Appendix 2

Hillingdon School Improvement Plan 2015-18

Our partnership for success

November 2015
Version 1 Final

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1. Introduction and Vision

The children of Hillingdon deserve the best. We firmly believe that all children in the borough should receive at least a good or better education.

Our **vision** is for every child in the borough to be successful and fulfilled learners, reaching their potential and thriving within inspirational and outstanding educational settings.

The **principles** that underpin our vision for school improvement are:

- That school improvement systems are most effective when they are based on 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
- That the council, as a strategic champion for securing the highest standards of education for all young people within the borough of Hillingdon, will provide appropriate drive and leadership; challenging, brokering and intervening where necessary to address concerns around underperformance.

The **purpose** of this strategy document is to clearly articulate the shared vision of the council and the wider Hillingdon School Improvement Community, and to explain how we will work together to translate our legal and moral imperatives around school improvement into action.

The central **aim** of this strategy, which has been developed in consultation and partnership with school leaders and key stakeholders across Hillingdon, 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.**

2. Our Vision into Action

2.1. Partnerships for Improvement

Our borough is committed to fulfilling all statutory duties around school improvement and to developing, promoting and, in doing so, championing a strong and effective school-led model of improvement.

It is the council's intention that, by working collaboratively with a wide range of school leaders and partners, and through the early identification of problems or concerns, we can facilitate any support necessary to ensure the resolution of difficulties with the minimum of council intervention. 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, local authorities must work flexibly and openly with partners from a range of settings and schools to drive and maintain improvement. We are committed to shaping and supporting the school-led improvement offer through our strong links and formal partnerships with a range of key improvement partners. These partners include our local Teaching Schools and other successful local providers, executive committees, outstanding school leaders, through our links with high quality research and development within the Higher Education sector and through our relationships with the Regional Schools Commissioner, Ofsted, and National College partners.

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 **Schools' Strategic Partnership Board** (SSPB) will act as the central leadership forum for school improvement by developing, promoting and quality-assuring our shared school improvement strategy. This key leadership group is strategically aligned with a range of partners in order 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 and from Hillingdon. *(Please see Appendix A - SSPB ToR).* The SSPB will act as the champion of borough-wide school improvement strategy, providing direction, challenge and innovative practice into our school improvement offer as a result of members' links with the best local and national expertise.

2.2. Our Model for School Improvement

The over-arching intention of our strategy is to ensure that, by August 2017, standards of progress and attainment across the borough...

- Compare favourably against those of our statistical/borough neighbours

- Match rates of improvement in line with London data so that Hillingdon children can be sure of outcomes that are as strong as those for young people across London
- Are 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, children with special educational needs and those most at risk of school and social exclusion)
- Aim high so that all schools in the borough are judged good or better.

The council will undertake its duties with regard to promoting the highest standards of education for young people in Hillingdon by:

- Retaining an accurate and up-to-date overview of the performance and effectiveness of all schools across the borough and sharing this with stakeholders regularly to scrutinise Hillingdon's school provision against London and national averages
- Collaborating with partners to tackle key barriers to school improvement at borough, phase/setting and individual school level
- Encouraging head teachers and school leadership teams to set and achieve aspirational targets for all
- Identifying and challenging underperformance at the earliest stages
- Sign-posting and, where necessary, brokering appropriate support in a timely and effective manner
- Intervening without delay where schools require rapid improvement
- Identifying and assisting vulnerable 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

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 Stands for Success Model

Strand 1: Securing Outstanding Leadership & Governance

This strand is fundamental to the success of school 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. The council is committed to supporting the development of exceptional leadership 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 Head Teacher pool to provide interim leadership capacity for schools facing challenge and to facilitate opportunities for Deputy Head Teachers to undertake headship within their own schools

- By working closely with governance support 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 school improvement partners within the Teaching Schools, NLE/LLE clusters and elsewhere to ensure that any skills-gap in leadership is filled quickly and effectively
- By bringing leaders together at least twice each year to explore school improvement and leadership and to learn from best practice in this field locally, nationally and through the council's our links with Ofsted
- By providing access to external School Review 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.

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 School Improvement Overview Database, includes data from Raiseonline, FFT, DfE performance tables and Ofsted data dashboards and is fundamental to ensuring that, as a local authority and a community of schools and settings, 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 school community) will be identified via this database and will be shared through our links with our strategic partners and the SSPB to shape borough-wide improvement activities and interventions. The school improvement function within the local authority 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).

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 positive and trusting relationships with individual schools through regular contact between the school improvement team 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 Head Teachers' Briefing and the termly School Improvement Update will provide operational and strategic school improvement headlines and highlight local opportunities for improvement.

The development of the ENHANCE space (led by our Teaching School partners and available to all schools) will complement this process, providing a crucial central point of access, available to all schools, for a variety of school developmental initiatives and opportunities.

Bi-annual school improvement conferences, delivered in partnership with school leaders and running alongside a wide range of other borough-wide improvement networks (please see Strand 4: Innovative & Improvement Networks) 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: Innovation & Improvement Networks (IINs)

The purpose of this strand is to facilitate time-limited learning networks, based around key themes of challenge or concern in the borough. The themes for the IINs will arise from our analysis of the School Improvement Overview Database and will be agreed by SSPB.

It is recognised that the Hillingdon schools' community already benefits from a diverse and strong school-led support and improvement offer which includes a range of local partnerships and cluster-groups. IINs should be used to complement this offer and may also provide a route

for pockets of good practice within established partnerships to grow and reach a wider range of school leaders in the borough. The networks, funded strategically but 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 IINs will be measured using our school improvement overview database and will be quality-assured and reported on by the SSPB.

It is anticipated that the vast majority of schools (and in particular those good or outstanding) will choose to contribute to an IIN and that their experiences/improvement journeys will be disseminated to all schools across the borough regularly. In many cases, the development of IINs will allow for the further development of school-to-school support models, where specific areas of focus are identified as critical to the success of a school at risk of underperformance.

The IINs will form part of the diverse improvement offer currently available across the borough and will encourage the engagement of schools with the school improvement themes that impact across all education institutions in Hillingdon as well as within their own context.

Strand 5: School 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 school 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 school improvement 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, the local authority will facilitate the provision of School Reviews and data analysis to inform individual school self-evaluation and risk assessment. The School Review process may be delivered via an outsourced/commissioned model or via a blended model,

using outstanding and current school leaders and borough resource. Our aim is for all maintained schools in the borough to access a School Review at least once every three years. Academies/free schools will also be given access to the School Review mechanism on a basis agreed by SSPB.

School Review intelligence will be used to contribute to holistic pictures of individual schools' strengths and weaknesses and will also contribute to the identification of thematic foci.

Strand 6: Schools at Risk & Interventions

The purpose of this strand is to outline the processes that will be used to raise concerns with school leaders when an individual school is identified as being at risk.

The local authority will retain a register of schools considered to be at risk. These schools will be identified via the statutory guidance (please see reference link to DfE - Schools causing concern January 2015). Schools may also be identified as a result of significant risk indicators within the borough school improvement overview database.

Placement on the Schools At Risk Register (SARR) 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 a council School Improvement Link for this purpose. In the case of academies/free schools the council will take all reasonable steps to indicate placement on the SARR with the Head Teacher, the responsible body or the Regional Schools' Commissioner. However, it should be noted by all Head Teachers that any school judged RI will automatically be included on the SARR, as will all schools in formal Ofsted categories.

NB. Our strategy recognises that schools judged Requiring Improvement may be at different points on their journey to improvement and, for that reason, will be sub-categorised as:

- **RI (A) = RI but making good progress, with a view to good at next Section 5**
- **RI (B) = RI and not yet making sufficient progress towards good/there is insufficient evidence to predict good at next inspection**

Those schools judged Good or Outstanding but at risk (GOBAR) will be identified via the school improvement overview database and will **always** be contacted to discuss their placement on the SARR.

Further detail regarding support and challenge for Schools At Risk can be found in Appendix B - SARR Guidance document attached to this strategy.

In accordance with our commitment to local improvement solutions and effective school-to-school solutions, in most cases the local authority will seek to galvanise support for schools facing challenge from within our Teaching Schools, LLE/NLE and Exec Head Teacher networks. However, when appropriate school to school support is needed particularly rapidly and where capacity within our local and school-led network for school improvement is limited, it may be necessary for the borough to deploy 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.

3. Local Authority Use of Statutory Duties - Schools Causing Concern

Alongside this strategic focus and within the shared remit of our Six Strands for Success, the council will continue to discharge essential statutory duties with regard to school improvement which include the local authority's responsibility to address concerns swiftly when schools fall into DfE categories (as outlined in the SCC guidance link in reference section) and within Part 4 of the Education Act 2006.

The content of this guidance informs the LA's work with schools identified as causing concern:

"Where schools are failing or seriously underperforming, it is vital that there is rapid intervention to address the problems as quickly as possible, so that children's education is affected as little as possible."

An important strand of our school improvement strategy (Strand 6) specifically addresses the LA'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 good communication, timely collaboration and school-to-school improvement mechanisms are the preferred approaches to securing improvement.

However, in line with statutory guidance and in cases where life-chances, opportunities and outcomes for young people are compromised as a result of insufficient progress, poor leadership and governance, concerns about the safety of pupils and/or inequalities in

achievement for vulnerable young people, the council will act swiftly and decisively to take appropriate action, within our overarching commitment to ensuring the highest standards of education for the young people of Hillingdon.

Our aspiration is for every school in Hillingdon to be at least a 'good school' and that no schools should be in an Ofsted or LA 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 the local authority, 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 standards, provision and quality for children and young people be compromised. There is a legal obligation upon the council to take action 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/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. The London Borough of Hillingdon 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 school improvement are centred on the schools which the borough maintains, Hillingdon firmly recognises its statutory duties with regard to **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 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, the local authority 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'.

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, the local authority will work in partnership with the school at risk by allocating a borough representative to provide oversight of the journey to improvement and to broker additional and appropriate support as required.

Where a school is an academy/free school setting, the local authority will also strive to sign-post additional support and link leaders together to improve outcomes for children. In these cases, the local authority may choose to engage with responsible bodies and the Regional Schools’ Commissioner in order 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 local authority 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 the local authority and may also be subject to additional legal intervention as detailed in the statutory guidance (please see reference link). 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.

3.1. Clarification of relationships with the Local Authority

Maintained/academy/free school is outstanding?

- Autonomous and independent, working in partnership
- Leading practice and shaping strategy across Hillingdon
- Strong role in Innovation & Improvement Networks by choice
- Commissioned to provide services to other schools
- Part of the ENHANCE collaboration

Maintained/academy/free school is securely good?

- Autonomous and independent, working in partnership
- Sharing practice and influencing strategy across Hillingdon
- Engagement in Innovation & Improvement Networks by choice
- Partnerships with outstanding schools to support journey to outstanding
- Part of the ENHANCE collaboration

Maintained school is good but at risk/coasting?

- Supported to mitigate risk through regular contact with local authority partner
- Risk assessments, brokerage and sign-posting interventions
- Opportunities to engage with best practice within and beyond Hillingdon
- Engagement with Innovation & Improvement Networks and local clusters/conferences
- Governance healthchecks
- Part of the ENHANCE collaboration

Maintained school requires improvement?

- Supported and challenged by regular contact with local authority
- Regular involvement to monitor progress and challenge underperformance leading to bespoke LA support models
- Brokerage of support
- Liaison with link HMI
- Expectation of engagement in Innovation & Improvement Networks/clusters and conferences
- Partnerships with outstanding schools to support journey to outstanding
- Governance support and development
- Part of the ENHANCE collaboration

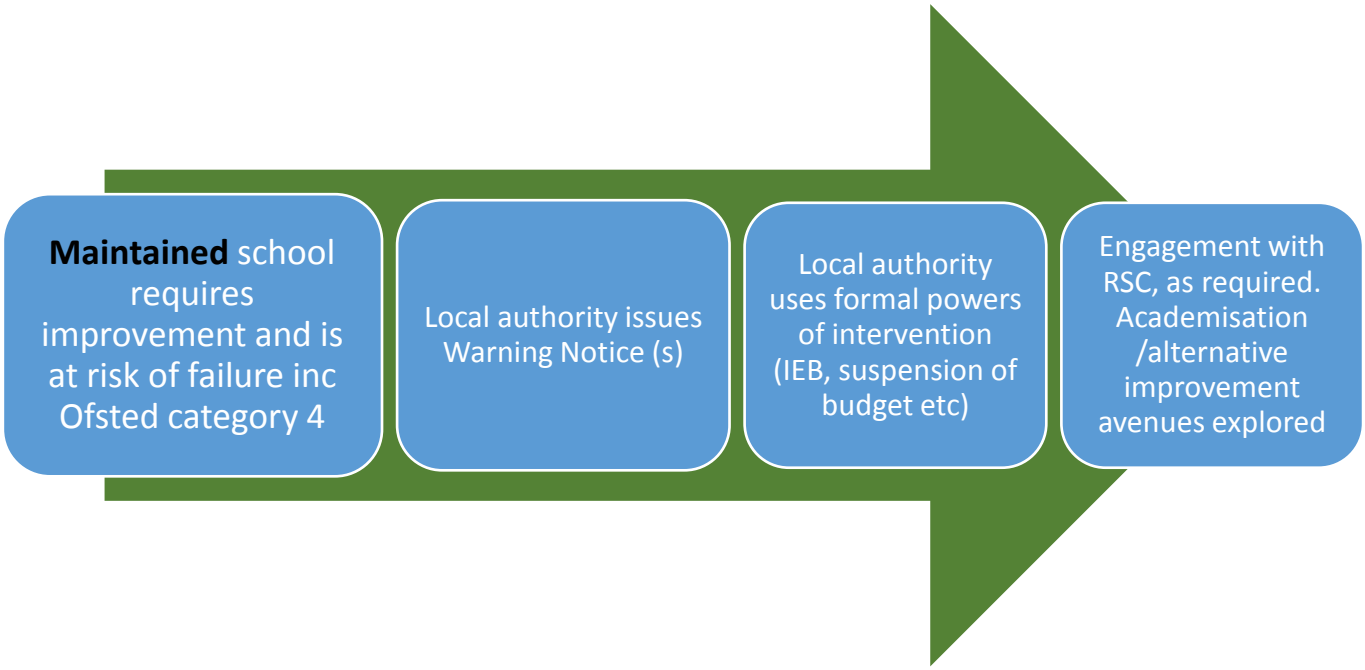
Academy/free school is good but at risk/coasting?

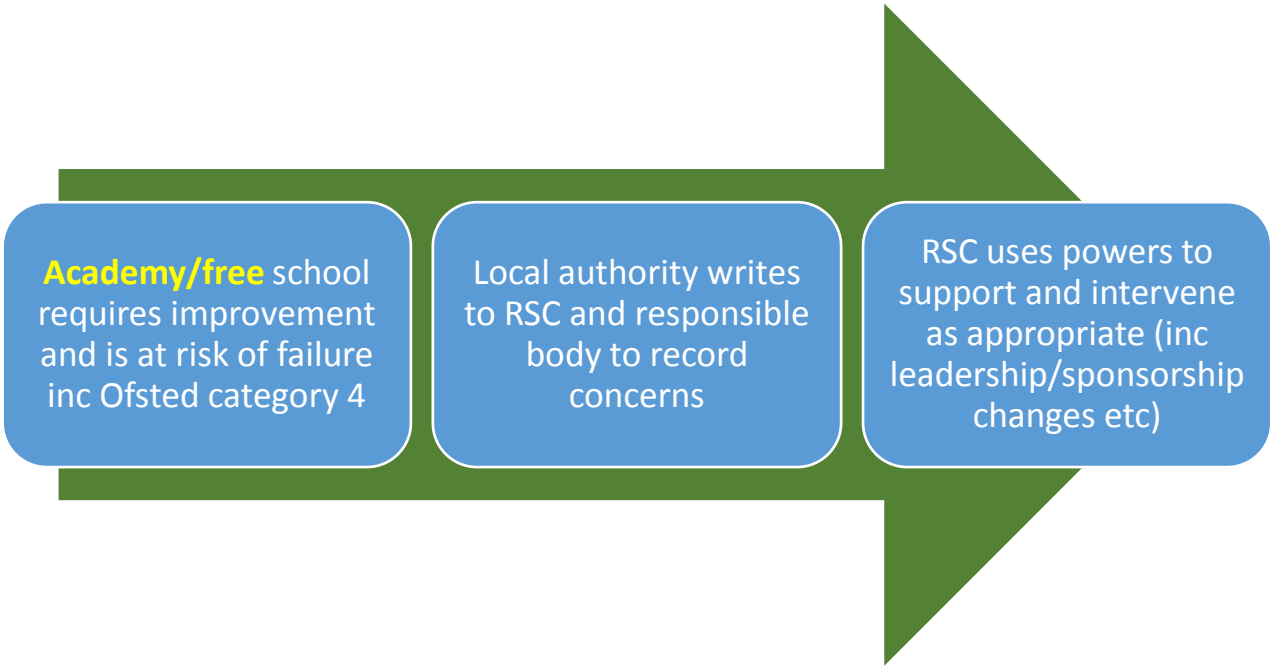
- School and/or responsible body contacted to raise LA concern on behalf of Hillingdon children and families
- Opportunities to engage with best practice within and beyond Hillingdon
- Engagement with Innovation & Improvement Networks and local clusters/conferences encouraged
- Part of the ENHANCE collaboration

Academy/free school school requires improvement?

- Formal concerns raised with RSC during LA link meetings
- Improvement journey monitored by LA on behalf of Hillingdon children and families
- Liaison and brokerage/ signposting as required
- Engagement in Innovation & Improvement Networks/local clusters and conferences recommended
- Partnerships with outstanding schools to support journey to outstanding encouraged
- Governance support and development opportunities highlighted
- Part of the ENHANCE collaboration

The processes below will be actioned in any case where (in the opinion of the Local Authority 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:





3.2. Quality assurance and accountability for school improvement in Hillingdon

The principles of partnership and school-led improvement are at the heart of the Hillingdon School Improvement Strategy. For this reason, quality assurance, monitoring and the evaluation of the school improvement strategy for the borough lies with the key strategic body for school improvement, SSPB. This board, held to account by Schools' Forum and other executive groups, will take responsibility for ensuring that the aims of the strategy outlined in this document are regularly and robustly monitored, that resources are used appropriately and that the quality of school provision throughout the borough improves and attains at least good or outstanding standards by 2017.

In addition and in line with the statutory responsibilities held by the council with regard to ensuring high standards of education for all young people in Hillingdon, education outcomes and school performance data will be scrutinised regularly by Members and by senior officers, including the Director of Children's Services.

The impact and effectiveness of this strategy for school improvement will be reviewed by the SSPB no later than twelve months from the date of first publication.

4. References

- DfE - Schools causing concern (January 2015) - link:
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-causing-concern--2
- Ofsted - The framework for the inspection of local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement (November 2014)

  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/framework-for-the-inspection-of-local-authority-arrangements-for-supporting-school-improvement--2
- Ofsted - Inspecting local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement: guidance for providers (December 2014)

  https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-local-authority-arrangements-for-supporting-school-improvement
- Education and inspections Act 2006

  http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents
- White Paper - The importance of teaching (2010)

  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-importance-of-teaching-the-schools-white-paper-2010

5. Appendix A

5.1. Schools' Strategic Partnership Board Terms of Reference

Reconstituted June 2015

Agreed Terms of Reference

Rationale
A strong and positive relationship between a local authority and all schools within the borough is central to the success of the borough, and the shared ambition to provide the highest quality of education and opportunity for all young people from Hillingdon.

Within the context of an increasingly diverse and autonomous school system the borough is committed to developing and supporting the most effective models of school-led support and challenge, alongside its central role as strategic champion of educational excellence. The borough has a clear role and responsibility to work with partners to secure the highest standards of education, to tackle underperformance swiftly and effectively and to promote school to school collaboration.

The development of the Hillingdon Schools' Strategic Partnership Board (SSPB) is key to the development, leadership and quality-assurance of school improvement strategy and direction across the borough. This leadership group is strategically aligned with a range of partners in order to best represent the needs and vision of school leaders and professionals across the borough and to take the driving role in shaping and securing school improvement in Hillingdon. As national and local requirements regarding school and education development evolve, it is anticipated that the SSPB will broaden and extend its focus.

Principles
The principles that underpin our vision for school improvement and which are upheld by SSPB are:

- That school improvement systems are most effective when they are based on partnership and collaboration and that school leaders and the local authority will work in equal partnership
- 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
- That the council, as a strategic champion for securing the highest standards of education for all young people within the borough of Hillingdon, will provide appropriate drive and leadership; challenging, intervening and brokering where necessary to address concerns around underperformance.

Membership

a) The SSPB will consist of appropriate representation to reflect all phases and settings of education across the borough. In order to offer representation in line with borough diversity, the following broad settings must be represented on SSPB membership:
   - All primary/infant schools
   - All secondary schools
   - Teaching Schools alliances
   - The Special School sector
   - Alternative provision/PRU settings
b) The SSPB will include appropriate senior school improvement officers from the borough
c) The SSPB will include Governor representation
d) The SSPB will include representation from the LLE/NLE network
e) The SSPB may invite temporary representation from other leaders as deemed necessary to undertake its duties
f) The SSPB will appoint Co-Chairs and a clerk whose appointments will be re-elected on an annual basis
g) The SSPB will operate via a co-chairing arrangement between local authority and school leaders
h) SSPB membership will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Quorum

a) The quorum will be 8 members, one of whom must include a borough representative and one of whom must be current Co-Chair
b) The quorum shall vote only if the majority of members present are current borough headteachers
c) The clerk of the meeting is not required to vote.

Meetings

a) The SSPB will meet once per term (3 x per year) as a minimum
b) Additional/extraordinary meetings may be held as required at the discretion of the SSPB
c) SSPB meetings will be scheduled at least two weeks prior to Schools' Forum meetings
d) Papers for SSPB meetings will be prepared by the SSPB clerk and, wherever possible, will be shared by email with SSPB members 7 days before each SSPB meeting. Papers will include the following:
   - Notice in writing of meeting date, time and venue
   - Copy of agenda
   - Draft minutes of previous meeting
   - Papers relevant to meeting
e) Minutes will be taken for each SSPB meeting
f) Following approval by Chair, minutes will be distributed to SSPB members within 14 days of each meeting
g) Minutes will be shared with Schools' Forum as a standing item.

Responsibilities

- To take the lead in proposing, developing and supporting the school improvement strategy for the borough, ensuring that the model fully represents the interests of all stakeholders and that all schools can access appropriate and high-quality models of support and challenge to secure improvement
- To use borough-wide intelligence and data to shape priorities for school improvement
- To monitor the impact of models of support by challenging rates of improvement and use of council and delegated/other resources where necessary
- To actively promote and support collaboration and innovation between schools and providers, leading to rapid improvement in outcomes and borough cohesion
- To support the self-evaluation of school improvement services across the borough
- To regularly update associated executive committees and partners inc Schools' Forum
- To make recommendations to Schools' Forum regarding strategy and/or finance as appropriate.

6. Appendix B

6.1. Guidance for Schools At Risk in Hillingdon:

Identification and Support Processes & Protocols

Key to abbreviations

SARR	**Schools At Risk Register**
SIOD	**School Improvement Overview Database**
HoSI	**Head of School Improvement**
SIL	**School Improvement Link**
RI (A)	**School Requires Improvement but is making good progress**
RI (B)	**School Requires Improvement and is not yet securing good**
GOBAR	**School Good or Outstanding but at risk**
LLE/NLE	**Local Leader in Education/National Leader in Education**
NOV	**School Improvement Note of Visit**

Introduction

As part of the local authority duty to monitor progress and standards in education and to intervene appropriately where necessary, Hillingdon's local authority school improvement function will retain a register of schools considered to be at risk.

In some cases, and where the local authority may choose to exercise its right to issue a Warning Notice and intervene formally, the guidance for identifying a School Causing Concern will be used. Please see below for general guidance relating to the issuing of a Warning Notice. More detailed guidance can be found by following the link:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-causing-concern--2#history

DfE Schools Causing Concern Guidance - Schools eligible for Warning Notices

National guidance makes it clear that local authorities should consider the use of a Warning Notice where at least one of the factors below apply:

1. Standards of performance in the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so, unless the local authority intervenes
2. There has been a serious breakdown in the way a school is managed or governed which is prejudicing, or is likely to prejudice, such standards of performance
3. The safety of pupils or staff is threatened

How will schools in Hillingdon be identified as being at risk?

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

This risk assessment involves the detailed scrutiny of a range of data and information captured within the borough school improvement overview database. The borough school improvement overview database is important as it provides performance data alongside other dynamic information, based on local knowledge and contextual factors.

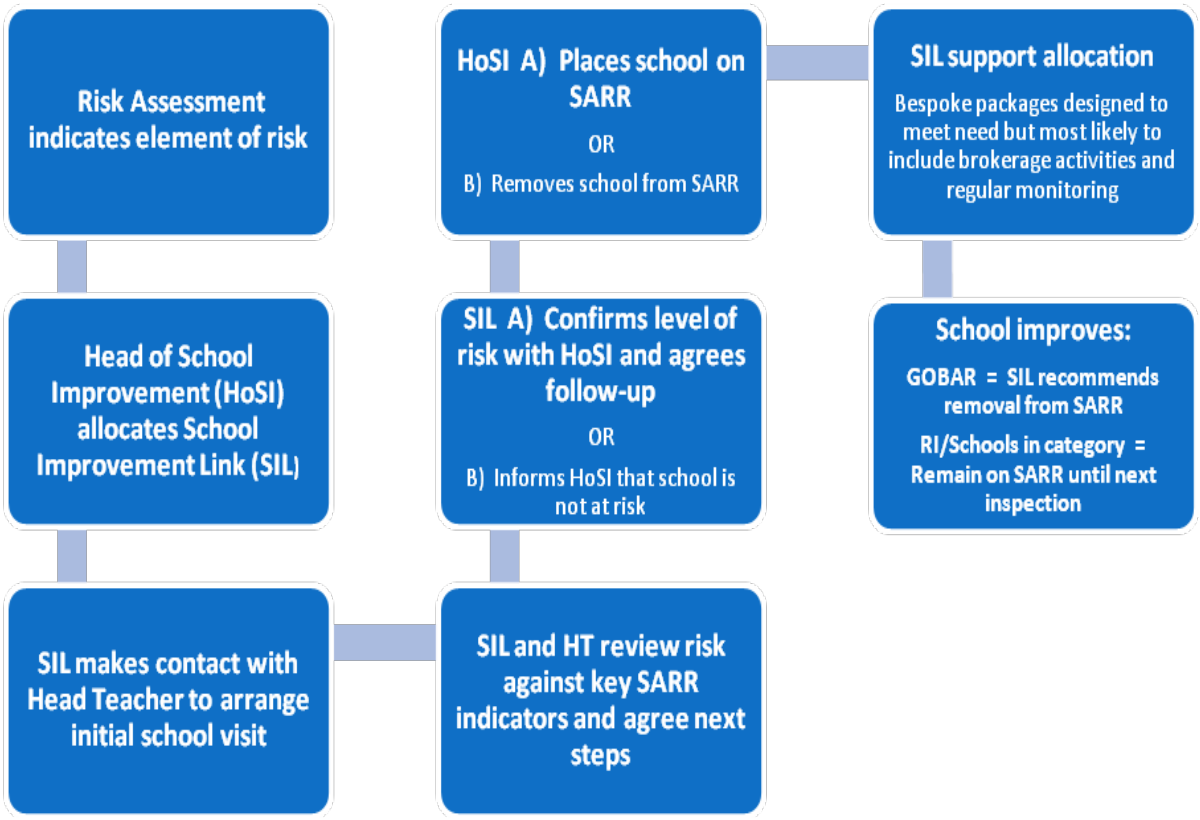
The School Improvement Service undertakes risk assessment activities on an, at least, half-termly basis. Risk assessment includes the scrutiny of a range of school intelligence including Raiseonline and FFT analyses and other publically available data-sets and additional data pertaining to vulnerable children. This always includes feedback from recent inspection reports and/or monitoring visits and local authority commissioned School Reviews where they have taken place. In addition, the risk assessment will take into consideration feedback from a range of school support teams including, but not limited to, School Improvement Link officers, governance liaison colleagues, early intervention and prevention services for vulnerable children inc LAC and local authority finance support teams in order to capture the most comprehensive picture of a school's areas of strength and challenge. The final decision to place a school on the Schools At Risk Register in Hillingdon will be made based on one or more of SARR Indicators listed below.

SARR Indicators

- Data analysis indicates a sudden drop or a steady decline in performance (attainment and/or progress)
- Outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable children, including those Looked After, are not in line with national averages
- The gap between key vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged children, and their peers in school is not closing quickly enough and does not compare favourably with the national picture for all children
- Outcome data indicates inconsistent or variable patterns of attainment or progress within the school
- Data suggests that the school is not performing as well as comparable schools in the borough (against benchmark groups)
- Attendance and exclusion data raises concern
- Evidence suggests that Looked After children are not having their needs adequately met
- There are concerns regarding the management of financial resources
- Turbulence/poor practice at leadership or governance level places the school at risk of underperformance
- The school has not acted quickly enough to address any areas of weakness/recommendations made by external or internal review partners
- There is any indication that standards of safeguarding are not adequate for pupils or staff

What is the process that the School Improvement Service follows?

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



Please note that the allocated SIL will always have reviewed 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 the local authority and through the provision of support and challenge in a variety of forms. In the case of academies, the School Improvement Team will take steps to ensure that appropriate bodies are aware of any concerns and are able to advise and support the school as required. It should be noted that **any** school judged RI will automatically be included on the SARR, as will all schools in formal Ofsted categories.

Our strategy recognises that schools judged Requiring Improvement may be at different points on their journey to improvement and, for that reason, will be sub-categorised as:

- **RI (A) = RI but making good progress, with a view to good at next Section 5**
- **RI (B) = RI and not yet making sufficient progress towards good/there is insufficient evidence to predict good at next inspection**

For schools categorised as RI (A), the assumption will be that the school has made positive progress and has successfully addressed any areas of weakness. These schools should be able to demonstrate stable and effective leadership structures at all levels and should be able to provide robust quantitative evidence of progress and improved attainment and achievement. Head Teachers of schools RI (A) should be able to demonstrate that they know their school well and that they have taken appropriate action to secure improvement. The school's self-evaluation document will be used alongside the current School Development Plan and any additional post-inspection action plan to prompt discussion between the Head Teacher and SIL.

For schools categorised as RI (B), the SIL 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 SIL may link with other partners to support the school in identifying and actioning activities to improve outcomes for pupils and families.

For schools Good/Outstanding but at risk (GOBAR) will be identified via the school improvement overview database and will **always** be contacted by a member of the School Improvement Service to discuss their placement on the SARR. In most cases a Good or Outstanding school will be identified as at risk based on data decline/underperformance or an issue of data variance. In these cases, the initial discussion of risk between the SIL and the Head Teacher is very important to ensure that the reasons that flagged any concern are clearly understood and accepted by all parties.

What can a School At Risk expect?

In the interests of consistency and transparency, the general guidelines below will be followed although it should be noted that all actions will be taken with careful and professional consideration of each school's individual context and that the guidance below is neither linear nor exhaustive.

School GOBAR	School RI (A)	School RI (B) or Ofsted Inadequate
•Allocated SIL support and challenge visit at least once per half-term •Progress monitored against current or refined improvement plans •Data shared regularly to inform in-year tracking •Brokerage of additional support to address priorities •Liaison with governors as required •Consideration of external reviews as required (governance, finance, pupil premium etc) •Signposting to recommended improvement activities •Consideration of Local Authority formal powers inc Warning Notices as required	•Allocated SIL monitoring meeting each term •Focus on monitoring progress against criteria for securely good including data updates as required • SIL support and contact via email/telephone between meetings •Additional brokerage as requested by Head Teacher •Liaison with Ofsted as required	• Regular support and challenge by allocated SIL and supported by Head of School Improvement as required •School priorities and self-evaluation, including data-tracking, shared with SIL •Challenge Task Group convened and chaired by SIL on a monthly basis •Intensive brokerage of support •Consideration of external reviews as required (governance, finance, pupil premium etc) •Signposting to recommended improvement activities •Regular contact with governors •Liaison with Ofsted as necessary •Consideration of Local Authority formal powers inc Warning Notices etc as necessary •Exploration of alternative improvement routes including federation, amalgamation or academisation as necessary

In accordance with our commitment to local improvement solutions and effective school-to-school solutions, in most cases the local authority will seek to galvanise support for schools facing challenge from within the Hillingdon local improvement community which includes, but is not limited to, the Teaching Schools, LLE/NLE and Exec Head Teacher networks. However, when appropriate school-to-school support is needed particularly rapidly and where capacity within our local and school-led network for school improvement is limited, it may be necessary for the borough to deploy 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.

Confidentiality and administration

The SARR is a highly confidential document and is strictly managed according to the council's protocols for sensitive information. The SARR is held and managed by the School Improvement Team and is only accessible to other officers on a need to know basis.

SILs are allocated schools from the SARR and are required to record all contact with their schools using the standard 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 back to Head Teachers following the visit.

Please note that, unless specifically requested to share the NoV more widely, the SIL will only share the NoV with the Head Teacher by email. However, Head Teachers are encouraged to share the content of their NoVs with governors and other partners in order to link improvement activities together effectively.