

## **A strategy to raise standards at key stage 2**

1. If Nottinghamshire is to secure improved outcomes at the end of key stage 2, all schools must continue to focus on high quality first teaching, using accurate tracking data to identify individuals and groups of pupils who would benefit from personalised high quality intervention. The effective use of the Pupil Premium should also ensure that more vulnerable pupils access enriched provision which impacts positively on attainment and progress.
2. The Education Improvement Service reviews the impact of the service on a yearly basis and revises its improvement plan to ensure a focus on outcomes and impact. This plan is underpinned by key strategic actions to ensure whole school improvement and not just a focus on Year 6. However, given the outcomes at key stage 2 in 2014, additional actions have been identified to focus the attention of all partners on improved outcomes for all primary aged pupils, and particularly those currently in year 6.
3. To this end, the group manager for the Support to Schools Service wrote to all headteachers in community primary schools and primary academies in February 2015, to share the key challenges following the publication of final 2014 key stage 2 data. A separate letter was also sent by the group manager to primary schools below the floor target. In addition, the service director also wrote to all Teaching School Alliance headteachers to ensure their continued focus on improving the outcomes of pupils at key stage 2 in their alliance primary schools. In all three letters, specific advice was provided to ensure that pupils are identified and targeted with additional provision. Copies of these letters have been sent to chairs of governors to ensure that they too are able to hold schools to account for the progress and outcomes of all pupils.

### **Key actions to improve outcomes at key stage 2 in 2015**

4. Following the analyses of the 2014 key stage 2 outcomes, NCC's School Improvement Strategy for 2015-2016 will focus on additional actions with concentration on the outcomes at the end of year 6 and the improvement of leadership, governance, as well as teaching and learning.
5. In order to strengthen the effectiveness of governors in relation to school improvement, actions include:
  - a. the revision of the School Improvement Strategy to incorporate the advice to Local Authorities in relation to governing bodies effectively holding headteachers to account. This will incorporate:
    - a stronger focus on ensuring good and outstanding governance, including the monitoring of the effectiveness of the LA Governor
    - a clear focus on monitoring the impact of the support and challenge provided by National Leaders of Governance particularly in schools in adverse Ofsted categories and judged to 'Require Improvement'

- clarification around the use of Warning Notices and implementation of Interim Executive Boards
  - clarification of the responsibility for the outcomes of academies, which essentially rests with the Regional School Commissioner
  - clarification of the responsibility on the County Council to raise any known concerns about academies in its area in relation to both standards and governance
  - a Director's Report to governors on the DfE revised Schools Causing Concern Guidance to be written for April 2015 and presented at the summer term 2015 Heads and Chairs briefings.
- b. The review and further development of elements of the County's governing body services to ensure that:
- LA governors are effectively monitored in relation to their impact on school improvement (i.e. holding the headteacher to account for pupil outcomes, impact of the pupil premium)
  - increased monitoring of governing bodies in relation to governor turnover, recruitment difficulties
  - a solid offer to governors that is refocused on governors' role in securing and maintaining school improvement (i.e. ensuring that LA governors in particular have a clear understanding of what 'good' and 'outstanding' governance is and their essential role in monitoring 'impact' rather than actions completed)
  - a further development of training and support for clerks to ensure their clear understanding of effective governance, including the relevant aspects of the DfE's revised 'Schools Causing Concern' guidelines.
6. Further short term actions to be undertaken by appropriate advisers, particularly in relation to securing improvements in the 2015 outcomes at key stage 2, to include:
- all advisers working with Schools Causing Concern to include a focus on directly monitoring year 6 pupils on track to achieve level 4 in 2 of reading, writing, mathematics but not all 3
  - all advisers working with schools causing concern to incorporate a focus on year 6 into partnership support plans, if not already identified
  - all advisers to ensure that the development and action plans in all schools causing concern, clearly identifies the monitoring of pupil outcomes in relation to being on track to achieve Level 4 in all 3 strands at the end of year 6
  - Virtual School data to be further reviewed and monitored to identify any year 6 with the potential to achieve Level 4 in all 3 strands to access one-to-one tuition

- Achievement and Equality consultants to work directly with schools causing concern to identify year 6 pupils who have English as an acquired language (EAL) who are on track to achieve 2 of the 3 strands and to mediate appropriate additional support.
7. Actions focusing on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils, as outlined in the County Council's Closing the Gap Strategy, and to include:
- the identification of FSM pupils in year 6 who are on track to achieve Level 4 in 2 of reading, writing, mathematics but not all 3
  - advice to schools on the effective use of the pupil premium to secure good outcomes for FSM pupils.
8. Headteacher briefings, conferences and meetings to include a sharp focus on raising attainment and securing good progress through effective leadership. Specific actions will include:
- effective strategies to close the attainment gap to be mediated at the Spring 2015 Headteacher and senior leader briefings
  - further analysis of the outcomes of 2014 key stage 2 outcomes to inform the planning of workshops with key challenges to be threaded through all sessions
  - the effective use of LA Leadership and Management reviews where impact of improvement is not evidenced after one term of partnership support. In addition, the appropriate use of support plans within the appraisal process for headteachers to be mediated in a timely manner and after one term if leadership is not impacting positively on school improvement
  - the sharing of the impact of partnership support and any emerging leadership concerns with the chairs of governors
  - the effective use of a Primary Focus Group (PFG) if a range of support services are involved in any partnership to ensure that all agencies focus on the impact of their shared and separate action plans, thus avoiding duplication or fragmentation of support
  - the use of Formal Warnings to be considered where there is no impact on school improvement after one term of partnership support
  - the use of Formal Warnings to be considered in relation to any school where governance is identified as a key weakness following any leadership review or Ofsted outcome identifying weaknesses in governance.
9. Medium term strategies will be incorporated within the revised School Improvement Strategy and will focus on the further strengthening of partnership working across the authority. Specific actions will include:
- a review of all partnerships across the County to ensure a sharp focus on impact rather than the completions of actions or strategies

- further review of known partnership with TSAs, NLEs, LLEs, PLs and other stakeholders to ensure a continued focus on the ‘impact’ of support on improving attainment and progress across the County
  - specific work with TSAs and other partnerships to map effective subject leadership expertise (SLEs/Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs)) to share with all schools
  - joint TSA and Support to Schools Service meetings to share field knowledge about Schools Causing Concern (SCC) to improve the capacity of TSAs to respond speedily to requests for specific support
  - further consultation with all good and outstanding schools to further develop the quality assurance (QA) process for good and better schools with a view of mediating TSA involvement in this process
  - further work with DfE funded mathematics hubs and LA mathematics Networks in order to support the further development of a bespoke offer for Nottinghamshire schools based on local data.
10. There will be a key focus on consolidating the role of the LA in securing accurate data as a result of the centralisation of data within Corporate Services. Key actions will include:
- agreeing the timeline with corporate services to ensure the completion of data sets and analysis of LA data at county, district and school levels. The data agreement will identify the subject and group data that is necessary to support the effectiveness of advisers’ work with all schools, including SCC
  - ensuring the renewal of the Fischer Family Trust Aspire contract beyond 2017 as this underpins Nottinghamshire’s School Improvement Strategy
  - advising and encouraging all schools to buy into FFT Aspire at the spring term headteacher briefings so that families of schools and other partnerships, including TSA Alliance schools, can access data sets that will support more detailed tracking, monitoring and analysis of outcomes, thus informing the focus of collaborative working in key areas of underperformance in early years, key stages 1 and 2, phonics, reading, writing and mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling
  - using data to identify good practice in relation to the teaching of early phonics at Foundation and key stage 1 and grammar, punctuation and spelling, which continue to be key areas of weakness.
11. The sold offer will continue to primarily focus on national developments such as the new primary curriculum and changes within statutory assessment (assessing without levels). As partnership with TSAs continue to develop, key actions will include:
- the development of a coherent sold service across Nottinghamshire as a result of the strengthening of the LA partnership with all TSAs
  - the development of continuing professional development (CPD) with a sharp focus on underpinning subject knowledge such as basic numeracy, the teaching of early

phonics and the effective teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling, particularly at key stage 2 and the teaching of inference when reading

- subject knowledge and expectations as a result of the new primary National Curriculum to inform the planning of school level CPD and also the sold offer
- the development of effective practice to ensure that 'assessing without levels' is embedded across the county in preparation for September 2016 when 'levels of attainment' end.