

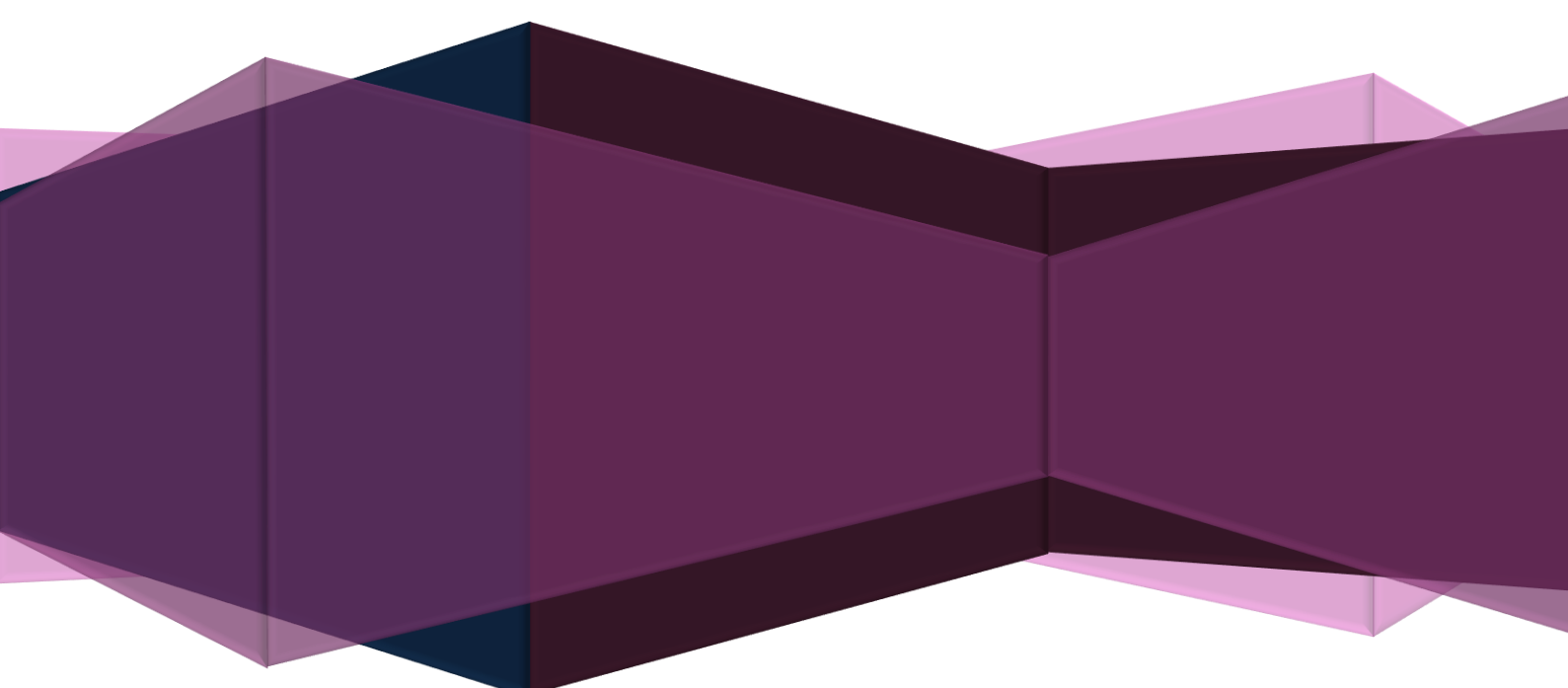


**Walsall Council**

**PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE**

# **Walsall Right for Children Inclusion Strategy**

**Walsall Council**



## Foreword

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council's mission is to secure the very best opportunities for all its children and young people, in the very best settings with the highest quality teaching and learning to enable them to realize their full potential. Providing academic excellence, and an outstanding social and civic education for every child and young person living in Walsall.

This document reflects Walsall's corporate vision that: **'Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised'** and that, 'We are led by the communities we serve who help shape the services we provide, and we help those communities to make a positive difference to their own lives through active civic engagement and co-operation.'<sup>1</sup> Our ambition is to create a culture where there is effective, high quality learning provision, combined with meaningful and purposeful school partnerships, focused on the direct pursuit of improved outcomes for all Walsall's young people. Our council-wide transformation programme is a whole system transformation of services associated with children who are looked after, as a key corporate transformation. We intend to better align schools with other providers and services impacting positively on the lives of our children.

Our transformation programme commits us to:

- Whole system change to ensure that Walsall's **Children's Services are as efficient and as effective** as they can be
- ensuring that support is in place so children can have the best start and are **safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well**
- ensuring that our communities are resilient and that housing needs for children and young people are met in **safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion**
- creating a **robust and ambitious school led system** of continuous improvement, informed by intelligent use of relevant data, and building on the many existing strong networks amongst Walsall schools and school leadership
- ensuring every school is part of a **family of schools**, and that there is good local and borough-wide knowledge
- developing **partnerships with employers, universities and health** to ensure Walsall's children, young people and families receive the

---

<sup>1</sup> Corporate Plan, 2018-2021, Walsall Council

qualifications and skills they need to become active, independent, contributing and positive citizens

- ensuring **high challenge and support based on a restorative approach** at all levels
- learning from and sharing the best **national and international developments in education and social care**
- above all Walsall Council will ensure that no **child, young person, family, school or academy, Head teacher or Principal, governing body or community** feels unsafe or unsupported in this continuing journey of all our schools being fully inclusive

Sally Rowe

Executive Director of Children's Services



# Contents

**Foreword..... 2**

**Introduction..... 5**

**National and Local context..... 8**

**Our Vision ..... 10**

**A Partnership Approach ..... 18**

**Partnership structures at three different levels..... 20**

**Priorities for Improvement ..... 21**

**Roles and Responsibilities ..... 21**

## Introduction

Our **Walsall Right for Children** vision sets out our ambition of the broad view of the role of schools in their immediate community, in Walsall as a whole and beyond and with the aim to meet the needs of the whole child. That is:



Our core work for **Walsall Right for Children** is based on our needs assessment which identified; ‘what’s working’, innovation activity and learning across children’s services nationally.

Our **key principles** within our vision are:

- Listening and responding to the voices of our children
- Restorative practice... doing with, not for or to
- Focussing on making a difference

Our **key priorities** within our vision are:

- Locality working
- Quality of practice and support
- Improve achievement and close the gaps
- Develop a strong and stable workforce
- Review our commissioning approach

Consequently, Walsall Council also works with a wide range of partners to champion physical and mental well-being and to ensure that communities work collectively to support schools and our children and young people in their wider civic role. Walsall Council is committed to ensuring that children have the best start in life and are safe from harm, happy and learning well.

In the Local Authority’s Children’s Services Directorate, the Access and Achievement service will deliver the Walsall Right for Children vision through two distinct strategies:

- The Access Strategy
- The Inclusion Strategy.

This, our Walsall Right for Children Inclusion Strategy sets out the vision, priorities and aims to ensure a step change in improved outcomes for all children and young people.

The strategy also aligns with the Council's corporate plan 2018-2021<sup>2</sup> and its priorities:



*'Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.'*

Ref	Outcomes	Measures	
Ch1	Children will be ready for school	25	Percentage of pupils reaching a good level of development (GLD) at the end of reception
Ch2	The gaps in educational attainment between the least and most deprived communities will be narrowed and for all under achieving groups	26	The progress Free School Meals children make
Ch3	Right children looked after, for the right length of time in the right placement	27	Average length of time in care
Ch4	Care leavers are economically active citizens of their community	28	Percentage of care leavers not in education employment or training (NEETs)
Ch5	Young People are prevented from entering the criminal justice system	29	Reduction of first time entrants

Our strategic priorities are based on an assumption that, given the right environment, culture, approach and circumstances all our children and young people can thrive, flourish and achieve great outcomes.

This Walsall Right for Children Inclusion Strategy aims to set out the respective roles and responsibilities of all concerned with educational outcomes including the Local Authority, which will act:

<sup>2</sup> Walsall Council Corporate Plan 2018-2021

- a) As a **champion** - of educational transformation with a strong moral purpose and democratic mandate to ensure good outcomes and a shared vision for our children, families and communities.
- b) As a **convener** – bringing leaders together, connecting to best practice within and beyond the system and facilitating the best partnerships.
- c) As a **commissioner** – bringing the strategic picture, sharing intelligence and data and enabling and commissioning support, challenge and development.

As a Local Authority, we believe that it is our duty to ensure that our values support children, young people and their families. Our values are:

**Professionalism** As stewards of public funds and information, we understand the importance of our jobs, we have respect for ourselves, our colleagues, our citizens and the organisation that we represent. We act accordingly. We deal with issues, whether positive or negative, in a moderate and straightforward manner whenever possible.

**Leadership** Together we will create an inspiring vision of the future. We will motivate and inspire people to engage with that vision. We recognise the talents of individuals and allow those talents to be utilised for the betterment of the organisation.

**Accountability** We adhere to a standard of professionalism in the workplace. We hold ourselves responsible for upholding the purpose of our organisation.

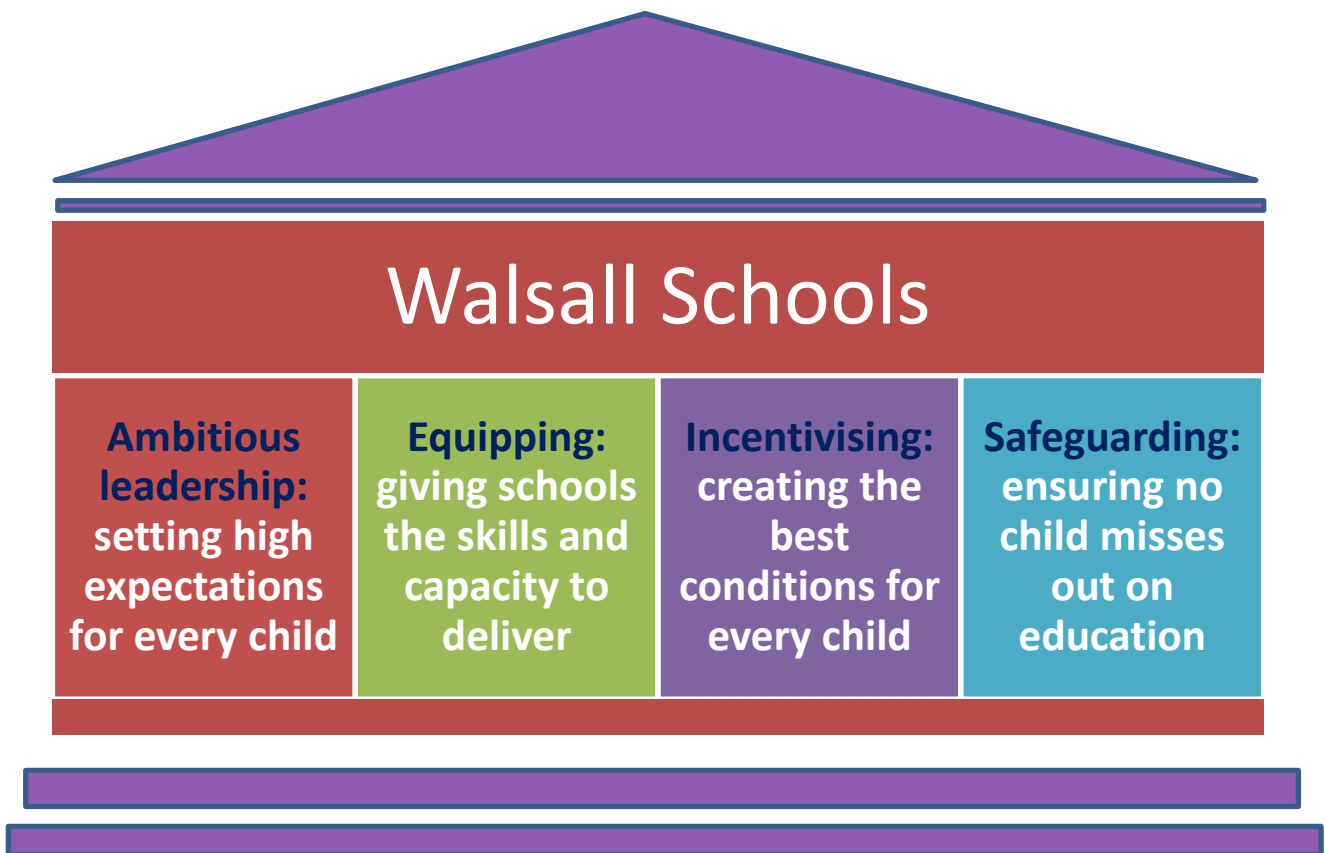
**Transparency** We will ensure the availability of information which can be made public.

**Ethical** We will display integrity, honesty and be mindful of the rule of law in order to successfully practice and promote transparency of government.

## Our Vision

Walsall Right for Children’s vision for inclusion is one where potential is unlocked for all learners whatever their abilities and needs. In schools and settings where an inclusive and an open restorative culture helps gain the necessary skills and confidence to be inspired and be aspirational.

Systemic improvement across Walsall is required to achieve this, and we put forward a vision for reforming practice built on four key pillars and identified in the recent education review conducted by Edward Timpson<sup>3</sup>:



### **Ambitious Leadership:**

We believe that we must support school leaders to create strong school cultures that deliver the best outcomes for every child. To do this, we need ensure schools have the support and capability to set clear and high expectations for all children, as well as to put in place the support that individual children may need. It is vital that we ensure that we have the right school leaders who are positive role models for all children in every Walsall school.

### **Equipping:**

We believe that if we are to support schools to deliver effectively high standards for every child, we must invest in their skills and capability to identify needs, address and issues and offer the very best education available.

<sup>3</sup> Timpson Review of School Exclusion, May 2019



### **Incentivising:**

We believe that we need to recognize schools who succeed in supporting all children, including those with additional needs, to remain positively engaged in mainstream in the context of a well-managed school. Sharing good practice of these schools where they take positive action to create cultures that offer the best conditions for all children to learn.

### **Safeguarding:**

We believe that as well as raising the expectations of schools and giving them the right skills and support to meet the expectations. Any high-performing system should have the right safeguards to keep children safe and ensure they are receiving a suitable education.

### **Policy into Practice:**

We believe that schools across Walsall should use Quality First Teaching principles. These provide high quality experiences and opportunities using flexible and adaptable approaches in learning environments where everyone is allowed to flourish. QFT, alongside a timely graduated approach to SEND in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (2014) will ensure all our learners have a voice and are supported throughout their educational journey, building resilient citizens and communities who feel valued and positive about their future.

‘Quality first teaching draws on a repertoire of teaching strategies and techniques that are closely matched to the specified learning objectives and the particular needs of the children and young people in the class. It demands 100% participation from the pupils and sets high and realistic challenges. It does not “spoon feed”, it is challenging and demanding; it expects pupils to be able to articulate their ideas, understanding and thinking by actively promoting pupil talk.’

### **Quality First Teaching Principles:**

- QFT involves understanding the needs of the learners.
- A variety of methods of delivery of approaches will help engage and inform learners.
- Support staff must have a clear understanding of what the lesson will involve so they can play an effective role.
- It is essential to monitor the lesson to gain a clear understanding of how learners are progressing.
- Questioning learners helps to challenge them and to check their understanding.



As a Local Authority we will model an early intervention, support and restorative approach based on equality, respect, high challenge and high support to ensure we are the ‘champions’ of our children, and their families. We will do this in line with our statutory duties whilst ensuring that all learners have equal access to a rich and vibrant curriculum in and out of the classroom.

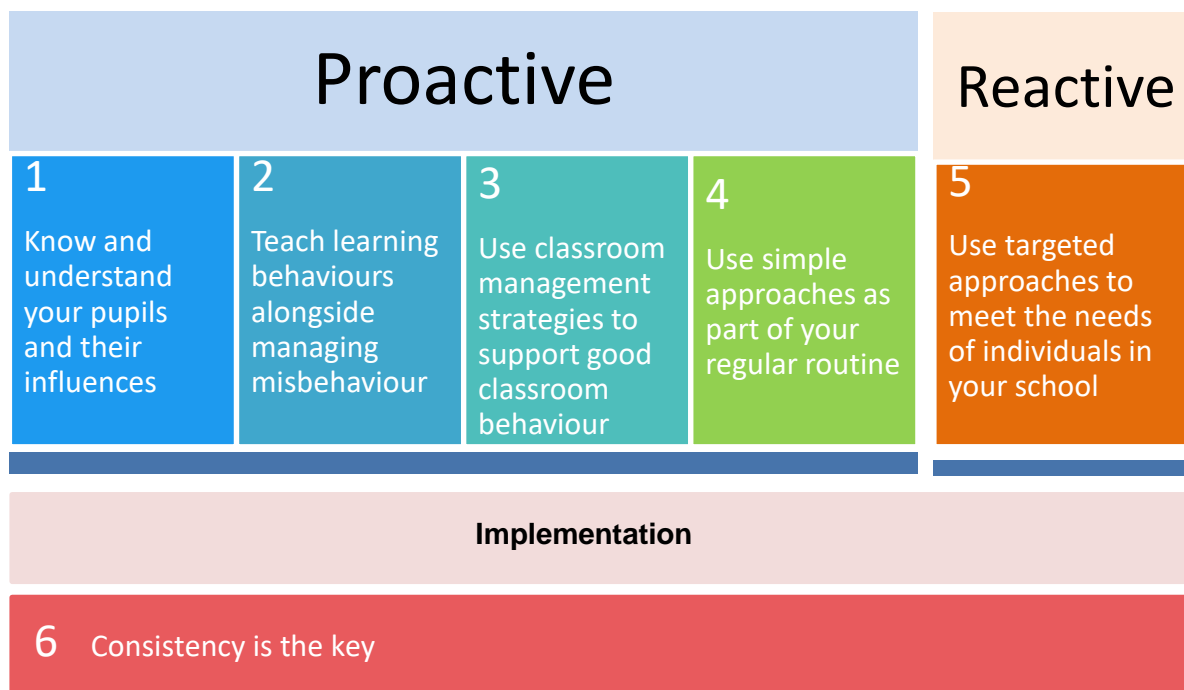
### **Inclusive Schools, Behaviour and Exclusions:**

We will require and challenge our school leaders to promote good behaviour, positive relationships, resilience, emotional well-being and engagement in learning to ensure

that successful outcomes for all Walsall children and young people are the norm. Research over time has found that the consistent features of school that effectively promoted positive behaviour were<sup>4</sup>:

- **School culture and ethos.** The ‘leadership processes which develop, maintain and transform the culture,’ specifying ‘an emphasis on developing values, norms and behaviour.’
- **Community and partnerships.** Schools must see themselves as members of a greater community.
- **Personal and professional characteristics.** An emphasis on what type of leader or leadership is frequently associated with good behaviour practices.
- **Promoting inclusion and limiting exclusion.** These schools tended to make maximum efforts to retain the most challenging students by finding methods of including them <sup>5</sup>in the school community. Note that this has often been misinterpreted – disastrously- as an oversimplification approach that returns students to the classroom with no program in place to support their integration and help remedy their behaviour. The opposite should be true; the most challenging children need provision that is often not possible within the mainstream classroom, but can be provided more efficiently in nurture units, until ready to return to mainstream education.

The recent guidance from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF<sup>6</sup>) sets out a number of key recommendations, which we ask Walsall schools to follow.



The first details strategies to prevent misbehaviour happening. A key theme from these recommendations is the importance of knowing individual pupils well, so that schools

<sup>4</sup> Promoting the conditions for positive behaviour, to help every child succeed – review of the landscape (2011) Professor Philip Garner

<sup>5</sup> Creating a culture: How school leaders can optimise behaviour, Tom Bennett - March 2017

<sup>6</sup> Improving Behaviour in Schools – Education Endowment Foundation, June 2019

and teachers know which factors might affect pupil behaviour and what the school can do to address these. Focusing on developing good relationships also ensures pupils feel valued and supported, meaning they are less likely to misbehave. The second focuses on how to deal with bad behaviour when it happens. A key message is that schools should use personalised approaches—like daily report cards—to address ‘problem pupils’, rather than universal systems. It recommends that teachers are trained in specific strategies if they’re dealing with pupils with high behaviour needs. The third focuses on the importance of consistency and coherence when it comes to behaviour policies. This means that once senior leaders have considered the rationale for putting a new behaviour strategy or approach to work, they need to spend time and care embedding it across the entire school.

The guidance provided by the EEF supports the key principles highlighted Timpson review of school exclusions and these are:

- every child, regardless of their characteristics, needs or the type of school they attend, deserves a high-quality education that allows them to flourish and paves the way to a successful future
- we should expect schools consistently to have the right systems in place and teachers to have the right skills to manage poor behaviour and provide support where children need it – but we must equip them with the right tools, capability and capacity to deliver against this expectation
- schools must be calm and safe environments and it is right that we support head teachers to establish strong school behaviour cultures, including by making use of exclusion where appropriate
- there is no optimum rate or number of exclusions – exclusion rates must be considered in the context in which the decisions to exclude are made. A higher rate of exclusion may reflect local context and be a sign of effective leadership in one school, whilst in others a lower exclusion rate may signal strong early intervention strategies that have been put in place. In contrast, higher rates of exclusion could demonstrate schools not putting in place effective interventions for children at risk of exclusion, and indeed lower rates could be indicative of children being pushed out of school without the proper processes being followed
- alongside considering the best interests of the wider school community, head teachers, with the support of their staff, should make decisions about how to address poor behaviour, based on their knowledge of individual children and what specific support, interventions or sanctions are needed from within the school and from the relevant support agencies
- schools must be places that are welcoming and respectful, where every child has the opportunity to succeed. To ensure this is the case, they should understand how their policies impact differently on pupils depending on their protected characteristics, such as disability or race, and should give particular consideration to the fair treatment of pupils from groups who are vulnerable to exclusion
- it cannot be the job of schools alone to take action to understand and address the complex underlying needs that children may have
- we should not accept that exclusion comes at the cost of a child getting a good education

Good behaviour – even exemplary behaviour – is possible in every school setting, whatever the baseline. This must always be the aspiration, no matter how far the execution falls short at times, because without the aspiration, the goal can never be realised. This includes schools with the most challenging intakes as well as the least.

A student's experience in school remains one of the most insightful indicators of later life success in any one of a number of metrics. For many it is the best chance they will ever have to flourish. How they conduct themselves at school is crucial to that experience. Helping them develop good behaviour is therefore one of the most important tasks a school faces.

As a LA and as a family of schools we need to ensure that we are working in effective partnership to signpost, support and broker early intervention to support and more importantly understand the needs of the learners within our care.

## **Inclusion in Walsall is everyone's right and everyone's**

**The true measure of any society can be found in how it  
treats its most vulnerable members.**

Mahatma Ghandi



## National Context

The significant shift in national education policy and funding which has occurred over the past five plus years has resulted in increased autonomy and diversity of school provision. However, it is important to recognize that Ofsted still have the oversight for all schools and make judgements about schools performance based on the inspection framework. From the 1st of September 2019, there is a new Ofsted inspection framework<sup>7</sup>. Ofsted announced that:

“These changes will move Ofsted’s focus away from headline data to look instead at how schools are achieving these results, and whether they are offering a curriculum that is broad, rich and deep, or simply rich and deep, or simply teaching to the test.”  
(Ofsted press release)

Ofsted inspectors will now spend less time looking at exam results and test data, and more time considering how a nursery, school, college or other education provider has achieved their results. Ofsted grades will also stay the same: Outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate. However, how these grades will be decided upon has changed significantly. The judgement categories have been revised to now cover:

**Quality of Education:** This judgement will have a much clearer focus on the curriculum. There will also be three major components when judging the curriculum:

- intent (what you are trying to achieve through the curriculum - it must be broad and balanced and include the essential knowledge that pupils need to become educated citizens. Note: Ofsted does not describe what the curriculum should be and schools taking a radically different approach but coherent and research led approach will not be penalised)
- implementation (how the curriculum being delivered)
- impact (what difference is the curriculum making – but note this does not imply continuous testing to prove changes) There will be far less emphasis on school's internal data as evidence, and much greater emphasis on drawing together evidence from interviews, observations and documentary review, as well as nationally published information about how pupils progress when they leave school (secondary)

**Behaviour and Attitudes:** Behaviour and attitudes considers how leaders and staff create a safe, orderly and positive environment in the school and the impact this has on the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils.

Note: if there is evidence that a school has deliberately removed pupils on the day of the inspection then this is likely to result in inadequate judgement in both ‘Behaviour and Attitudes’ and ‘Leadership and Management’. Ofsted will also evaluate the

---

<sup>7</sup> Ofsted Framework – May 2019

effectiveness of alternative and off-site arrangements made for pupils. In gathering evidence for this judgement, Ofsted will hold discussions with pupils and staff – this will include support staff and other systems – trainees, NQTs, administrative support staff, supply staff and catering staff.

**Personal Development:** There is a strong emphasis upon the academic, technical or vocational curriculum and Ofsted recognises that schools have a fundamental role in developing responsible, respectful and active citizens. Some of these activities will go beyond the normal school day and include a range of out of school activities. This judgement will include issues such as keeping healthy through diet and physical activity. It will also evaluate the school's provision for spiritual, moral and social education.

**Leadership and Management:** Leadership and management can be neatly summed up by, 'making things work'. This judgement is about how leaders, managers and those responsible for governance ensure that the education provided by the school has a positive impact on all its pupils including:

- creating a coherent vision through inclusive curriculum
- enabling staff to deliver that vision by supporting them to develop their skills
- developing an appropriate management style
- creating appropriate systems to enable the vision
- ensuring the delivery of the vision

**What do the changes mean for children and young people with SEND?** Many parents of disabled children and children with SEND have voiced concern over the new 2019 framework, saying that it lets vulnerable learners down and that inclusion has not been given enough focus. In response to this, Ofsted argues that the new framework will 'bear in mind where the curriculum needs to be amended to meet the needs of those learners with SEND' including:

- whether schools and early years providers are inclusive of children with SEND
- whether schools are removing some children from their rolls solely to improve published outcomes
- whether colleges and other further education providers are doing all they can to ensure that all learners are able to complete their courses
- whether the curriculum available for the most disadvantaged learners is ambitious and meets their needs

As a Local Authority we have taken much of our vision for inclusion from the new Ofsted framework and the Timpson review. We have also considered:

- the parliamentary report- *Forgotten Children: alternative provision and the scandal of ever-increasing exclusions*<sup>88</sup>, which states: *"Mainstream schools should be bastions of inclusion"*

---

<sup>88</sup> *Forgotten Children: alternative provision and the scandal of ever-increasing exclusions*. House of Commons Education Committee, July 2018

- The white paper, Education Excellence Everywhere<sup>9</sup>, which calls for schools to: *“deliver educational excellence everywhere, so that every child and young person can access world class provision, achieving to the best of his or her ability regardless of location, prior attainment and background”*
- Creating opportunity for all<sup>10</sup>, a DfE publication which states: *“Every child, no matter their background, needs or where they live, deserves an excellent education and the opportunity to fulfil their potential. For some children, their health needs or circumstances mean that they are not able to attend a mainstream or special school, and are educated in alternative provision (AP). It is vital that we ensure that these children, who are often some of the most disadvantaged, are offered equal opportunities to make the most of their talents and become successful adults.”*

At the same time, Local Authorities have become strategic commissioners and champions for parents and children. Local Authorities retain the statutory duty “to promote high standards so that children and young people achieve well and fulfil their potential” (1996 Education Act) and are required to ensure secure arrangements for school improvement. School improvement in its widest sense, relating to:

- Alternative Provision
- Early Years and School Readiness
- Exclusions
- Leadership and Governance
- Policy support and good practice
- Post 16
- Schools Causing Concern
- SEND support and early intervention, including EHCP assessment and SENDIASS
- Virtual School and LAC

As a Local Authority we are committed to providing an appropriate, high quality, inclusive education to ensure the best possible outcomes for all our pupils, whatever their abilities or needs.

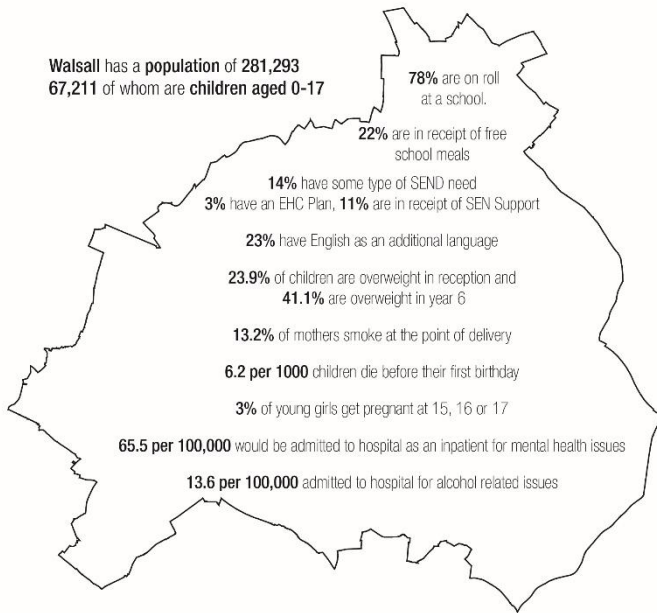
---

<sup>9</sup> Education Excellence Everywhere – White Paper, March 2016

<sup>10</sup> Creating opportunity for all Our vision for alternative provision. DfE March 2018

# Local Context

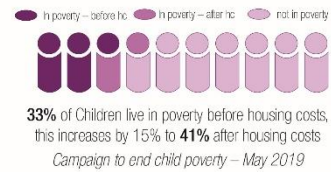
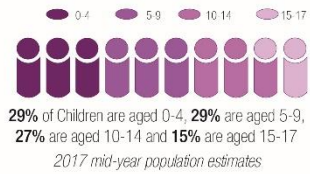
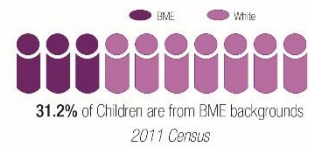
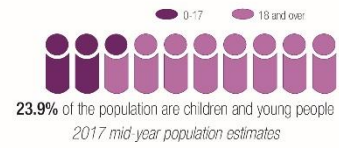
## Children Living in Walsall



Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database rights 2017 [100019529]



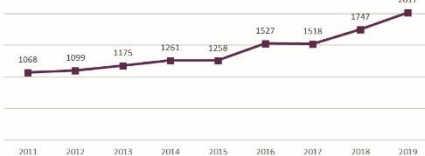
Walsall Council



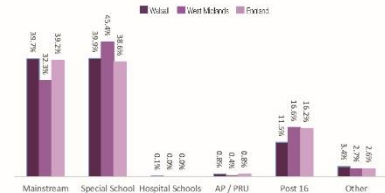
## Brief Profile of children with SEN in Walsall

Based on published data

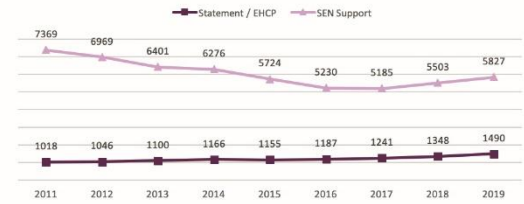
EHC Plans and statements Maintained by Walsall



Placement of children with an EHCP



Pupils in Walsall Schools



In January 2019, Walsall schools reported that

**1490 (2.8%) pupils**

Had an Education, Care and Health plan

Statistical Neighbours - 3.26%  
West Midlands - 3.10%  
England - 3.10%

**5827 (10.9%) pupils**

Were in receipt of SEN Support

Statistical Neighbours - 12.75%  
West Midlands - 12.60%  
England - 11.90%



In 2016 - 17

**3.06%**

Appeals were registered per 10,000 school population

Statistical Neighbours - 4.16%  
West Midlands - 5.94%  
England - 5.45%



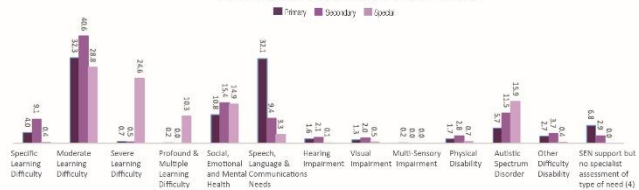
In 2018

**34.60%**

of EHC plans were issued within 20 weeks

Statistical Neighbours - 49.38%  
West Midlands - 58.40%  
England - 60.10%

Placement of children with an EHCP



Walsall Council



We aim to engender a sense of community and belonging and to raise the aspirations and expectations for all pupils' especially vulnerable learners and those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND). We believe that all children should be equally valued wherever they access their education. We will strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, and to develop an environment where all children can achieve, feel safe and included.

Our moral imperative is that fairness and social justice is fundamental to ensuring progress for all, but especially for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners who start behind others.

**“Accountability matters - every child deserves a great education. We have a responsibility to ensure all pupils are getting a great education, and we will be unapologetic in acting where pupils' education is suffering.” DfE – ‘Principles for a clear and simple accountability system’ (May 2018)**



**“It’s time to raise our ambitions, to expect more and to expect better for every child, whatever their background.” Education Secretary Damian Hinds (July 2018).**

## A Partnership Approach

The Local Authority is ultimately accountable for the statutory education outcomes of all its children and young people, but recognises that many of the skills and resources to achieve great outcomes lie within schools and across partnerships.

Central to our Walsall Right 4 Children Inclusion Strategy is the strong belief that schools are, for the most part, self-improving. We recognise of the value and importance of system leadership in promoting inclusion and school improvement. Teaching School Alliances and hubs along with other strong schools with capacity, are taking an increasing role in developing system leaders and sharing good practice. These schools embrace the concept of school-to-school support and take responsibility beyond their own organisations.

The Council provides support and challenge to schools to improve outcomes for all children and young people across the borough by:

- Using the LA's Education Data Dashboard (EDD) to identify schools that *may* require support, *may* need to be challenged as well as those that are known to require support and challenge. This is part of our protocol for schools causing concern.<sup>11</sup>
- Commissioning, where appropriate support and challenge that ensures schools remain 'good and better' and that improvement is sustained.
- Intervening early where the performance of a school is declining – ensuring that schools are challenged and secure the support needed to improve to at least 'good'.
- Knowing our schools well and influencing schools to become engaged in service design, commissioning and delivery at the local level.
- Targeting school priority areas for improvement and signposting/brokering where schools can access appropriate support.
- Encouraging good and outstanding schools to support and challenge other schools and contribute to system improvement.
- Building strong working relationships with Head Teachers – encouraging challenge and support.
- Work with partners to develop flexible and responsive locality based services to

---

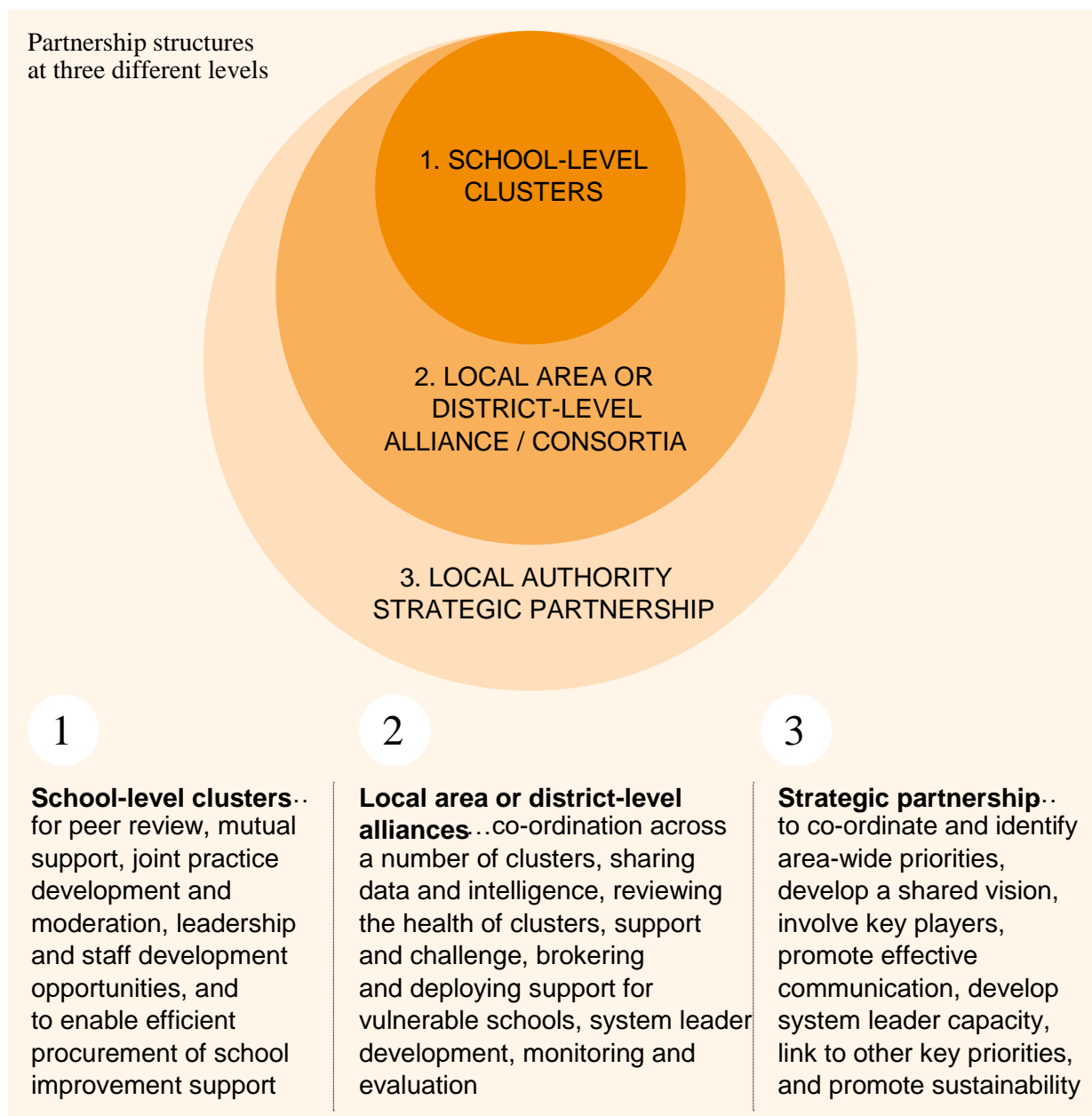
<sup>11</sup> Schools Causing Concern. Protocol for Monitoring, Challenge, Support & intervention in Schools. Walsall Council 2018.

support children and their families to be 'school ready' in Early Years.

- Exploring regional links for sharing good practice and driving up collective performance across the Midlands.
- Piloting social workers being based in schools which will enhance our principles of connecting our practitioners with the communities in which children and young people live
- Working with parents and pupils in a culture of openness and honesty

## Partnership structures at three different levels<sup>12</sup>

We believe that as a Local Authority we need to work with our schools and partners to develop a multi-tiered structure that will work within our local context ensuring that the local improvement system provides high-quality support and is credible with school leaders. This will mean that we will need to have a robust commissioning process that operates through these partnerships and can work through the complexities of multiple providers in a mixed economy.



<sup>12</sup> Enabling School Improvement – research into the role of local authorities in supporting local school improvement systems. ISOS Partnership & LGA – January 2018

**School-level Clusters:**

All schools and academies are part of an identified Walsall cluster of schools. There are a range of improvement benefits that are found from working together including staff development opportunities, joint commissioning professional development or even short-term secondments working with other schools.

Through cluster working school leaders can provide much in the way of informal mutual support, as well as planning more formal leadership development. Cluster projects both short and long-term enable joint working, moderation of practice and performance, and genuine joint practice development. School-level clusters are driven by school leaders. The Local Authority see their responsibilities as championing and as conveners of inclusion, leadership and school development across the school-level cluster.

**Locality-Level:**

Walsall Children's Services are moving towards locality working. This way of working enables focused and targeted support for priorities, which are specific to the children and families, and supports schools in their locality. Locality working facilitates co-production with schools based on identified needs through data and local intelligence.

The Local Authority will bring the intelligence from across the local school improvement system, utilizing existing expertise and capacity from within Walsall and beyond, to support priority working and support the evaluation process. Much of the work at locality level will involve the Local Authority in partnership with Teaching School Alliances, health and other identified good practice providers.

**Strategic Education Inclusion Board:**

The family of schools in Walsall is strong. The creation of the Strategic Education Inclusion Board<sup>13</sup> by the Local Authority in partnership with its schools; embodies a shared moral purpose and passion for inclusion and for continuous improvement in outcomes for all children and young people.

The Local Authority has an important role in working with the Strategic Education Inclusion Board to identify key priorities, which are borough wide. This impacts on all service areas across the Council and not just in the education service delivery areas so that inclusion and school improvement are not seen in isolation.

---

<sup>13</sup> Walsall Right for Children Strategic Education Inclusion Board – ToR 2019

## Priorities for Improvement

The Strategic Walsall Right 4 Children Education & Inclusion Board has identified the following themes for each of its working groups:

- SEND
- Recruitment and Retention
- Vulnerable Learners
- Transition
- Standards

### **SEND:**

- Review the Specialist Provision across the whole borough to ensure that there are the right pupils in the right provision and at the right time in line with our Walsall Right for Children vision.
- Ensure all schools make appropriate 'reasonable adjustments' (Equality Act, 2010) for children with barriers to learning, including children with medical needs
- Ensure early identification of SEND needs, through implementation of robust school based monitoring systems and 'assess, plan, do, review' cycles
- Ensure all schools provide a graduated approach to SEND in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice (2014), to ensure timely and needs led support with a focus on promoting independence and inclusion
- Develop confidence and effectiveness across Walsall schools in providing appropriate and evidence based support for children with SEMH needs
- Effective use of SEN budgets and resources across Walsall schools, with the commissioning and implementation of interventions closely matched to current needs
- Development of clear and transparent pathways and a partnership approach to support so that schools and families know what services can provide and how to access specialist support when needed
- Schools and services work in partnership with children and their families to ensure a needs led approach to service design and delivery
- Improved educational outcomes for children on SEN support

- Improved educational outcomes for children with an EHCP
- Improve access and achievement of the SEND pupils
- Develop a universal understanding of ‘nurture’ and how to develop and deliver a culture and approach to nurture across all schools and settings utilising the experience and expertise across schools and across Children’s Services.

**RECRUITMENT & RETENTION:**

- Help to create the right climate for head teachers and other school leaders to establish supportive school cultures. At the heart of this will be reforming the accountability system.
- Transform support for early career teachers, introducing the most significant reform to teaching since it became a graduate only profession backed by substantial extra investment. In particular:
  - We will build on the foundation of the Early Career Framework to support teachers – whatever their expertise or circumstances – to pursue the right career opportunities for them. In particular:
  - We will radically simplify the process for becoming a teacher, introducing new digital systems designed to make application much easier and more user-friendly.
- Focus on establishing good behaviour across all schools as the key to ensuring that all children are able to achieve their full potential. Effective leadership of schools in establishing the right environment, culture and conditions for learning will support and enable all school staff to work in environments where they can thrive and develop their skills. Universal training/CPD event for all HTs by phase on the EEF guidance materials.

**VULNERABLE LEARNERS:**

- Improve access and achievement of the vulnerable and disadvantaged learners. Every school has pupils premium funding which is given to them to ‘raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities and to close the gaps between them and their peers’ (DfE and EFA, 2018). However the most recent research conducted by the Education Policy Institute (July 2018), shows that the gap for our disadvantaged pupils here in Walsall is unacceptably wide when compared to their peers.
  - On average, disadvantaged children are four months behind at age five. Here in Walsall disadvantaged pupils are 5.9 months behind at aged five.
  - Nationally disadvantaged pupils at aged 11 are likely to be 10 months behind their peers. Here in Walsall that gap is 12.3 months – over a year behind.
  - Nationally at the age of 16 and by the time they take their GCSEs they are 19 months behind. Here in Walsall, that gap is nearly 2 years behind their

peers and an unacceptable 23.6 months.

- Reduce the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions. Attendance and behaviour within our schools is a key priority area. Walsall exclusion rate is currently 3 times the national average.
- Develop and encourage a Restorative Justice approach enabling all learners to remain within their school setting.
- Develop and encourage a whole-school approach to Social Emotional Mental Health based on the the DfE guidelines and incorporating the Wellbeing for Educational Return programme.
- Review the use of Pupil Premium funding and carefully measure the impact of the strategies to ensure maximum impact on the support for vulnerable learners.
- Introduce the Raising Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY) concept within secondary schools. Fund the initial concept work and encourage all secondary schools across Walsall to become active partners in the RADY networking activities
- Review of Alternative Provision across the borough aligned to the Government's vision<sup>14</sup> for reform to ensure:
  - The right children are placed in AP. We need commissioners who place children in AP for behavioural, health or other reasons to plan for how the placement will meet the child's needs and support their transition into a mainstream or special school, another medical placement or onto meaningful employment, education or training at 16. Wherever possible, this planning and decision-making will involve parents and children.
  - Children have good experiences of, and receive high quality education in AP. AP providers should provide an ambitious education that meets children's needs and prepares them for success in the next phase of their education.
  - Children achieve meaningful outcomes after leaving AP. The success of AP settings can be measured by how well prepared children are for the next stage of their lives. Schools, the LA, AP settings, NHS teams, post-16 providers and employers work together to ensure the routes out of AP are well developed, so that children who leave AP settings can fulfil their potential as they grow up.
  - AP is recognised as an integral part of the education system. AP should be an attractive place for teachers to train, work and develop. There must be sufficient high quality and specialist provision to meet the needs of

---

<sup>14</sup> Creating opportunity for all. Our vision for alternative provision. DfE March 2018



compulsory school-age children, for as long as they need it.

- The system is designed to achieve high quality outcomes for children and value for money for the taxpayer. AP should be delivered on the basis of a robust evidence base about how commissioning, accountability and inspection arrangements support the delivery of better, long-term outcomes for children and value for money for the taxpayer.

## **TRANSITION:**

- Review all transition arrangements into EYFS to ensure all learners' needs are known (where possible) and that parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's education.
- Review all transition arrangements from Primary to Secondary schools for all vulnerable learners targeting the disadvantaged pupils whose 'flight path' will be a barrier to the gaps for these learners to be closed.
- Review all Transition Panels and groups alongside the development of the All-age Disability Service to ensure a single transitions pathway for all young people with SEND from 14-25. Ensure appropriate transitions pathways are developed for those with particular needs e.g. Autism.

## **STANDARDS:**

### **1) Early Years Performance**

- Improve the number of EYFS settings attaining a good level of development compared to national.
- Ensure that all learners and parents have access to an inclusive EYFS setting

### **2) Primary Phase Performance**

- Improve the number of settings through direct support, challenge and where appropriate intervention, providing good or better education
- Ensure that all learners have access to an inclusive primary setting

### **3) Secondary Phase Performance**

- Improve the number of settings through direct support, challenge and where appropriate intervention, providing good or better education
- Ensure that all learners have access to an inclusive secondary setting

### **4) Post 16 Performance**

- Mapping current provision and identifying gaps and alignment to economic

priorities/ Labour Market Information (LMI)

- Identifying Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) hotspots such as wards and schools. Identifying 'what is not working well' and the underlying causes.
- Identification of good practice and what is working well and having impact.
- Close partnership working with Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) Impact project to support NEET Post 16.
- Partnership working to develop better and more timely transition pathways for young people with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP). Strengthening links between child and adult social care, health, SEND etc. and the associated education and training providers, in joint funding arrangements where appropriate.
- Refining and monitoring provision to ensure targets are met.
- Develop Post 16/18 provision to ensure that it meets specific needs such as, Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Better monitoring and re-engagement of young people who drop out of education or are Not Knowns.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### **We expect all schools to:**

- Provide good or outstanding education
- Be inclusive and caring, keeping children safe - offering a school place to local children whatever their level of need or background and welcoming vulnerable children into their school community
- Set high aspirations for **all** children
- Develop an ethos that demonstrates good citizenship and respect for all, underpinned by appropriate strategies such as restorative justice principles for behaviour management, inclusive practice, mindfulness and coaching and mentoring for pupils and staff
- Promote and retain a high focus upon good and outstanding teaching
- Celebrate and reward success of their pupils and staff or the whole school and share such good news with the Local Authority and others to raise the profile of educational success and support the improvement of all Walsall schools

Parents have a central role in supporting and encouraging aspiration in their children. The majority of parents want their children to do well; the school systems need to ensure that parents are well supported to do this and made to feel welcome to discuss any concerns they may have.

### **In particular, parents should:**

- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time unless they are unwell
- Make sure their child is ready to learn
- Praise their child's success and encourage them to try again if they don't succeed first time
- Have high aspirations for their children and their school
- Encourage their children to reach their potential by taking an active interest in their school work and activities
- Build a relationship with the school and particularly the class teacher
- Respond positively and in a timely manner to requests from the school to assist their children to do better
- Ask their school for help and advice or to consider changing their approach if their school if they feel their child is at risk of not realising their potential

## **The Role of Head Teachers and School Leaders**

School leaders are instrumental in providing the drive to improve standards in our schools and Head Teachers particularly play a crucial role and have a wealth of experience and knowledge to offer. There are a growing number of Executive Head Teachers who have responsibility for more than one school across a locality. Heads are accountable for the educational performance of the school, ensuring good or better outcomes for all pupils and to ensure that there isn't a gap between vulnerable groups and all our children. Along with the Governing Body, school leaders are responsible for their school's improvement and its inclusive nature.

### **Head Teachers should:**

- Be relentless in their drive for improvement in access and achievement for all.
- Be relentless in their work in ensuring that all children and families are supported to attend school regularly.
- Motivate staff and provide effective leadership with a strong focus upon a high standard of teaching and learning.
- Provide regular and rigorous performance management of teaching staff.
- Ensure that the school is fully inclusive enabling all learners whatever their starting points achieve their full potential by deploying the right well trained staff and good quality resources are made available.
- Be open to challenge and innovation.
- Where possible share their good practice and expertise in partnership with other schools, the LA and Teaching School Alliances.

## **The Role of the Governing Body**

The effective leadership by the governing body is crucial to the strong performance and success of each school and this is closely scrutinised by Ofsted. Effective school governors make a positive contribution to children's learning and have a crucial role in raising standards. Whatever the designation of the school the responsibility is to develop, with the Head Teacher, a vision and strategic direction for the school, and holding the school to account for the outcomes of all learners.

They have to hold the school to account to ensure high educational performance is achieved by:

- Understanding the needs for all learners to have a fully inclusive education and ensuring that the school provides highly qualified, trained staff and is well resourced to support the learning needs of all.
- Carrying out the performance management of the Head Teacher.

- Monitoring progress to ensure that every pupil and specific groups in the school gets the best possible education.
- Ensuring the school is fully compliant with health and safety and safeguarding policy and good practice.
- Holding the school to account for efficient use of financial resources, delivering good value for money, ensuring good financial systems, protocols and practice, and complying with legal requirements.

Governors are expected to uphold the seven principles of public life:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

All governing bodies should be self-evaluating, access appropriate training and use the services of a professional clerk to ensure their working practices have the greatest positive impact on the school.

**NLGs:** There are two National Leaders of Governance in the borough. They are experienced chairs of Governors who offer support to chairs of governors in other schools. They concentrate on developing leadership capacity. They offer FREE support on a voluntary basis for up to a total of 10 days per financial year to one or more schools. They can be contacted directly or via Walsall's Governor Services department.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Children's progress in their learning is dependent upon the high quality of teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom every day. Teachers therefore are fundamental to our overall success and are a valuable asset.

Teachers need to:

- Feel valued and supported in their school
- Aspire to provide high quality teaching for effective learning to happen

- Be open to challenge and innovation
- Take responsibility and accountability for the aspiration, attainment and outcomes of all their pupils
- Be supported and challenged to improve their performance.
- Be given opportunity to share good practice, their knowledge and skills both within their school and elsewhere.
- Be supported in accessing relevant and good quality training.
- Work to support and encourage all parents to work in partnership with the school in addressing the needs of their child and their child's education.

### **The Local Authority:**

The Local Authority is responsible for:

- Understanding the data and context of all schools based on end of year results.
- Identifying the key priorities for inclusion and school improvement activity year on year, based on; hard data, hard and soft intelligence and an awareness of local and national developments
- Identifying those schools who are Schools Causing Concern (whether they are in an Ofsted category or not) and identifying appropriate resource to support and challenge rapid improvement towards a secure judgement of good.
- Working in partnership with all schools in a school-led system in and beyond Walsall; to identify, utilize and broker, commission and sign-post inclusion and school improvement support and development. Enabling all pupils across the borough the opportunity to reach their potential.
- Quality assuring centrally commissioned progress and challenge activity, to ensure that it impacts on the outcomes for all learners

### **Ofsted:**

Ofsted's aim is to promote the improvement of care and education services to at least a good standard, with a particular focus on outcomes for the disadvantaged and vulnerable. 'We are committed to supporting the development of a highly educated, productive and safer society, where children and young people can succeed whatever their background'<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Ofsted's Equality Objectives 2016-2020

NB This document needs to be read alongside the SEND strategy and Accessibility strategy.

