared key stages.
- Schools need each other – we should work together as a whole-Island collegium.
- Successful practice should be celebrated and shared.
- Those who work at the centre of the local authority will work in partnership with those in the schools.
- The local authority must intervene when pupils' progress is at risk.
- Intervention should be in inverse proportion to success.
- External support for schools will be well co-ordinated.
- Procedures and expectations need to be explicit; and communication transparent.
- The local authority must challenge as well as support.

What we intend to do improve schools and raise standards:

1. Monitoring, support, challenge and intervention

Every school's performance will be closely and regularly monitored by its school improvement partner.

If a school is underperforming, it can expect to be challenged.

All schools should have plans for improvement; those schools which are underperforming will have agreed action plans with the local authority.

The local authority will co-ordinate support for schools in inverse proportion to their success.

Where a school continues to underperform and fails to respond to challenge; the local authority will intervene.

2. School self-evaluation

The school improvement team will make sure that:

- all schools have and maintain an up-to-date self-evaluation form (SEF).
- the self-evaluation is based on secure evidence and robust analysis; where pupil progress is evaluated in relation to previous learning and benchmarked to show value added.
- judgements about the school's effectiveness are rigorously based in the standards achieved and the rate of progress of all pupils.
- judgements about the quality of teaching are firmly based on the quality of learning and the progress achieved by pupils.
- judgements about the quality of leadership and management are firmly based on the quality of education provided – the quality of teaching, curriculum and assessment and the standards achieved.
- schools are held to account across the 5 outcomes to and for every child or young person on the school roll – inclusion is a moral imperative.

3. The use of data to monitor and manage progress and the achievement of the 5 outcomes

The school improvement team will make sure that:

- all schools learn how to use data intelligently to monitor and manage progress;
- targets for individual pupils, for classes, cohorts and key stages, are based on careful analysis of prior attainment and potential, with appropriate, benchmarked, expectations and aspirations;
- where pupils make less progress than expected, intervention is early and targeted diagnostically to need;
- schools share information effectively with partners to ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported.

4. Assessment for learning and the quality of teaching

The school improvement team will work in partnership with school leaders to make sure that:

- teachers know what their pupils have already learned and have clear objectives about what their pupils will learn next;
- teachers know how their pupils learn best and provide the right learning experiences to maximise their pupils' progress;
- teachers track their pupils' progress and provide them with challenging and engaging learning programmes;
- teachers know the progression pathways within their subject matter;
- teachers involve their pupils in understanding their learning and their learning targets;
- teachers plan carefully and organise their lessons well.

5. Leadership and management

The school improvement team will make sure that:

- school leaders meet their responsibilities for the standards the pupils achieve and the progress they make;
- Year 4 and Year 8 optional SATs are carried out in all relevant schools;
- school leaders challenge pupils, parents and teachers to raise their aspirations and expectations.
- school leaders manage every link in the delivery chain that leads from the intended curriculum through good teaching to successful learning; .
- school leaders know how to manage performance and ensure their school does well by each and every pupil on its roll;
- school leaders challenge and where necessary intervene to eradicate underperformance.

6. The quality of governance

The local authority's school improvement team will make sure that:

- Governors set clear strategy to raise standards;
- Governors know how to hold the headteacher and staff to account for the standards achieved.

7. The quality of local authority support and challenge

The local authority's school improvement team will:

- build its skills and confidence to support schools in their improvement and to challenge underperformance wherever and whenever it occurs;
- celebrate and share good practice;
- effectively intervene, including the use of external partners, where underperformance persists.

Resources and mechanisms:

The school improvement team comprises link inspectors, school improvement partners, national strategy colleagues, advisory teachers, advanced skills teachers, and leading practitioners. The team will always seek to work in partnership with headteachers and school leaders, including governors, supported by colleagues across IOW Children's Services.

The school improvement team itself will draw heavily on external partners to assist its members in the building of their skills and knowledge.

The key mechanisms for improvement are:

- challenge and support from the education and children's services training programmes;
- challenge and support during the programme of school visits carried out by link inspectors and school improvement partners;

- the recruitment of key change agents from other authorities;
- the complementary strands of development in the IOW Children and Young People's Plan, particularly to galvanise parental support and ambition for their children's achievement and aspiration.

Action Plans / Programmes for Development

Work is in hand to identify a lead officer for each strand of this School Improvement Strategy and to establish clear action plans / programmes of development activity.