

Children's Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel

**Agenda
Item No.
11**

Date: 25 November 2014

Title of Report: School Improvement

Ward(s): All

Portfolio: Cllr B Cassidy – Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

Executive Summary:

This report is an update on School Improvement since the last Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

Reason for scrutiny:

The report was requested by the chair of Scrutiny.

Recommendation

That:

Subject to any comments that members may wish to make, the amendments to the School Improvement Strategy Action Plan, as approved by the Education Challenge Board, be noted.

Background papers:

School Improvement Strategy Action Plan

Resource and legal considerations:

Any resource implications arising from this report will be found from within approved budgets. There are no direct legal considerations arising from this report.

Citizen impact:

Raising standards across education will have an impact on all citizens in Walsall.

Environmental impact:

There is no specific environmental impact from this report.

Equality Implications:

All School Improvement services are intended to impact on the outcomes for all Walsall children and young people. The appropriate Equality Impact Assessments have been prepared and submitted.

Consultation:

There has been no further consultation on the draft version of the School Improvement Action Plan since the Education Challenge Board held on 5 November 2014.

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Children's Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel

Date: 25 November 2014

Title of Report: School Improvement

1. Purpose

To provide an update on the first meeting of the Education Challenge Board which has taken place since the last Children's Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel in October.

2. Background and Context

Post Ofsted inspection of School Improvement services in June 2014, the outcome determined the service to be ineffective. Based on the inspection outcome and main findings, an action plan was drawn up to address the six key priorities identified for improvement. These are:

Priority 1: Ensure strong leadership in all Walsall Schools

Priority 2: Ensure the LA improvement strategy is fit for purpose

Priority 3: Ensure the LA maintains an accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the performance of all schools

Priority 4: Ensure a robust and unambiguous approach to school categorisation, intervention and support

Priority 5: Ensure high quality school improvement across all sectors

Priority 6: Ensure effective school to school support across the LA

After consultation with colleagues in schools and the Local Authority, the action plan was presented to Senior Regional HMI at Ofsted for scrutiny in August 2014. Overall approval for the actions were discussed and agreed. As part of the accountability, monitoring and scrutiny of the post Ofsted action plan, it was agreed to establish an Education Challenge Board.

3. Education Challenge Board

The Education Challenge Board is independently chaired by Frances Done. Membership of the Board includes Headteachers from all phases, governor representatives, the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and LA officers. *(Please see Appendix 1 attached).*

At the first meeting of the Education Challenge Board on the 5th November, the Terms of Reference and Governance were agreed. *(Please see Appendix 2 attached).*

The Walsall School Improvement Strategy Action Plan (draft) was scrutinised with comments and amendments to the 6 priorities agreed.

4. Agreed amendments to the Strategic Action Plan

- a) To RAG rate the progress of the School Improvement Strategy Action Plan (6 priorities).
- b) To RAG rate each milestone and success criteria, including measurable target ranges.
- c) To combine the success criteria from each of the 6 priorities into one list of measurable success criteria with milestones.
- d) To prioritise, challenge and progress monitoring on 3 of the 6 priorities for the next meeting in January, while considering the remaining 3 priorities at the following meeting.
- e) A risk register to be presented at the next Education Challenge Board meeting in January.
- f) Revise target dates and confirm leadership of each priority.

5. Considerations to Successful Delivery

In order to achieve targets outlined in the plan the following actions need to be successfully implemented as part of the educational landscape in Walsall:

- a) Building partnership working and collaboration, trust and confidence of schools and academies within the Local Authority.
- b) Developing the school to school led improvement strategy and sharing of best practice.
- c) Deliver required improvement urgently in a way that will sustain and embed improvements long term.
- d) Ensuring strong leadership at all levels in schools and academies, including governance and school leaders.
- e) Using data consistently and effectively to challenge and support schools in order to ensure all pupils make progress at or above national levels.

Lynda Poole
Assistant Director – Access and Achievement
11 November 2014



Walsall Education Challenge Board

Wednesday 5 November 2014

Conference Room 4, Council House

Attendance List:

Frances Done	Independent Chair
Councillor Barbara Cassidy	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
Councillor Eddie Hughes	Main Party Opposition Lead Member
David Haley	Executive Director: Children's Services
Lynda Poole	Assistant Director – Access and Achievement
David Mountney	HTGWG representative
Elaine Maher	Walsall Nursery and Primary Schools Headteacher
Kay Mills	Walsall Special School Headteacher
Alison Bruton	Walsall Secondary Headteacher
John Bonhomme	Walsall Governor
Ross Doodson	Walsall Governor

In attendance (support):

Karen Marcroft	QA and Performance
Jane Bonner	Head of Service for School Improvement (Interim)
Pam Grant	PA to Assistant Director, Access and Achievement

Walsall Education Challenge Board

Overall Purpose: Governance for Walsall's School Improvement Strategy

Membership:

- Independent Chair
- Walsall Council:
 - Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
 - Main Party Opposition Lead Member
 - Executive Director: Children's Services
 - Assistant Director - Access and Achievement
 - Headteacher and Governor School Improvement Strategy Working Group representative
 - Walsall Nursery and Primary Schools Headteacher representative x 1
 - Walsall Special School Headteacher representative x 1
 - Walsall Secondary Headteacher representative x 1
 - Walsall Governors x 2

Support:

- PA to Assistant Director
- QA and Performance Support
- Head of Service – School Improvement

Meeting Schedule:

- 5 times per year – approximately every two months in September, November, January, March/April and May/June
- Agenda to be agreed between Assistant Director in liaison with Portfolio Holder and Executive Director: Children's Services and the Independent Chair

Remit:

Through its actions and communications the Walsall Education Challenge Board will monitor progress in and provide challenge for Walsall's Strategy for supporting School Improvement and its associated improvement plan.

This will be achieved by:

- Providing constructive challenge to those responsible both for delivering improved outcomes in schools and those providing support to schools' improvement.
- Monitoring the raising of standards at all key stages across all schools and academies
- Monitoring the proportion of schools judged good and better as well as those requiring improvement
- Evaluating the impact of improved leadership and management
- Evaluating the impact of the Council's School Improvement function
- Monitoring and evaluating the progress of the post Ofsted actions to ensure they are contributing to the strategic aims of the overall school improvement strategy

Additionally, the Board will:

- Examine the progress being made in enabling schools to play a full role as the key universal service in the wider partnership for children
- Review the quality and impact of services available to support and challenge schools and other settings
- Evaluate the impact of sector led improvement and research in practice on school improvement.

Role of the Independent Chair:

- To keep the Board focused on the key objectives of the Walsall School Improvement Strategy and its associated operational plans
- To regularly review the progress of the strategy to support school improvement in terms of outcomes
- To ensure that the Board's findings are regularly reported to the Children and Young People's Partnership
- To represent the board to all stakeholders as appropriate.

Reporting:

To the Children and Young People's Partnership Board

Links with:

Headteacher Associations, Walsall Governor Association, JNCC and Children and the Young People Scrutiny Panel, Regional Schools Commissioner, Academy Sponsor