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Strategy for School Improvement 2021-2022

September 2021

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Our commitment to school improvement

At the heart of Lincolnshire's education strategy is the commitment to work collaboratively with maintained schools and academies within the sector, to secure:

- the best levels of attainment and progress
- outstanding leadership including effective governance
- safety, fairness and equity for all pupils and staff
- value for money
- the capacity for continuous improvement within a rigorous self-improving system.

Lincolnshire County Council will do this through engagement with maintained schools and academies in Lincolnshire, seeking to support schools to improve whilst recognising the most effective school improvement will be delivered through schools working in effective partnership and collaboration.

The Role of the Local Authority

The role of the Local Authority in Lincolnshire's sector led system is to provide strategic direction, facilitation of information and to support and connect settings within the sector led school improvement model.

The Local Authority ambition is for every child in Lincolnshire to attend a good or better school. The Local Authority has a clearly defined statutory role to intervene where there are serious concerns about school performance or the way a school is governed. The Local Authority will maintain an overview of the performance of all schools and academies. In 2021, there are no national assessments so knowledge of risks from LA officers will be used to inform risk ratings.

The Local Authority's function in school improvement:

- effectively communicate priorities and opportunities with the sector
- hold stakeholders to account for their performance in the setting
- monitor and intervene when schools are high risk or a school causing concern
- support and develop governance
- support the sector to lead the way, making the most of expertise in Lincolnshire facilitate partnerships, collaborations and different ways of working to ensure outcomes are ever improving
- empower and support schools to engage in peer review and peer improvement work strategically with [Lincolnshire Learning Partnership](#), the new Teaching School hub, other hubs and nationally designated specialist centres to develop a highly successful sector led system

The Lincolnshire County Council Offer for all schools/academies:

- Education Team Locality Leads offering advice, support, monitoring and challenge
- Leadership, Governance and Safeguarding briefings throughout the academic year and regular locality meetings
- Weekly bulletins for SchoolNews and Safeguarding throughout term time to Perspective Lite¹
- Signposting to training provision and opportunities which are available through the Teaching School Hub and other nationally designated specialist centres, Local Authority Early Years provision and connecting excellent practice within the sector itself
- Interim Headteacher leadership support within maintained schools
- Governor Services support helpline
- Supporting the appointment process of new Headteachers in maintained schools
- The provision of a comprehensive commercial offer to all schools (charges may apply for some services)²
- Access to new headteacher induction in maintained schools.

Lincolnshire maintained schools and academies will need to:

- Seize opportunities for school improvement, and partner with us to deliver the outcomes of the One Strategic Plan for Lincolnshire.
- Utilise and harness the potential of the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board to set the strategic direction of need on behalf of Lincolnshire schools
- Attend relevant briefings for leaders, safeguarding and governance
- Access relevant updates through [Perspective Lite](#)
- Secure high quality professional development from the Teaching School Hub or other nationally designated centres of excellence
- Access high quality and value for money performance management for Headteachers
- Develop excellence through networks, collaborations, alliances and local partnerships to maximise professional development opportunities
- Work together with peer review groups and contribute to helping one another improve outcomes

¹ <https://perspective.angelsolutions.co.uk/perspective/login.aspx>

Lincolnshire County Council Education Team

The Education Team at the Local Authority is committed to supporting schools and academies to achieving the best outcomes for Lincolnshire's children and young people.

The team report to the Executive Director of Children's Services and liaise closely with the Regional Schools Commissioner and Ofsted Representatives.

Within the team are:

- Assistant Director for Children's Education
- Head of School Standards
- Head of Education Strategy
- Education Locality Leads
- Administration and Support Officers
- Interim Headteachers

If you have a query or request please call 01522 554590 or email

EducationTeam@lincolnshire.gov.uk

The collective knowledge in the group is utilised across all elements of school-based work, accessing other departments where necessary, to develop a clear view of the school including its strengths to promote sector support and also enable a clear view to be maintained of school requirements in Lincolnshire.

The Risk Rating System

The Local Authority process of desktop analysis will be conducted annually and each school and academy will be allocated a risk rating. This will determine the level of direct contact a school or academy will be offered by their Education Locality Lead, and the level of intervention through this strategy.

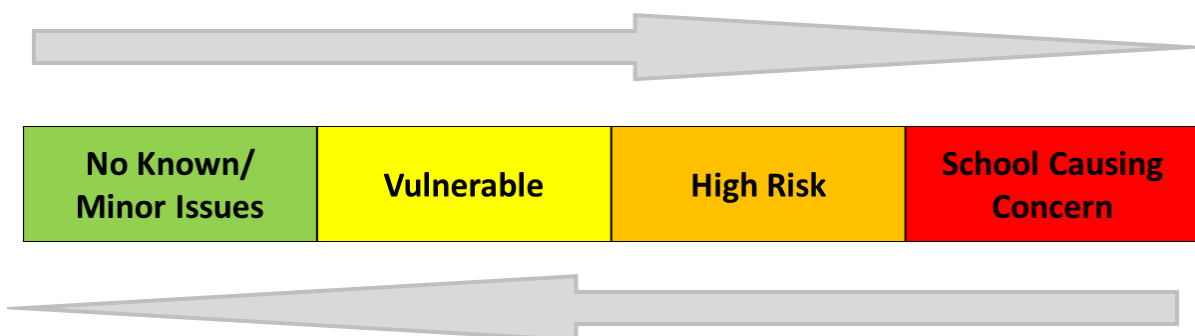
Regular reviews of all schools and academies will be conducted throughout the academic year.

Children's Services teams that are able to feed into this process are:

- School Standards
- Early Years
- Education Support – including safeguarding, school admissions and attendance, ethnic minority and traveler education, elective home education
- Finance
- Governor Services
- Health & Safety
- Inclusion
- SEND
- Virtual School

Risk ratings are also informed by the key areas of the current Ofsted framework to ensure that those schools identified as being vulnerable and high risk are proactively approached and supported to engage in school improvement activity within the sector led system.

The risk rating categories are as follows:



As this system recognises and may lead to formal legal processes such as [Schools Causing Concern](#), if this is the case, key actions will need to be shared with the Regional Schools Commissioner and Ofsted. The Local Authority is committed to an [Engagement with Academies Protocol](#) which states that we will always inform schools and academies when we have discussions about them with the Department for Education or Ofsted.

Local Authority engagement with schools

Lincolnshire County Council wishes to ensure that every child in Lincolnshire attends a good or better school and has a legal duty to intervene where there are serious concerns about performance or governance.

To that end, and to enable a broad and balanced picture to be maintained, Education Locality Leads will be the main link when risk rating maintained schools and academies. Their role is to engage, challenge and support as well as signpost schools as they continually strive for improved outcomes for learners.

A summary of the process of risk rating for maintained schools and how this will impact on engagement with the Local Authority is detailed below:

(Academies – please refer to the Engagement with Academies Protocol on how the Local Authority will interact with academies)

| Rating | Typical triggers | Action by the Local Authority |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| No Known or Minor Issues | Local authority assured that the school is taking effective action for any minor aspects of concern | Support, Monitor and Challenge Termly core visit with an Education Locality Lead with the headteacher and Chair of Governors. There will be a set agenda for all schools focusing on the priorities for improvement, signposting to support and the effective monitoring of these priorities throughout the year. Summary reports of these visits will be provided for school leaders and governors; these will be uploaded on Perspective Lite. |

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| <p>Vulnerable</p> | <p>Trigger(s) have been reached through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Data – Attainment and Progress • Exclusion Data, Absence Data, Information and intelligence from other services areas • Requires Improvement Ofsted inspection <p>Or the school is vulnerable to an inspection outcome of less than good within its inspection window in relation to areas listed in the latest Ofsted Inspection Handbook.</p> | <p>Support, Monitor and Challenge</p> <p>Termly core visit with an Education Locality Lead with the headteacher and Chair of Governors. There will be a set agenda for all schools focusing on the priorities for improvement, signposting to support and the effective monitoring of these priorities throughout the year. Summary reports of these visits will be provided for school leaders and governors; these will be uploaded on Perspective Lite.</p> <p>Additional Support</p> <p>Education Locality Leads will visit approximately four weekly to monitor the school's progress against identified priorities and set recommendations for next steps. Monitoring forms will be updated for each visit and uploaded on Perspective Lite.</p> <p><u>Activities may include:</u></p> <p>Reviewing the school development plan Learning walk Book scrutinies Discussion with leaders Discussions with pupils Discussions with governors Joint monitoring activities with school leaders Ofsted preparation</p> <p>Maintained Schools can apply for intervention funding to support specific improvement activity if the school meets the thresholds within the Intervention Policy.</p> <p>Regular telephone and email communication may take place in-between visits.</p> <p>All schools rated as vulnerable will have regular monitoring by senior officers to ensure actions are effective and sufficient progress is being made to be removed from the vulnerable category and/or</p> |
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| | | <p>judged as good.</p> <p>Where there are concerns about progress a follow up visit will be made the following term. If concerns about progress remain at this visit the school will move to Strategy.</p> |
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| <p>High Risk</p> | <p>Serious or complicated factors are hindering improvement.</p> <p>Leaders and Governors are not taking effective action to address areas of concern.</p> <p>If inspected, there is a high risk of an inadequate or adverse grading in one or more areas of the latest Ofsted Inspection Framework.</p> | <p>Support, Monitor and Challenge</p> <p>Termly core visit with an Education Locality Lead with the headteacher and Chair of Governors. There will be a set agenda for all schools focusing on the priorities for improvement, signposting to support and the effective monitoring of these priorities throughout the year. Summary reports of these visits will be provided for school leaders and governors, these will be uploaded on Perspective Lite.</p> <p>Additional Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher and chair of governors will be invited to be part of a formal Strategy Meeting to co-ordinate and provide strategic input from Local Authority Officers. • Education Locality Leads will continue to monitor progress and provide rigorous challenge ensuring that school improves and that any support accessed is having high impact against the agreed milestones. • Where there are serious concerns about school's performance or leaders and managers are not taking effective action the school may receive a Pre-Warning Notice to inform the school of actions it must take to the address concerns. • Where a school has a Pre-Warning Notice in place, this will be reviewed regularly and when all actions are complete or there is significant evidence of progress against the priorities, this will be removed. • At this point the school will remain in Strategy for further monitoring and to ensure improvements continue. • In these cases, or for schools in Strategy without a Pre-Warning Notice in place, the school may be removed from Strategy following two Strategy meetings where strong progress has been evidenced and there is confidence that this will be sustained. • Where there is not enough progress or there are serious concerns, the school may receive a Performance, Standards and Safety Warning Notice that will be sent to the Regional Schools |
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| | | <p>Commissioner and Ofsted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities may issue warning notices to their maintained schools under the following circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so; or 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; or The safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise) 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 the governing body have failed to secure that the head teacher of the school complies with such a provision. <p>Serious allegations against the headteacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Strategy meeting will be chaired by the Head of Education Strategy with the chair of governors where relevant officers will be invited to provide advice on actions to governors as necessary. Where the allegations are open to LADO, a Strategy meeting will be chaired by the LADO with the chair of governors and other professionals as appropriate. The Head of Education Strategy or Assistant Director for Education will be in attendance as the lead educational professional. |
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| <p>School Causing Concern</p> | <p>School subject to Inadequate Ofsted grading</p> <p>Academisation Order</p> <p>Failed to fulfil the terms of the Performance, Standards and Safety warning notice.</p> | <p>Support, Monitor and Challenge</p> <p>Termly core visit with an Education Locality Lead with the headteacher and Chair of Governors. There will be a set agenda for all schools focusing on the priorities for improvement, signposting to support and the effective monitoring of these priorities throughout the year. Summary reports of these visits will be provided for school leaders and governors, these will be uploaded on Perspective Lite.</p> <p>Additional Support</p> <p>The Local Authority will work constructively in order to positively affect structural change with the Department for Education and the Regional Schools Commissioner.</p> <p>Local Authority Senior Officers will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the transition arrangements for schools • Write a Local Authority Statement of Action • Maintain challenge to those accountable for the standards of education in the school • Ensure the pace of the improvement is maintained. |
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Outcomes of visits will be recorded on one common format that will cover strengths, areas of development and recommendations for improvement. This will be monitored and updated on each visit via Perspective Lite.

**Additional Lincolnshire County Council policies and guidance can be found on
Perspective Lite**

- Engagement with Academies Protocol
- School Intervention Fund Allocation Policy
- School Alert Policy
- Protocol for the Allocation of Interim Heads

Documents for working

- Visit Agendas
- Education Locality Lead Visit Report Template
- Intervention Funding Form

Autumn Agenda

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|--------------------------|---|
| Name of Meeting | Autumn Term Visit |
| Location/Platform | |
| Date and Time | |
| Attendees | Headteacher Chair of Governors Education Locality Lead |
| Apologies | |

| | Agenda Item |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Welcome and Introductions |
| 2 | Performance data trends and outcomes for pupils |
| 3 | Quality of Education – Curriculum |
| 4 | Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do governors hold leaders to account for the quality of education? |
| 5 | School improvement priorities, recommendations and joint monitoring activity for the spring core visit |
| 6 | AOB |

Spring Agenda

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|--------------------------|---|
| Name of Meeting | Spring Term Visit |
| Location/Platform | |
| Date and Time | |
| Attendees | Headteacher Chair of Governors Education Locality Lead |
| Apologies | |

| | Agenda Item |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Welcome and Introductions |
| 2 | Feedback from joint monitoring activity |
| 3 | SEND |
| 4 | Disadvantaged |
| 5 | Early Years |
| 6 | Agree focus of summer joint monitoring activity |
| 7 | AOB |

Summer Agenda

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|--------------------------|---|
| Name of Meeting | Summer Term Visit |
| Location/Platform | |
| Date and Time | |
| Attendees | Headteacher Chair of Governors Education Locality Lead |
| Apologies | |

| | Agenda Item |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Welcome and Introductions |
| 2 | Feedback from joint monitoring activity |
| 3 | Personal development |
| 4 | Behaviour and attitudes |
| 5 | Transition |
| 6 | AOB |

Covid 19

This appendix aims to summarise some of the changes to ways of working which were introduced through the Covid 19 pandemic to support schools and their children and young people.

What key decisions were made as a result of COVID-19 and their impact on children and young people?

Some of the decisions made for schools and the guidance that was issued came directly from the Department for Education. The Local Authority received this at the same time as schools and officers supported school leaders and governors in understanding this guidance and in applying this in the school's own setting. It is fair to say that this guidance changed regularly and it was difficult, particularly in the initial stages of the pandemic, to keep up-to-date with this.

The Strategy for School Improvement and the Education Locality Lead role of support, monitor and challenge was paused including schools escalated in Strategy or Call In. The team moved into a supportive function to assist headteachers in dealing with the crisis.

The Education Team became the key communication channel to ensure that school leaders had received important Department for Education communications as well as issuing communication and updates from Local Authority departments. Leadership briefings moved online and became more regular with specialist sessions on different topics added as a focus including assessment, Ofsted, the role of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum and sessions from Health Protection at different stages of the pandemic to support schools navigating specialist guidance. Regular locality meetings were set up with headteachers to enable more support for school leaders and to share practice in areas.

The Mobilise project was re-purposed to deliver sessions on trauma-informed practice and to support teachers in welcoming pupils back to school. Other school improvement programmes were paused and then repurposed to support schools and pupils in returning to their full curriculum. A bespoke programme was commissioned to develop the resilience of school leaders. The Department for Education School Improvement Programmes were paused. Some schools accessed specific Department for Education support to help them deal with the Covid 19 pandemic. Transition resources were produced for schools for each stage of transition to support pupils who may have been most at risk at these key transition phases.

How did we know that the quality and impact of practice in Lincolnshire remained high and addressed the risks during the pandemic?

We ensured our most vulnerable children were safe and reviewed the provision for all children with SEND and those with a social worker. This included calling all families and carrying out individual risk assessments. We updated the medical needs policy and Health Protection provided specific advice for individual procedures. We continued to carefully monitor applications for Elective Home Education and changed our processes to follow these up as initially we saw applications rising although many of these were Covid-specific and numbers have since decreased. We established the key worker helpline supporting schools to establish which children required a school place and supporting schools and parents where there were issues. For pupils who may have been more at risk on return we supported schools with advice on carrying out specific risk assessments for individual pupils.

When schools were asked to open to more pupils we wrote a recovery document to support schools in preparing for and thinking about what they would need in place for re-opening. We issued additional attendance and safeguarding advice to support schools in updating their policies through the pandemic. Our school food team provided specialist advice to schools in adapting their provision and we issued the Winter Grant and then the Covid Support Grant to schools to provide pupils eligible for free school meals vouchers or food in the holidays. We managed the first tranche of issuing of Department for Education Laptops to disadvantaged pupils and those with a social worker in the year groups required by the Department for Education. Admissions were processed meeting national deadlines with appeals moving online. Throughout the different phases of opening or partial opening, school transport was continuously updated to ensure that pupils who needed to get to school could do so.

We wrote specific guidance for schools on emotionally based school avoidance to support them with pupils who may find it hard to return to school. Teachers accessed speech and language communication training. Boss adapted their practice to support children and families in the home where necessary. We launched a social media campaign which aimed to recognise the enormous efforts made by many of our young people to support their communities during a time of national crisis. Through #Covidteenheroes, many schools celebrated individual contributions via Twitter.

Our Education Locality Leads reviewed remote learning plans and continued to support schools in welcoming pupils back into schools and in adjusting their curriculum planning where necessary and they started to move back into their support, monitor and challenge function. Strategy meetings started to recommence.

What recovery plans are in place to mitigate impact of the pandemic and return to business as usual?

We established a pilot of the Holiday Activities Fund pilot over the school Easter holidays with more schools part of this in the summer holidays.

Schools were supported with specialist assessment sessions to ensure assessments they are making are accurate which helps them to identify any gaps in pupils' learning.

Valuing SEND is being established and the AskSAL helpline has been set up so schools can seek specialist advice when supporting individual pupils with SEND or where they may be considering an EHCP application.

The Strategy for School Improvement has been refreshed so that all maintained schools receive a termly visit from their Education Locality Lead to ensure that their school is in a strong position moving forward.

The Government has provided a number of programmes to support recovery in schools including:

- Training for Early Years Staff
- Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI)
- Catch Up Premium (Summer catch up)
- Recovery Premium (Disadvantaged pupils)
- Holiday education: summer schools
- National Tutoring Programme
- Early Career Framework Training and new suite of NPQs
- CPD for teachers
- 16 to 19 Tuition fund.