

# Hillingdon

## **Education Improvement and Partnerships Strategy 2022-23**

***Our partnership for success***

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Vision

Our **vision** is for every child in the borough to develop the skills to be successful, fulfilled, and happy adults, playing a positive, active role as citizens in the United Kingdom. We want to support the creation of inspirational and outstanding educational settings that help children prepare for their future in a constantly changing century by developing the knowledge and skills they will need.

The central aim of this strategy is to ensure that all children, no matter where they live in the borough, access schools and settings that are judged to be at least good and which are constantly aspiring to improve to become, and remain, outstanding.

The local authority is highly focused on all its schools and partners at all levels working together, using the Council as a central point and resource for improvement and support.

The **principles** that underpin our vision for Education Improvement are:

- That Education Improvement systems are most effective when they are based on trust, partnership and collaboration.
- That local solutions supported by national best practice are often best placed to drive improvement.
- That challenge and support mechanisms across the borough should be transparent, clearly understood by all and open to interrogation to ensure the greatest impact on outcomes and opportunities for our young people.

We hope our Educational Improvement Partnership will stimulate:

- the expansion of high-quality collaboration
- the rationalisation of partnership activity where appropriate
- the devolution of responsibilities and resources from the local authority to groups of schools and other partners

The purpose of this strategy is to clearly articulate the shared vision of the wider Hillingdon Education Improvement and Partnership. It is intended to be schools-led, working in partnership with the Council, the office of the Regional Schools' Commissioner and Ofsted, who rely on the Council to share local intelligence.

## 1.2. Vision into Partnership Action

Our Hillingdon LEAP is committed to fulfilling all statutory duties around Education Improvement and to developing a strong and effective school-led model of improvement.

It is the partnership's intention that, by working collaboratively, a wide range of school leaders and partners, through the early identification of concerns, can facilitate any support necessary to ensure the resolution of difficulties. We know that schools have the skills, expertise, and ability to meet many of their own challenges and we will work in partnership with them to maximise their potential to develop and improve.

We believe that, within the dynamic and diverse national landscape, our local education area partnerships must work flexibly and openly to drive and maintain improvement. We are committed to shaping and supporting the school-led improvement offer through strong links and formal partnerships with a range of key improvement and development partners. Our partnership includes Teaching Schools and other successful local providers, executive committees, and outstanding school leaders. We will also work more widely by drawing, where appropriate, on the skills of the Higher Education sector, the office of the Regional Schools' Commissioner and Ofsted.

We will utilise a range of existing networks to consult regularly with school leaders across the borough and will respond to feedback by communicating regularly with leaders and strategic partners.

Our SSPB (**Schools' Strategic Partnership Board**) will act as the central leadership forum for Education Improvement by developing, promoting, scrutinising and quality assuring our shared Education Improvement and Partnerships strategy. This key leadership group is strategically aligned with a range of partners to best represent the needs and vision of school leaders and professionals across the borough and to secure shared accountability for outcomes for children in Hillingdon. The SSPB will act as the champion of the borough-wide Education Improvement and Partnerships strategy, providing direction, challenge and innovative practice into our Education Improvement offer because of members' links with the best local and national expertise.

Within our partnerships there will be agreed protocols to cover the 'rules' of our Education Improvement Partnerships that take on functions devolved by the authority, and how groups will be collectively accountable for delivering services and meeting defined targets.

These agreements will specify:

- The expected inputs, outcomes, monitoring and evaluation processes, as well as procedures which could be taken to rectify any problems.

- The resources and time available.
- The internal lines of accountability as partnership members must have clarity among themselves on leadership, management, and governance.
- The external lines of accountability, so where groups take on responsibility for the delivery of a named function and agree the delivery of the Education Improvement Partnership there is accountability.
- What action will be taken if individual members fail to contribute as envisaged by the Education Improvement Partnership.
- How performance will be managed, e.g., benchmarking against other partnerships through self-evaluation and peer review.
- How to minimise bureaucracy to ensure that the benefits from working in this way outweigh the costs and challenges.

### 1.3. Our Intent

The over-arching intention of our strategy is to ensure that, by August 2023, standards of progress and attainment across the borough:

- Aim high so that all schools in the borough are judged good or better.
- Compare favourably and are strong against those of our statistical/borough neighbours.
- Match and exceed rates of improvement in line with London and other national data so that Hillingdon children can be sure of outcomes that are as strong as those for young people across London and nationally.
- Are at least in line with national medians for key progress and attainment measures.
- Demonstrate that we are closing the gap rapidly for young people from our most vulnerable groups (including those who are disadvantaged, and children with special educational needs and those most at risk of none-attendance, school and social exclusion).

As a partner, Hillingdon Council will undertake its duties regarding promoting the highest standards of education for young people in Hillingdon by:

- Retaining an accurate and up-to-date overview and data base of the performance and effectiveness of all schools across the borough and sharing this regularly with stakeholders to ensure accurate and effective scrutiny of Hillingdon's school provision against London and national averages.
- Collaborating with partners to tackle key barriers to Education Improvement at borough, phase/setting and individual school/provision level.
- Encouraging Headteachers and school leadership teams to set and achieve aspirational targets for all.
- Identifying and challenging underperformance at the earliest stages.
- Signposting and, where necessary, brokering appropriate support in a timely and effective manner.
- Intervening without delay where schools require rapid improvement.
- Quickly identifying and assisting vulnerable and disadvantaged young people so that they may sustain their engagement in education, employment, and training.
- Securing sufficient high quality early years provision, in support of children's development and readiness for school.

### 1.4. Six Strands for Success Model

The shape of our strategy is captured in our ‘Six Strands for Success’, which we are committed to integrating and securing across the borough to ensure robust whole system improvement.



Figure 1 - Six Strands for Success Model

#### Strand 1: Securing Outstanding Leadership & Governance

This strand is fundamental to the success of Education Improvement in Hillingdon. Strong, effective and skilled leadership provides the foundation for high quality education, better life chances for young people and improved outcomes for all stakeholders. Leadership thrives in communities, which promote aspiration and ambition and allow for autonomy and creativity. Hillingdon LEAP is committed to supporting the development of exceptional leadership at all levels and in a variety of ways:

- By linking established and effective leaders with emerging and aspiring leaders to share practice and strengthen leadership outcomes across the borough.

- By developing and supporting an Executive Headteacher pool to provide interim leadership capacity for schools facing challenge and to facilitate opportunities for Deputy Headteachers to undertake headship within their own schools.
- By working closely with governing bodies and providers to identify, develop and place consistently excellent governance solutions in all schools.
- By engaging with school leaders transparently and strategically through connections with the SSPB, Schools' Forum and other executive committees.
- By working with local Education Improvement partners within the Teaching Schools, NLE (National Leaders in Education) / LLE (Local Leaders in Education), Hillingdon Learning Partnership, clusters and elsewhere to ensure that any skills-gap in leadership is filled quickly and effectively.
- By bringing leaders together to explore Education Improvement and leadership and to learn from the latest and most effective educational research, best practice in this field locally, nationally and through Hillingdon Council's links with Ofsted and other organisations.
- By providing access to external School Review and Moderation mechanisms and data analysis solutions, designed to ensure that school leaders have the information that they need to self-evaluate and target improvement activities accurately.
- By increasing and maintaining a high proportion of schools that are judged as Outstanding by Ofsted with a strong leadership capacity that provides peer support to Hillingdon education community.

## **Strand 2: Borough Overview**

The purpose of this strand is to ensure that the borough retains an accurate and holistic overview of school effectiveness and performance at all times. The overview should be inclusive and will encompass all maintained and academy/free school data and intelligence, alongside qualitative evaluations from the widest range of professional partners. The overview, in the form of our Education Improvement Overview Database, includes data from the DfE (Department for Education) performance tables, Ofsted data dashboards, and other data sources. This is fundamental to ensuring that we know our context in detail, in real time and over time.

At whole borough level, themes (including areas of expertise, best practice and the most positive outcomes as well as areas of concern or challenge for our schools) will be identified via this database. Themes will be shared through our links with our strategic partners and the SSPB to shape borough-wide improvement activities, interventions and scrutiny. The Education



Improvement function within Hillingdon Council will also use information and data from the database or other areas to inform Risk Assessment activities at the beginning of each term and, in some cases, to trigger consideration of placement on the borough Schools At Risk Register. *(Please see Strand 6: Schools at Risk & Interventions for more detail).*

### **Strand 3: Communication & Navigation**

The purpose of this strand is to provide a clear and consistent channel for communication and sign posting that is accessible to all schools. Alongside the cultivation of open, positive and trusting relationships with individual schools through regular contact between the Education Improvement and Partnerships service and school leaders throughout the borough, an additional range of mechanisms will be used to provide timely updates on important local and national priorities, opportunities and concerns.

The School Leaders' Weekly Briefing will provide operational and strategic Education Improvement headlines and highlight local opportunities for improvement.

The continued development of the LEAP portal will complement this process, providing a crucial central point of access, available to all schools, for a variety of school developmental initiatives and opportunities. LEAP will be the glue of Hillingdon education partnership.

LEAP conferences running alongside a wide range of other borough-wide improvement initiatives (please see Strand 4: LEAP Improvement Initiatives) will provide a broad menu of choice for school leaders who have identified their priorities for improvement and would like to work with partners to effect positive change.

In this way, we will ensure that no school or leader feels isolated or unsupported in the journey to outstanding and that all schools across the borough are able to access the support that they need, in the way that feels right for them and at the time that it is needed.

### **Strand 4: Hillingdon Learning Partnership (HLP) & LEAP Improvement Initiatives**

Hillingdon Learning Partnership is a collaboration between schools and the local authority to offer professional development opportunities to schools across all phases of education. A key intention of the HLP is to support schools to build on existing practice through collaboration and sharing expertise. 2022-23 will be the first year of the HLP and more than 40 schools have signed up to it. The HLP offer will be expanded in future years after consultation with headteachers about their development needs.

In addition, through LEAP the local authority will facilitate improvement initiatives, based around key themes of educational development, challenge and concern in the borough or in support of a particular need of a cluster of schools. The themes will arise from our analysis of the Education Improvement Overview Database and the views of our schools and will be agreed by SSPB.

Our Education Improvement initiatives will allow all schools and settings that educate Hillingdon children and young people to participate in collaborative development work. The improvement initiatives, facilitated by school leaders and other appropriate professional colleagues, will provide the opportunity for schools to collaborate beyond traditional partnership/setting/phase structures and to examine, develop and share best practice in their focus field. The impact of the improvement initiatives will be measured using our Education Improvement Overview Database and the views of our schools and will be quality assured and reported on by the SSPB.

In many cases, the partnership improvement initiatives will allow for the further development of school-to-school support models, such as primary hubs, where specific areas of focus are identified as critical to the success of a school wishing to improve further and/or one at risk of underperformance.

### **Strand 5: School Support, Reviews & Self Evaluation**

In our borough schools are self-managing and autonomous and are, therefore, primarily responsible for their own performance and improvement. Every school is expected to make an accurate self-evaluation of its performance and provision and take clear and decisive action to improve any weaknesses this identifies. We recognise that effective self-evaluation is the most important process of Education Improvement, enabling continued autonomy, self-management and excellence.

However, as part of the core responsibility to secure high standards for the young people of Hillingdon, our Education Improvement and Partnerships strategy recognises the value that many school leaders place on the external validation of baseline - particularly for schools facing challenge, those undergoing changes of leadership and/or governance and those tackling underperformance or underachievement.

For that reason, Hillingdon Council will facilitate the provision of school reviews and data analysis to inform individual school self-evaluation and risk assessment. All schools will be categorised as either a priority 1, priority 2 or priority 3 school. The Local Authority will work with schools to develop peer support cluster collaboration groups as a universal support offer to all schools and settings, which will better address the localised challenges.

The Education Improvement Advisor (EA) is at the heart of the local authority's support for school improvement for maintained schools. EAs provide strategic challenge, development, and support for leaders in a partnership between the Local Authority and schools/ settings. This will include but not limited to:

- Providing critical, professional challenge to schools, identifying priorities for improvement in the context of the curriculum and supporting the planning of effective change
- Helping build a school's capacity to improve pupils' outcomes, curriculum, pedagogy, and strategic leadership
- Provide school leaders with challenge and support, in identified areas and in proportion to individual need
- Ensuring that there is scrutiny of the provision and outcomes for those pupils that are Children in Care, Pupil Premium, from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and SEND

EAs will undertake an annual visit to all maintained schools. The purpose of this visit is to identify strengths within the school system, identify any schools that may require additional support and provide additional support and challenge to priority 1 or 2 schools.

The visit will involve an evaluation of the quality of leadership, curriculum and pedagogy, high level data, and some analysis of relevant documentation such as the Self Evaluation (SEF) and School Improvement Plan (SIP).

## **Strand 6: Schools at Risk & Interventions**

The Local Authority believes that schools should control their own destiny in the interests of the children and young people of Hillingdon. However, the local authority recognises that not all schools have the capacity to determine their improvement at times and may need additional support and challenge to secure the quality of provision.

An area of the responsibility shared between the Strategic Lead for School Improvement and the EA is to agree the support level for the school with the Head teacher and Chair of Governors.

The purpose of assigning support levels is to ensure that the resources available to the local authority can be targeted appropriately to the schools which need the most support so that they can meet the required standards at all levels and be free from intervention.

**It is not a judgement on a school but a mechanism for which improvement and/or support can be secured, and areas of vulnerability addressed.**

The EA will work with schools in line with the following principles:

- **respect for the school's autonomy** to plan its development, starting from the school's self-evaluation and the needs of the community, especially the pupils.
- **evidence-based** assessment of the school's performance and its strategies for improving the quality of the curriculum and pedagogical approach.
- strict adherence to **confidentiality** within the context of the Freedom of Information Act and the Code of Practice for working with schools.

The Education Improvement Partnerships team will maintain a record of the accurate and up to date agreed support level for each school and will formally amend these on a termly basis where the support level has changed.

### **Levels of support**

Where a school is identified as requiring additional support, it will be identified as a Priority 1 or Priority 2 school in partnership with the headteacher, Chair of Governors, EA and School Improvement Lead. All other schools will be identified as Priority 3 entitled to universal support.

### **Prioritisation**

The local authority recognises that there are many reasons which might make a school become a priority at times and the anticipated level of risk would necessitate a change in the assigned support level. This would need to be completed in partnership with the school, EA and School Improvement Lead.

- The agreed support level can be changed at any time throughout the school year and will remain fluid and responsive to the needs of individual schools.
- School leaders may identify risks and approach the LA for additional support.

### **Schools at Risk Register**

Hillingdon Council will retain a register of schools considered to be at risk. These schools will be identified via the statutory guidance [DfE - Schools causing concern \(September 2022\)](#). Schools may also be identified because of significant risk indicators within the borough Education Improvement overview database.

Placement on the Confidential SARR (Schools At Risk Register) should always result in regular contact with a school and through the provision of support and challenge in a variety of forms. All maintained schools on the SARR will be allocated an Education Improvement Adviser for this

purpose. In the case of academies/free schools, Hillingdon Council will take all reasonable steps to indicate placement on the SARR with the Headteacher, the responsible body or the Regional Schools' Commissioner. However, it should be noted that any school judged as 'Requiring Improvement' will automatically be included on the SARR, as will all schools in formal Ofsted categories.

Those schools judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' but at risk (GOBAR) will be identified via the Education Improvement Overview Database and will be contacted to discuss their placement on the SARR. However, this should be seen by schools as the authority's commitment to supporting and developing them further, rather than a negative view.

Further detail regarding support and challenge for Schools At Risk can be found in Appendix A.

In accordance with our commitment to local improvement solutions and effective school-to-school solutions, in most cases, Hillingdon Council will seek to galvanise support for schools facing challenge from within our Teaching Schools, LLE/NLE and Executive Headteacher networks. However, when appropriate school-to-school support is needed particularly rapidly and where capacity within our local and school-led network for Education Improvement is limited, it may be necessary to deploy additional advice and intervention support quickly. Where this occurs, the aim will usually be to agree local school-to-school support as soon as is practicable for all parties.

## **2. Statutory Duties for Hillingdon Council / Regional Schools' Commissioner**

### **2.1. Schools Causing Concern Guidance**

Alongside this strategic focus and within the shared remit of our Six Strands for Success, Hillingdon Council will continue to discharge essential statutory duties with regard to School Improvement which include Hillingdon Council's responsibility to address concerns swiftly when schools fall into DfE categories, as outlined in the DfE Schools Causing Concern guidance and Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).

The content of this guidance (extracted below) informs Hillingdon Council's work with schools identified as causing concern:

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

This important strand of our Education Improvement and Partnerships strategy specifically addresses Hillingdon Council's role in support and challenge for schools causing concern. At the heart of our approach to these duties is our belief that preventative interventions through excellent communication, timely and effective, cluster-based collaboration and school-to-school improvement mechanisms are the preferred approaches to securing improvement.

However, in line with statutory guidance, Hillingdon Council will act swiftly and decisively to take appropriate action if the following areas are at risk:

- Cases where life-chances, opportunities and outcomes for young people are compromised because of insufficient progress, poor leadership and/or governance.
- Concerns about the safety of pupils and/or inequalities in achievement for vulnerable young people.

## 2.2. Legal Powers of Intervention

Our aspiration is for every school in Hillingdon to be at least a 'Good' school and that no schools should be in an Ofsted category of concern. The great majority of schools will be able to identify what is working well and what they need to do to improve, brokering their own support, but for others, some additional support or intervention may be needed. It is necessary and appropriate for Hillingdon Council, as champions of all children in Hillingdon and their parents/carers, to act quickly and provide or broker support where required and, when necessary, to use its powers of intervention to promote improvement should safeguarding, standards, provision and quality of life for children and young people be compromised. There is a legal obligation upon Hillingdon Council to act where there are concerns about the performance of any school in Hillingdon, using our powers of intervention to act early and effectively to secure improvement in maintained schools or to raise concerns with the Regional Schools' Commissioner in the case of academies and free schools.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, together with subsequent legislation, places a duty on local authorities to act decisively in respect of Schools Causing Concern. Hillingdon Council is committed to fulfilling this duty and acting swiftly to eradicate underachievement and drive-up educational standards, so that children and young people are able to learn and achieve irrespective of the school that they attend or the neighbourhood in which they live. Whilst statutory intervention powers for Education Improvement are centred on the schools which the borough maintains, Hillingdon Council firmly recognises its statutory duties regarding **all** young people in the borough and is equally committed to maintaining a regular and effective dialogue with the responsible bodies of all local academies and free schools and, where necessary, the Regional Schools' Commissioner.

Effective schools are characterised by determined leadership and strong governance and have well developed self-improvement procedures. Reflective, evaluative and forward thinking, they take the initiative when building on their strengths and addressing their weaknesses. They form strategic alliances with partners and seek support through collaborative arrangements based on cluster, hubs and networks. Their effectiveness is endorsed by positive inspection outcomes and by the high levels of achievement of the children and young people who attend them. Some schools, however, cause concern because the children and young people they serve have lower achievement than their peers locally and nationally and have been unable to address poor performance effectively or quickly enough. Some schools do not ensure that vulnerable groups perform well enough and that any gaps in performance in relation to peer groups are reduced

through targeted interventions and good teaching. Some of these schools are unable to sustain incremental improvement meaning their performance remains insecure over time.

For these reasons, where schools cause concern, Hillingdon Council will take action to ensure that the school system works for every family using intervention powers where required in those schools who are considered 'eligible for intervention'.

### **2.3. Schools Causing Concern and Schools Eligible for Intervention**

National guidance makes a distinction between schools deemed to 'cause concern' and those that are 'eligible for intervention'. In Hillingdon, Schools Causing Concern will be considered a School At Risk and will be placed on the confidential SARR. When this happens, Hillingdon Council will work in partnership with the school at risk by allocating an Education Improvement Adviser to provide oversight of the journey to improvement and to broker additional and appropriate support as required.

Where a school is an academy or free school setting, Hillingdon Council will also strive to signpost additional support and link leaders together to improve outcomes for children. In these cases, Hillingdon Council may choose to engage with responsible bodies and the Regional Schools' Commissioner to highlight concerns and to prompt action to improve outcomes for the children of Hillingdon who attend the school.

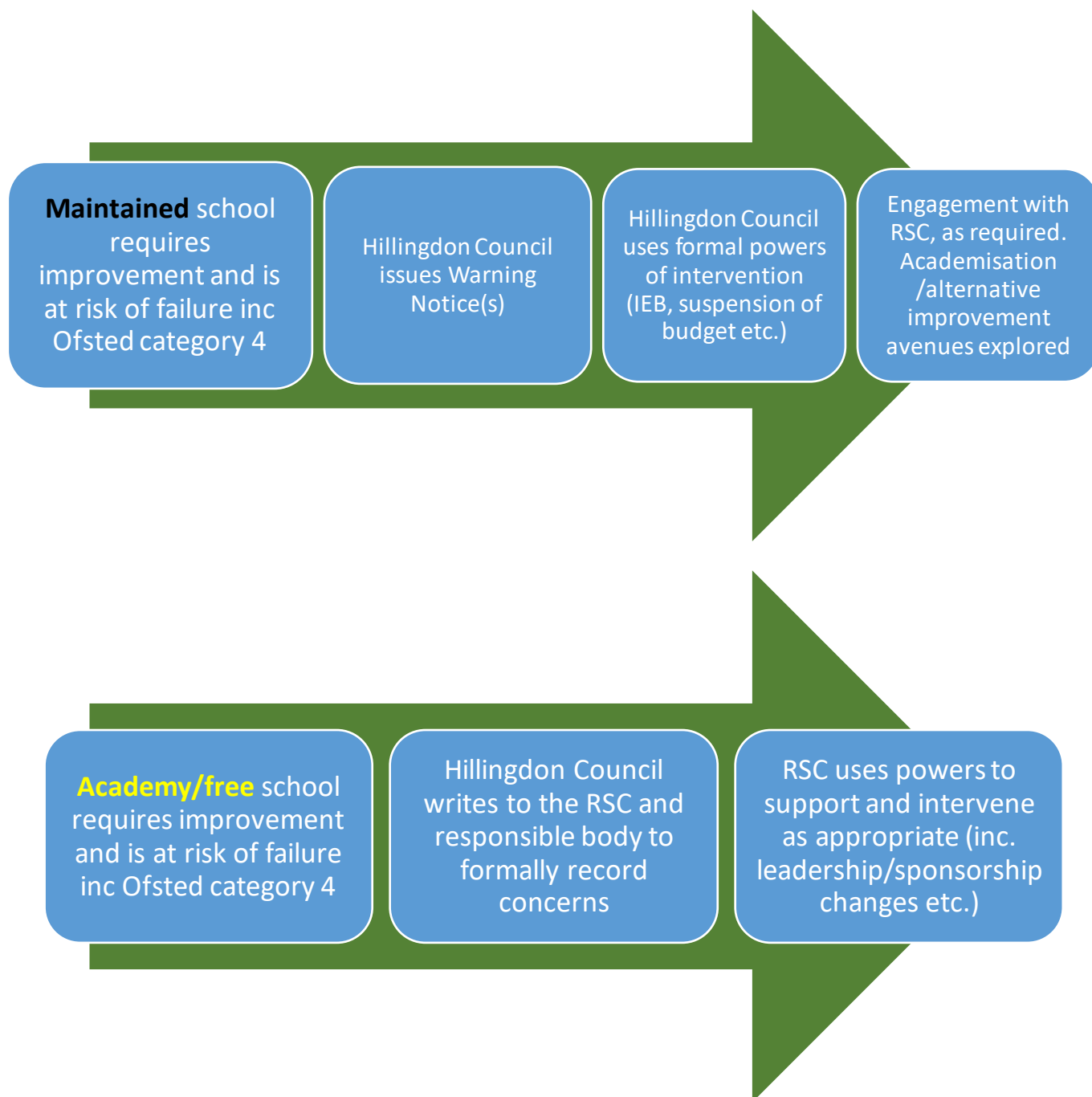
In most cases, early identification of risk, coupled with professional and focused partnership working within the principles outlined within this strategy, will result in swift improvement and Hillingdon Council oversight contact will taper or hand-over to other support partners.

In some cases, however, a school at risk may need additional and formal intervention to highlight to leaders and governors the urgent need to take action to improve educational standards and opportunities. These schools, referred to as 'eligible for intervention' in the national guidance, will receive formal Warning Notices from Hillingdon Council and may also be subject to additional legal intervention as detailed in the guidance [DfE - Schools causing concern \(September 2022\)](#). Any school subject to a Warning Notice in Hillingdon will be expected to produce a coherent and externally validated Leadership & Rapid Improvement Plan and to engage fully with partners within and beyond the borough to effect positive and sustainable change.



## 2.4. Intervention Flow Chart

The processes below will be actioned where (in the opinion of Hillingdon Council and subject to the information that it has received from borough representatives, the school and any other responsible bodies) there remains insufficient evidence of improvement leading to compromised educational opportunity for children and young people in Hillingdon:



## 2.5. Relationships with Different Schools

<p><b>Maintained/Academy/Free school is 'Outstanding'</b></p>	<p><b>Maintained/Academy/Free school is securely 'Good'</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Autonomous and independent, working in partnership</li> <li>▪ Leading and supporting practice and shaping strategy across Hillingdon</li> <li>▪ Strong role in Improvement Initiatives by choice, including those delivered through the Hillingdon Learning Partnership (HLP)</li> <li>▪ Commissioned to provide services to other schools</li> <li>▪ Leading peer review and support in the cluster and LEAP collaboration</li> <li>▪ Part of the cluster and LEAP collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Autonomous and independent, working in partnership</li> <li>▪ Sharing practice and influencing strategy across Hillingdon</li> <li>▪ Engagement in Improvement Initiatives by choice, including those delivered through the Hillingdon Learning Partnership (HLP)</li> <li>▪ Partnerships with 'Outstanding' schools to support journey to outstanding</li> <li>▪ Part of the cluster and LEAP collaboration</li> </ul>
<p><b>Maintained school is 'Good' but at risk</b></p>	<p><b>Maintained school 'Requires Improvement'</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supported to mitigate risk through regular contact with Hillingdon Council Officers</li> <li>▪ Risk assessments, brokerage and sign-posting interventions</li> <li>▪ Taking opportunities to engage with best practice within and beyond Hillingdon</li> <li>▪ Engagement with Improvement Initiatives/clusters</li> <li>▪ Safeguarding training/advice</li> <li>▪ Governance health-checks</li> <li>▪ Part of the cluster and LEAP collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supported and challenged by regular contact with Hillingdon Council Officers</li> <li>▪ Regular involvement to monitor progress and challenge underperformance leading to bespoke Hillingdon Council support models</li> <li>▪ Brokerage of support</li> <li>▪ Liaison with link Ofsted inspector</li> <li>▪ Expectation of engagement in Improvement Initiatives/clusters</li> <li>▪ Partnerships with 'Outstanding' schools to support journey to outstanding</li> <li>▪ Governance support and development</li> <li>▪ Part of the cluster and LEAP collaboration</li> </ul>
<p><b>Academy/Free school is 'Good' but at risk</b></p>	<p><b>Academy/Free school 'Requires Improvement'</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School and/or responsible body/RSC contacted to raise concern on behalf of Hillingdon children and families</li> <li>▪ Opportunities to engage with best practice within and beyond Hillingdon</li> <li>▪ Engagement with Improvement Initiatives/clusters encouraged</li> <li>▪ Safeguarding training/advice</li> <li>▪ Part of the cluster and LEAP collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Formal concerns raised with the RSC during link meetings</li> <li>▪ Improvement journey monitored by Hillingdon Council on behalf of Hillingdon children and families and reported to the RSC</li> <li>▪ Engagement with Improvement Initiatives/clusters recommended</li> <li>▪ Part of the cluster LEAP collaboration</li> </ul>

## **2.6. SSPB Scrutiny, Quality Assurance and Accountability**

The principles of high-quality partnerships and school-led improvement are at the very heart of the Hillingdon Education Improvement and Partnerships Strategy. For this reason, trust, openness, quality assurance, moderation, monitoring and the evaluation of this strategy for the borough lies with the key strategic body, SSPB. Hillingdon Council will consult with Headteachers through the SSPB and the Strategy will be in draft until ratified by them.

Additionally, in line with the statutory responsibilities held by Hillingdon Council, education outcomes and school performance data will be scrutinised regularly by Members and by senior officers, including the Executive Director of Children's Services and Special Educational Needs.

Ultimately, this strategy and SSPB are accountable to the education community and children and young people in Hillingdon for a strong and positive partnership working in the borough in relation to the performance of all the schools and the education outcomes of all children and young people.

## **2.7. LEAP Portal**

The LEAP Portal is an education communications tool for all education providers in Hillingdon. Its primary purpose is to:

- advertise and book courses for maintained and academy schools, targeted to Education Improvement
- share information about the council teams, including team details and contact details
- access and share information, including Hillingdon Council's School Leaders' Weekly Briefing and guidance, along with research school leaders can use to improve outcomes and stay up to date with developments in the education sector

The LEAP Portal will continue to grow in phases and can be accessed through [leap.hillingdon.gov.uk](https://leap.hillingdon.gov.uk).

As we further develop LEAP, we are looking to include a variety of features which will ultimately support leaders across Hillingdon with providing the best outcomes to their children. We are working towards a model whereby LEAP will hold personalised information about schools, dependent on the services they have purchased through the council, and to be the 'one-stop-shop' for all matters related to schools and education improvement.

### 3. Appendix A - Risk Assessment of Maintained and Academy Schools

#### 3.1. Introduction

As part of Hillingdon Council's duty to monitor progress and standards in education and to intervene appropriately where necessary, our Education Improvement function will risk assess and categorise all schools. A register will be retained for schools considered to be at risk. This is shared with the office of the Regional Schools' Commissioner to lead on academy schools.

In some cases, and where Hillingdon Council / the Regional Schools' Commissioner may choose to exercise its right to issue a Warning Notice and intervene formally, the guidance - [DfE - Schools causing concern \(September 2022\)](#) will be used. This includes guidance relating to the issuing of a Warning Notice.

#### 3.2. Abbreviations Key

SARR	Schools At Risk Register
SIOD	Education Improvement Overview Database
HoEIP	Head of Education Improvement and Partnerships
EA	Education Adviser
RI	School Requires Improvement
GOBAR	School Good or Outstanding but at risk
LLE/NLE	Local Leader in Education/National Leader in Education
NoV	Education Improvement Note of Visit

#### 3.3. Risk Assessment and Categorisation

Hillingdon Council recently reviewed the way we categorise and support schools. We offer a 'three-tier' school categorisation and support model to risk assess all schools on a termly basis. Schools with the highest number of risk-indicators will be eligible for the highest level of support and those with the lowest number of risk-indicators will receive the lowest allocation of support. However, a level of support will also be provided to schools in order to help them both maintain and aspire to be outstanding schools. The categorisation of support will be determined through a 'best-fit' approach. The support offered may look different to schools within the same band,

because they may have different needs and will have challenges that are unique.

This risk assessment involves the detailed scrutiny of a range of data and information captured within Hillingdon Council's Education Improvement overview database. This provides performance data alongside other dynamic information, based on local knowledge and contextual factors.

This always includes feedback from recent inspection reports and/or monitoring visits. In addition, the risk assessment will take into consideration feedback from a range of Council school support teams including, but not limited to, Education Improvement officers, governance officers, early intervention and prevention services for vulnerable children including Children Looked After and finance support teams. This soft intelligence will help to capture the most comprehensive picture of a school's areas of strength and challenge.

The allocation of a school to a category is primarily about identifying and prioritising support. As such, some schools where leadership is excellent and teaching is outstanding may still find themselves in a category for support because the challenges they face, such as falling rolls, deficit budgets, ongoing HR issues, present a real risk to the school and leaders will need support to manage these risks.

### **3.4. Identification of Schools At Risk**

In some cases, and particularly when there is a sudden and drastic deterioration associated to the indicators above or when a school has not taken sufficient action to remedy concerns in spite of advice and support, Hillingdon Council / the Regional Schools' Commissioner will use its power to issue Warning Notices. However, in most cases, and in line with Hillingdon Council's view that early intervention is the most appropriate and effective approach to mitigating risk, a School At Risk in Hillingdon will usually be identified through the risk assessment and categorisation activity undertaken by the Education Improvement and Partnerships Service.

The final decision to place a school on the SARR (Schools At Risk Register) in Hillingdon will be made based on one or more of SARR Indicators listed below.

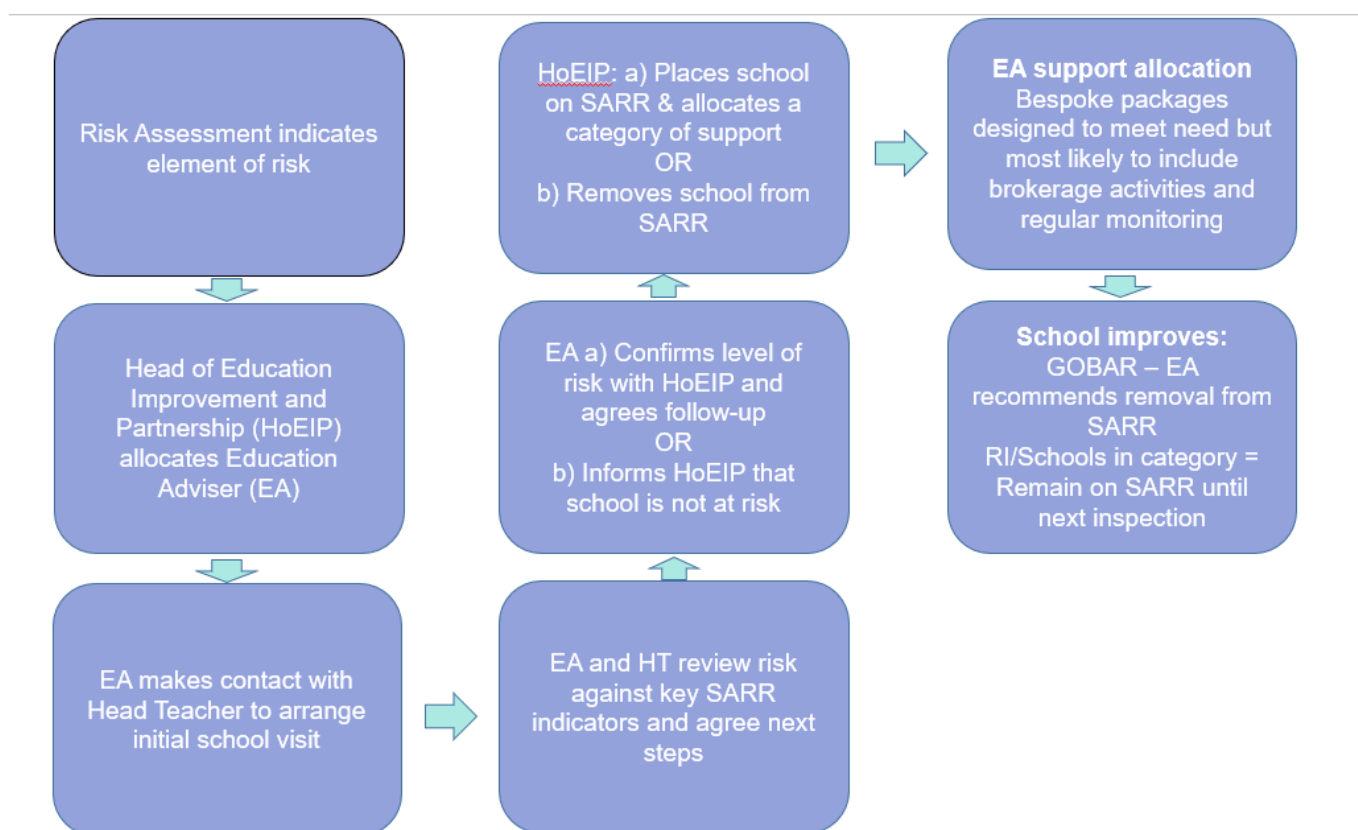
### 3.5. SARR Indicators

Priority	Risk Factors	Support & Challenge
<b>Priority 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The school is not meeting statutory duties.</li> <li>- The school is currently in or at risk of being judged as Inadequate by Ofsted.</li> <li>- The school is at risk of a double Requires Improvement Ofsted judgement.</li> <li>- Significant teacher underperformance.</li> <li>- Weak pupil outcomes.</li> <li>- Lack of appropriate CPD.</li> <li>- Governors not fulfilling core functions.</li> <li>- Safeguarding concerns.</li> <li>- High numbers of Fixed Term Exclusions and / Permanent Exclusions</li> <li>- High rates of Persistently Absent pupils</li> <li>- Other local significant intelligence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intense EA support</li> <li>- EA to co-produce a Rapid Improvement Plan (RIP) of action with school leaders.</li> <li>- Challenge Task Group (CTG) review meeting termly</li> <li>- LA review to monitor and evaluate progress at least 3 times per year.</li> <li>- Additional reviews (e.g., SEND, Safeguarding, Governance) as identified in the RIP</li> <li>- Universal offer: Primary hub, Hillingdon Learning Partnership, LEAP development opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Priority 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The school is currently or at risk of being judged as Requires Improvement by Ofsted.</li> <li>- The school's curriculum intent is weak across several areas.</li> <li>- The school's pedagogical approach is weak.</li> <li>- Assessment is not used effectively to check what CYP know and can do.</li> <li>- The school's approach to teaching phonics and reading is weak.</li> <li>- CPD is not always focused on the right priorities.</li> <li>- Governance is weak.</li> <li>- Significant staff mobility and/or changes to school leaders.</li> <li>- Above average numbers of Fixed Term Exclusions and / Permanent Exclusions</li> <li>- Above average rates of Persistently Absent pupils</li> <li>- First headship and or Acting Headship</li> <li>- Significant change to demographics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Targeted EA support</li> <li>- CTG review meeting termly</li> <li>- EA to support a RIP of action with school leaders.</li> <li>- LA review of progress twice per year</li> <li>- Additional reviews (e.g., SEND, Safeguarding, Governance) as identified in the RIP.</li> <li>- Universal offer: Primary hub, Hillingdon Learning Partnership, LEAP development opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Priority 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The school has a track record of accurate self-evaluation and continuous self-improvement.</li> <li>- Impactful CPD is prioritised for all members of staff.</li> <li>- The curriculum intent is inclusive, strong, and secure and is implemented highly effectively.</li> <li>- Pedagogy and curriculum meet the needs of <b>all</b> CYP.</li> <li>- All groups of CYP learn to read fluently.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual EA visit.</li> <li>- Expectation that schools will actively engage in external reviews e.g., SEND or safeguarding reviews.</li> <li>- Opportunities to share practice across the system.</li> <li>- Universal offer: Primary hub, Hillingdon Learning Partnership, LEAP development opportunities</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessment is used effectively to identify what CYP know and can do.</li> <li>- Governors effectively undertake their core functions.</li> <li>- The school has growing capacity to support other schools within the system.</li> </ul>	
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### 3.6. Identification Process of Schools At Risk

The flowchart below outlines the process that will take place following an Education Improvement Service risk assessment.



**Please note that the allocated EA will review school data prior to the initial school visit and will be able to outline the reasons for SARR placement during this meeting.**

Placement on the SARR will result in regular contact with a school where it is maintained by Hillingdon Council and through the provision of support and challenge in a variety of forms. For maintained schools, support will be based on the category of support allocated to the school and this may include half-termly Challenge & Task Group meetings (with the HoEIP) and annual Support & Scrutiny meetings (with the Director of Education). In the case of academies, Hillingdon Council will contact the CEO/Executive Headteacher and ensure the Regional Schools’

Commissioner is aware and support is allocated to advise the school as required. It should be noted that **any** school judged as 'Requiring Improvement' will automatically be included on the SARR, as will all schools in formal Ofsted categories.

<b>3 Tier School Support Model of Categorisation</b>			
	<b>Priority 3</b>	<b>Priority 2</b>	<b>Priority 1</b>
<b>Education Advisor Support and Challenge Meeting</b>	1 day per year	1 day per half-term	2 days per half term
<b>Challenge Task Group Review</b>	x	Termly	Termly
<b>School to School Cluster Working</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Headteacher Recruitment</b>	LA to shortlist and attend interviews	LA to shortlist and attend interviews	LA to shortlist and attend interviews
<b>Ofsted Complaints</b>	Investigations conducted by EAs	Investigations conducted by EAs	Investigations conducted by EAs
<b>Finance Support</b>	As requested by the school	✓	✓

**For maintained schools categorised as 'Requiring Improvement (RI)**, the EA will work more closely with leaders to ensure that the School Development Plan, associated action plans and the Self-Evaluation Document are appropriately focused and allow the school to provide clear evidence of improvement. The EA may link with other partners to support the school in identifying and actioning activities to improve outcomes for pupils and families. A package of support will be offered, in line with our 'four-tier support model' below.

**For maintained schools categorised as 'Good/Outstanding' but at risk (GOBAR)**, the EA will have an initial discussion of risk with the Headteacher to ensure that the reasons that flagged any concern are clearly understood and accepted by all parties. In most cases a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' school will be identified as at risk based on data decline/underperformance, an issue of data variance or a leadership issue. The school will be allocated a category, based on the needs of the school, and support will be delivered as detailed below:



### **3.7. School At Risk - Support and Challenge**

In accordance with our commitment to local improvement solutions and effective school-to-school solutions, in most cases, Hillingdon Council will seek to galvanise support for schools facing challenge from within Hillingdon LEAP which includes, but is not limited to, the Teaching Schools, LLE/NLE and Executive Headteacher networks. However, when appropriate school-to-school support is needed particularly rapidly and where capacity within our local and school-led network for Education Improvement is limited, it may be necessary to deploy additional advice and intervention support quickly. Where this occurs, the aim will usually be to agree local school-to-school support as soon as is practicable for all parties.

#### **Schools in receipt of Challenge Task Group Meetings**

If the support level for a school moves to Priority 1 or 2 the School Improvement Lead and EA will meet with the headteacher and Chair of Governors to confirm the level of support required. The EA will work with school leaders to devise a time bonded plan of action (Rapid Improvement Plan) to address the key priorities. The School Improvement Lead will broker support for the school as appropriate. Any resource of funding will be recorded on the action plan for accountability.

#### **Purpose and frequency of meetings**

CTG meetings will monitor progress towards priorities identified on the action plan, provide opportunities to problem solve and find practical solutions. The meetings will take place as frequently as required (normally 3 times a year) and will consist of the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher, Chair of Governors / or a representative of the board, EA and the School Improvement Lead. Other LA officers, system leaders or school senior leaders will be invited to attend as appropriate, and this will depend on the foci.

If required, task groups may be initiated termly, monthly, or even fortnightly, where the pace of improvement needs to be increase or where the school is undergoing a period of instability; this is particularly relevant for Priority 1 schools.

There may be schools that have been identified as Priority 3 (and were previously Priority 1 or 2), but CTG meetings are maintained on a less frequent basis. Schools that have been judged as Requires Improvement but have made significant progress may come under this criterion or schools that have recently moved out of a Requires Improvement Ofsted judgement.

Key points from the CTG meetings will be recorded on a 'CTG Group Record' by the EA and circulated to the headteacher and School Improvement Lead after each meeting.

## Local Authority Reviews

The LA will lead a review in all Priority 1 and 2 schools. All reviews will be led by the Strategic Lead for School Improvement Lead.

Reviews will be led in partnership with school leaders with the aim being to initially identify specific priorities for improvement and thereafter progress towards these priorities.

Timetables will be agreed with school leaders a minimum of 5 days in advance of any review. A one-page summary will be drafted on site by the lead reviewer. This will identify progress towards priorities, potential risks, and actions to be taken. This will be shared with school leaders as part of the feedback at the end of the review.

Schools will receive a minimum of 2 reviews per academic year. Additional officers may also support the process. The aim of having additional officers involved is to enable schools to have a more in-depth focus on a particular aspect of provision; in most instances this will be an Inclusion, Governance or EYFS officer.

<b>Schedule of Support</b>							
	<b>Start of the Year</b>	<b>Autumn 1</b>	<b>Autumn 2</b>	<b>Spring 1</b>	<b>Spring 2</b>	<b>Summer 1</b>	<b>Summer 2</b>
<b>Priority 3</b>	1 EA visit School Cluster HLP						
		Support available over the phone/ remotely for individual queries or concerns					
<b>Priority 2</b>	Action plan School Cluster CTG Meeting HLP	1 day EA support	1 day EA support	1 day EA support	1 day EA support	1 day EA support	1 day EA support
			CTG		CTG		S&S with HoEIP & Director
<b>Priority 1</b>	Action plan School Cluster CTG Meeting HLP	2 days EA support	2 days EA support	2 days EA support	2 days EA support	2 days EA support	2 days EA support
			CTG with HoEIP		CTG with HoEIP		S&S with HoEIP & Director
<b>Internal</b>			Internal review meeting		Internal review meeting		Internal review meeting

### **3.8. Confidentiality and administration**

The SARR is a highly confidential document and is strictly managed according to Hillingdon Council's protocols for sensitive information. The SARR is held and managed by the Education Improvement and Partnerships Service and is only accessible to other officers and partners (Regional Schools' Commissioner and Ofsted) on a need to know basis.

EAs are allocated maintained schools from the SARR and are required to record all contact with their schools using the standard NoV (Note of Visit). Following visits, each NoV is reviewed to ensure that key information is captured and that brokerage requests are actioned quickly. The NoV will be emailed to Headteachers, and Chairs of Governors where appropriate, along with the Head of Education Improvement & Partnerships following the visit.

### **3.9. DfE Schools Causing Concern - Schools eligible for Warning Notices**

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

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

1. The standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so.
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.
3. The safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).
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.

RSCs 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, such standards of performance.
2. Where the safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).

RSCs will only issue warning notices for low standards of educational performance in exceptional circumstances, such as where there are links to poor financial management and/or failures of governance.

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 RSCs will use their discretion to decide whether the use of formal powers is necessary.