



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough



Quality assurance policy

Detailing the monitoring, support and intervention for all
maintained schools in Telford and Wrekin

Ambitious for all

September 2023 – July 2024



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1. Introduction

Telford & Wrekin Council is committed to working in partnership with all schools, academies and free schools to ensure that every pupil receives a good quality education and achieves excellent outcomes. Together, we will facilitate a culture of working together to develop a first class education provision for all children and young people in the borough. We will enable all learners to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be confident and successful members of their community in modern Britain. Acting as system leaders, we will support providers to focus on pupil achievement in its broadest sense and transform educational experiences for children and young people, so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education and on into the workplace.

Education and Skills has the key responsibility within the Council for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the quality of education and standards of attainment and achievement in all Telford & Wrekin schools, and for identifying where targeted intervention is required for maintained schools where significant improvement is necessary.

This policy outlines the strategies used by the local authority (LA) to ensure that all maintained schools are

monitored effectively, that early identification of emerging issues is noted and acted upon, and intervention, where needed, is timely and well planned.

We remain committed to working in partnership with our schools building upon successful practice, to ensure that all schools are at least good, and that we have the best learning environments delivering high quality teaching and learning, providing a wealth of opportunity that prepares our children and young people for healthy, happy and successful adult lives.

Throughout this document the term 'school' refers to all maintained schools, academies and free schools, and includes special, alternative and mainstream provisions. We will work with openness and transparency and keep children and young people at the heart of decisions and actions that we take. We know that we share a collective desire with our schools, which is to foster learning environments that deliver the best outcomes for children. We are highly ambitious for our children in Telford and Wrekin and our work to improve our schools, alongside other local system leaders, remains core to delivering our goals.

Simon Wellman

Director Education and Skills

2. Statutory responsibilities

The role of the Local Authority

2.1 The local authority's current statutory responsibilities for educational excellence are set out in section 13a of the Education Act 1996. That duty states that a local authority must exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards. Local authorities must discharge this duty within the context of increasing autonomy and changing accountability for schools, and alongside an expectation that improvement should be led by schools themselves.

2.2 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 defines the strategic role of the local authority in the school / education settings improvement process:

- As 'champion' of the needs of children and young people and their families
- In the planning, commissioning and quality assurance of educational services
- In challenging schools / education settings and, where appropriate, to commission support and, if necessary, to intervene in the management and governance of the school and
- Where a local authority has concerns about academy performance it must raise them directly with the Department for Education.

2.3 The 2006 Act granted new statutory powers to Local Authorities, to intervene in maintained schools where performance is poor. Part 4 of the Act sets out measures for tackling school underperformance by:

- Enabling early action to tackle school underperformance so that it does not become entrenched and lead to formal school failure
- Ensuring that effective support and challenge is provided immediately when unacceptable standards are identified, so that improvements can be made quickly
- Securing decisive action if a school in 'special measures' fails to make sufficient progress, so that the education and life chances of pupils are safeguarded.

These responsibilities are further described in the School Causing concern guidance 2023.

Local authorities are also subject to a number of duties relating to children and young people with SEND, Safeguarding, PRUs and Governance.

3. Shared principles

The Telford and Wrekin School Improvement Strategy is underpinned by the following key principles:

- That every child or young person in Telford and Wrekin will reach their full potential and have a happy, positive, and fulfilling school experience.
- That every school will make effective provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities so that they can make good progress in their learning and can move easily on to the next stage of their education and aspire for employment and independent adult life.
- That the outcomes of every child or young person in Telford and Wrekin are a collective responsibility: While responsibility for improvement rests with individual schools as self-managing institutions; Telford and Wrekin has a statutory duty (as outlined in Section 2) to challenge and, where it deems it necessary, to undertake timely interventions in schools to raise standards.
- That transparency, mutual trust and partnership are vital to a self-improving system: Clear and robust criteria for classifying each school, based on their level of effectiveness in providing a good level of education is shared with school leaders (see section 6).
- That strong leadership, management and governance are essential: Headteachers and governors are ultimately responsible for the performance of the schools they lead. Governing bodies, therefore, challenge effectively and hold school leaders to account appropriately, to ensure good outcomes for all pupils. The effectiveness of school governance will therefore be considered as part of the risk assessment for classification (see section 6).
- That an effective self-improving school led system of support is vital: School to school improvement networks that are built on autonomy and effective professional relationships, are vital to ensure effective support is available to all schools. Through these networks, schools will take ownership and responsibility for their own and support each other's performance and improvement.

4. Local priorities for 2023-2024

The Telford and Wrekin Education Strategic Partnership Board agreed five priorities for 2023 – 24 academic year. These priorities are as follows:

- Keeping children and young people safe
- Achievement of children across Telford and Wrekin including English and Maths at KS2, KS4 and Early Years Good Level of Development.
- Raising aspirations and expectations of staff, children and parents with a focus on those from a disadvantaged background.
- Ensure inclusion and SEND support meets the needs of young people in mainstream settings
- Preparation for young people for life after school including skills, jobs and higher education



5. The classification process

Each maintained school will be classified by the Local Authority using a range of data to determine the level of monitoring and intervention. These levels of support and challenge are outlined in Section 6 below.

Powers of intervention

The Local Authority will intervene in maintained schools, including voluntary controlled, voluntary aided and trust schools, in proportion to need, as identified through the classification process to ensure that the school's performance improves.

For maintained special and mainstream schools and alternative provisions, the local authority will use its powers of intervention, including statutory powers where necessary. This will include notifying the Regional Schools' Commissioner (RSC) of the concerns where appropriate.

The Local Authority may exercise its statutory powers such as:

- require the governing board to enter into arrangements
- appointment of additional governors;
- establishment of an interim executive board (IEB);
- removal of delegated budget;

These schools will receive additional visits, challenge, and advice which will be recorded and shared with the headteacher, the Chair of Governors and the Director of Education and Skills.

The classification process recognises that changes in circumstance could inform a review of the overall level awarded during the academic year. As part of a continual review process, headteachers will be notified individually if their school classification is to change and the reasons for this. There will be an opportunity for the headteacher to discuss the rationale for any change in classification with a representative from the Local Authority.

Whilst it is understood that academies are independent of the Local Authority, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility for standards in all schools and settings and will work in partnership with trustees and sponsors to ensure they provide a level of support and challenge which is at least consistent with that provided by the local authority to maintained schools.

6. Criteria for the classification of schools

The Local Authority classifies special, alternative provision and mainstream schools using a traffic light approach. A cross service delivery area model is used to classify schools, with representatives from areas of the Local Authority holding information relating to schools meeting to jointly contribute to the school classification process.

The assessment of each school is based on an analysis of school level performance outcomes, along with a range of other contextual information. This information is evaluated and used to inform each individual schools' classification.

Information regarding the following are used to inform decisions

Quality of education, including:

- performance outcomes at statutory assessment points for all pupils including disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs.

Behaviour and attitudes, including:

- Attendance,
- suspension and exclusion levels,
- modified timetables,
- pupils who are electively home educated.

Personal Development, including:

- inclusion,
- the promotion of opportunity and diversity.

Leadership and management, including:

- safeguarding,
- complaints,
- governance,
- changes in leadership.

In addition to the above criteria, the LA will also consider information concerning individual schools regarding:

- Admissions,
- Early years provision,
- Support for pupils with English as an additional language, along with provision for pupils in care,
- Numbers of pupils on roll,
- Human resources and staffing,
- Finance,
- Ofsted inspection outcomes,
- Local contextual information
- Information received from the Department of Education and/or OFSTED
- Any other significant information/ concerns which are brought to the attention of the Local Authority.

The Local Authority will apply the criteria above in response to any information gathered. As a result, the classification of a school may change following an evaluation of this information.



The use of the criteria will allow the Local Authority to identify issues where a school may need an increased level of monitoring and challenge as part of the quality assurance process.

From time to time, circumstances may arise which result in a school experiencing difficulties, and which might impair its ability to sustain normal progress and performance. An example, could be where there are significant changes to leadership which might result in a period of instability for the school. In such cases, the school might be offered additional support in this period.

As part of its quality assurance process, the Local Authority recognise the important and respective role the Governing Board has in working alongside school leaders.

The Local Authority will use the information collated as part of the classification process to conduct an annual conversation with each governing board, which will explore how core functions are carried out as well as the process for ensuring that their school fulfils its statutory duties.

This annual conversation will include, but is not limited to, the following areas:

Governing board priorities in line with the SDP

- Strategic role
- Monitoring and evaluation of impact
- Financial Probity

The structure of the Governing board

- Instrument, constitution, committees, link governors
- Recruitment and retention

Meetings

- Minutes
- Challenge
- Participation and attendance
- Clerking

Training

- Skills audit
- Capacity on the Governing board
- Succession planning

Compliance

- Safeguarding
- Website
- GIS
- Policies
- Declarations of interests

Other

- Governing board and school specific areas



7. Classification bands for schools

Our approach is designed to recognise that working in partnership with schools and school improvement providers is the most effective way to secure sustained improvement. The approach ensures that duties and responsibilities are discharged effectively and in a timely way. The Local Authority support and challenge offer is outlined in the classification grid. All maintained schools will receive a minimum of three annual visits; two as part of the part of classification process and one annual conversation with those responsible for school governance.

While the accountability for academies does not sit with the Local Authority and they are not compelled to engage with the borough wide approach to school improvement, we recognise that the Academy Trusts working in the borough have a key role to play in school improvement. Where a special or mainstream school is part of a formal partnership, for example a Multi-Academy Trust, an initial conversation about how the support and challenge offer will be deployed is likely to take place with the accountable body in the first instance, rather than the individual school. In all cases, the existing arrangements that a school has in place will be considered carefully when determining how the support and challenge offer could be deployed.

The Local Authority will carry out a risk assessment of all maintained special and mainstream schools and alternative provisions, to identify the degree of monitoring the school will receive. The level will depend on the seriousness of concerns identified through a range of indicators and the capacity of the school to make rapid and sustained improvements. Green schools are those deemed to be 'self-improving' and having potential to share effective practice with others. Yellow schools are schools where there are a low level of concern and the leadership and management can demonstrate the capacity to swiftly bring about improvement. These will be given a 'light touch' approach to monitoring to ensure that progress is being maintained. Those schools where leadership and management has the capacity to improve but are considered to need additional support to ensure that pupils achieve closer to national averages, will be graded as amber. These schools will receive two visits each term in order to ensure they have the support

needed to secure rapid improvement. Red schools are those where there are more significant concerns about the quality of provision for pupils. These schools will receive additional monitoring and support and may be the subject of more formal intervention.

In every instance the classification level will be discussed and agreed with the school. A school classification level can be reviewed at any time where changes to circumstances occur, or a school themselves request this. This continuous review will allow us to be responsive to schools emerging needs.

Schools graded as amber or red may be asked to work with NLE, SLE or other local schools as appropriate and to enable the attendance of the headteacher or other leaders where requested and the chair of governors or their representative, at Monitoring and Support meetings.

Schools graded amber or red will also be asked to provide the following in order to support visits schools:

- A relevant school development / raising attainment plan including accurate and evaluative impact measures.
- Evidence about progress for all children including vulnerable learners, and evidence of the steps being taken to address any underperformance.
- A robust monitoring cycle that is adhered to.
- A copy of current and relevant reports for monitoring and support meetings.

Classification	Criteria	Level of Support and Challenge
Green	Those schools which have no significant issues raised from the identification criteria (as in section 6), and could have effective practice that can be shared across the borough.	Schools will receive two visits during the academic year. One in the autumn term and one later in the year Findings from the desktop monitoring outlined in section 6 will form the basis for a conversation with the headteacher to agree the lines of enquiry for the visit and the Agenda outlined in the note of visit.

Classification	Criteria	Level of Support and Challenge
Yellow	Those schools where there is a low level of concern identified from the criteria in Section 6 above and it is considered that the school leadership has the capacity to make sustained improvements and ensure that pupil achievement is at least in line with national averages.	<p>Schools will receive a termly visit during the academic year, in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the school's improvement plan (Autumn) Monitoring of school Improvement Plan (Spring) Evaluate the impact of the school's improvement plan (Summer) <p>In order to support these visits schools will be asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share their improvement plan including accurate and evaluative impact measures. Provide a summary of impact in improving teaching and learning and pupil outcomes if requested by the LA Quality Assurance Lead.
Amber	Those schools where there are a number of concerns identified from the criteria (section 6), where leadership has the capacity to bring about improvements, but the LA identifies that the school needs enhanced monitoring to ensure rapid and sustained improvement, and secure achievement for pupils which is at least in line with national averages.	<p>Schools will receive 2 visits per term consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Termly Monitoring and Support meeting chaired by the LA to support Improvement planning and review progress. An interim visit each term to review impact and progress alongside senior leaders and governors where appropriate.
Red	Those schools who are vulnerable or for which there has been a more serious cause for concern identified by either the LA, the Regional Schools' Commissioner or Ofsted. In these schools the LA may judge that the school has not made and sustained progress to secure good or better outcomes despite LA intervention. These schools could be subject to a formal warning notice issued by the LA or be judged by Ofsted to be less than good.	<p>Schools will receive three or more visits per term consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Termly Monitoring and Support meetings chaired by the LA to support and review progress. At least two interim visit per term to support school self-evaluation and improvement between the monitoring and Intervention meetings. These visits might include learning walks, book looks, data reviews conducted alongside senior leaders and governors where appropriate.
Academies	Special or mainstream schools who are accountable to the RSC office and not the Local Authority for their performance, although may have a role to play in borough wide school improvement.	An offer of an initial conversation with the CEO about how the trusts contribution to borough wide schools improvement, and the Local Authority offer could be deployed, followed by a visit to individual schools where appropriate. In all cases, the existing arrangements in place for school improvement will be considered when discussing how the support and challenge offer could be deployed.
Governing Boards (maintained schools)	As part of its statutory duties for oversight of governing boards for maintained schools, the Local Authority will conduct an annual conversation with those responsible for school governance to explore how effectively core functions are carried out as well as the process for ensuring that their school fulfils its statutory duties.	This annual conversation will include the areas listed under the sub heading Annual Governing Board Conversation in section 6.

8. Monitoring and support meetings

Following the discussion with school leaders about the level of classification, a programme for monitoring and support will be agreed. Meeting dates for the year will be scheduled in order to ensure that all relevant parties can attend, and that regular support and evaluation takes place.

Monitoring and support for amber and red schools

Where the school has been classified as Amber or Red, the local authority will chair meetings that will focus upon the quality of:

- Education, and its impact on outcomes for pupils
- Behaviour and attitudes
- Personal development
- Leadership, management and safeguarding

These will be tailored to meet the circumstances of the school.

The following people should be in attendance for the relevant part of the meeting:

- Headteacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Middle leaders where requested, including Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).
- Chair of Governors or an appropriate representative of the Governing Board.
- The school's Improvement Adviser.
- Services such as Human Resources, and Finance may be included as appropriate.

The Local Authority will circulate the agenda for the meeting two weeks prior to the meeting date. It will be helpful if the supporting paperwork is sent to the Local Authority Quality Assurance Lead seven days prior to the meeting taking place.

The minutes from the meeting will be distributed within a maximum of seven days by the Local Authority for the Headteacher to check for factual accuracy.

This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with stakeholders.



9. Stakeholders, partnerships and local system leaders for school improvement



We are committed to working with schools, special, alternative and mainstream provisions, and a range of school improvement partners and system leaders to ensure the children and young people in our borough receive a good quality of education.

Support for all schools

The School Performance Team will work alongside schools to provide support in the following circumstances:

- To follow up specific serious allegations, issues or incidents which may arise such as child protection, financial audit report or critical incident, and concerns raised by OFSTED;
- Recruitment of a new headteacher in maintained schools (statutory requirement) and academies if requested by governors;
- Visit, as required, to monitor the administration and/or special arrangements for end of phase tests and assessments;
- Visit to meet with members of inspection teams and attend Ofsted's inspection feedback meetings.

Support for school governing boards

The Local Authority will support schools governing boards to be effective by:

- Supporting the recruitment of governors, including LA governors;
- Ensuring that governors are equipped to effectively support and challenge senior leaders about the quality of provision in their schools by providing a full range of training opportunities throughout the year;
- Briefing governors about important national education updates to support them in fulfilling their statutory duties;
- Providing an opportunity to subscribe to an SLA for a fully managed governance service;
- Assisting and advising governors in the recruitment process for head teachers and senior leaders;
- Supporting boards that are at risk of not fulfilling their statutory duties;
- Where necessary making recommendations to strengthen the capacity of a board by recommending the appointment of associate governors or by establishing an Interim Executive Board (IEB).



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