

# Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

6 July 2016

**Report title** **Local Authority School Improvement  
Inspection - Self Evaluation Document**

<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Cllr Claire Darke Education
<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Accountable director</b>	Julien Kramer (Education)
<b>Originating service</b>	School Standards
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<b>Report to be/has been considered</b>	Strategic Executive Board                                      3 May 2016

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## **Recommendation(s) for action or decision:**

The Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

1. Scrutinise the Local Authority School Improvement Inspection Self Evaluation Document (Appendix 1).
2. Comment on the scope and effectiveness of City of Wolverhampton Council's response to a possible inspection of the LA's school improvement services by Ofsted and in securing the highest possible standards across all Wolverhampton schools.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To inform The Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel of the School Standards preparation for a possible Local Authority School Improvement Inspection including the services draft self-evaluation document (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel is invited to scrutinise the contents of the report and make any suggestions or recommendations that strengthen the council's ability to carry out its functions to monitor the performance of schools in its area and ensure that where improvements are necessary, these are carried out effectively and expeditiously.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Handbook for the Inspection of Local Authorities (September 2015) outlines the process for the inspection of LA school improvement services.
- 2.2 The LA will be given up to five days' notice of the inspection; which will take two weeks.

Week 1 will include a number of focus school inspections (approx. 10) and a telephone survey of further Headteachers.

Week 2 onwards will be an on-site inspection of the local authority which will include:

- Initial meeting with DCS and/or Director of Education and the Head of School Improvement Services at the authority – to outline process, set timetable for week and share finding of week 1.
  - Analysis of data, LA's assessment of school performance and LA self-evaluation document.
  - Meetings with elected members, senior and operational staff, school-based staff and other stakeholders.
  - Feedback at the end of the inspection.
- 2.3 The final report will then be published within 28 days of the end of the inspection. The LA is then required to respond with a written statement setting out its actions in light of the inspection findings.

## **3.0 Discussion**

- 3.1 The following preparation for a possible inspection has been completed:
  - Draft Self-evaluation document (SEF) has been completed by the Assistant Director of Education in consultation with other services and stakeholders (Appendix 1)
  - Once SEF is approved an action plan for the key areas for development will be finalised (Paper to follow)
  - A full range of case studies, data analysis, policies have been compiled to evidence the self-evaluation document (hard copies are available for Panle to view if required)
  - Stakeholder groups of headteachers, governors and other key partners are in the process of being organised and briefed.

- A Logistics Plan and Comms Plan are in the process of being completed by Assistant Director of Education with the support of Sean Seagal and Paul Brown.

3.2 The attached Self Evaluation (SEF) outlines the councils current position against the key areas outlined in the Framework for the Inspection of Local Authorities (September 2015), including the key strengths and areas for development.

3.3 Once approved the SEF (and its appendices) will be updated on a termly basis to show the progress that the council is making against its priorities.

#### **4.0 Financial implications**

4.1 The cost of implementation and monitoring of the Council's actions to challenge and support schools to improve their end Ofsted outcomes has been included in the approved revenue budget for the Schools Standards service.

The cost of educational failure is however significant for the school, for the community and for the City in economic terms - It is therefore evident that the role of the LA in supporting raising standards in schools has financially significant implications for the Council and for the City.

[OJ/21062016/Q]

#### **5.0 Legal implications**

5.1 Under Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 the Council has a duty to contribute to the development of the community by securing efficient primary and secondary education and promote high standards in the city.

Recent improvements in attainment and in the performance of schools suggest that the Council's duties are being discharged.

#### **6.0 Equalities implications**

6.1 Some pupils and some schools face greater challenges in achieving educational success; there are therefore profound Equalities implications to the LA and to schools in ensuring that every child and young person achieves their full potential and every school provides good educational outcomes.

A coherent and effective strategy to support schools is in place and Ofsted regularly audit all of this work.

#### **7.0 Environmental implications**

7.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report

#### **8.0 Human resources implications**

8.1 Where the Headteacher, staff or governors require support or training there can be significant HR implications.

The wider social costs of educational underachievement or failure have been previously referred to.

**9.0 Corporate landlord implications**

9.1 There are no direct Corporate Landlord implications arising from this report

**10.0 Schedule of background papers**

10.1 N/A

This report is Public or PRIVATE  
[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

## **Appendix 1**

### **Local Authority School Improvement Self –Evaluation Document**

## Wolverhampton LA

### School Standards Service

# Self-evaluation of the Local Authority's Arrangements for School Improvement (April 2016)

## CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

### THE CITY: (Appendix C11)

Wolverhampton is the 19<sup>th</sup> largest city in the country, has a population of 251,557 and is proud of the diversity that this encompasses, with 35.5% of its residents from BME communities. Population projections show that the balance of the population is likely to change significantly over the next couple of decades; with an increase in the number of children and older people and fewer working age people.

The population is predicted to grow by 8.9% by 2037, to 273,300, with the aged 19 or below cohort expected to increase by 7%. A total of 57,658 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Wolverhampton. This is approximately 22.8% of the total population in the area.

As of October 2015, the local unemployment rate is significantly higher than that for the wider West Midlands region. It is also higher than the local Black Country average (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton) and well more than double the national unemployment rate. Wolverhampton has the fourth highest JSA claimant rate, at 3.8%, of all 326 English Local Authorities and the third highest youth unemployment claimant rate at 5.7%, of all 326 Local Authorities.

Wolverhampton ranks 12<sup>th</sup> (from 20<sup>th</sup> in 2010) out of 326 Local Authority areas in the Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI) 2015 with approximately 31.5% of the local authority's children and young people (aged 0 – 17) are living in poverty; this rises to 50% in 10 LSOA's. This is higher than the national average. This is particularly relevant when placing educational achievement into a relevant context as Wolverhampton pupils start their education journey from starting points that are well-below national average.

- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible and claiming free school meals was 22.4% in January 2015, which is over 7ppts higher than the national average for England of 15.2%.
- In 2015 over 650 new to country arrivals were placed in the City's schools; this is likely to continue to increase.
- 24.3% of pupils in Wolverhampton schools speak English as an additional language (over 9,000 pupils speaking more than 140 languages in January 2015), which is 7ppts higher than the national average for England of 17.3%.
- The mobility of pupils is also a particular challenge for a number of schools in Wolverhampton. According to the most recent school census (January 2015), 8.4% of the Year 5/6 school population (237 of 2815 pupils) joined their school in the previous two years.
- Wolverhampton's school population in 2015 was 40856. This figure is projected to grow very rapidly and there is increasing pressure on primary school places. This is expected to translate into secondary pressures within the next five years.
- 17.4% of pupils attending Wolverhampton schools in Spring 2015 had special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) compared to 15.4% nationally. This includes 3.0% (1261 pupils) with a statement of SEN or EHCP. The proportion of the latter group of pupils in Wolverhampton is high compared to most of our Statistical neighbours, and higher than the national average of 2.8%.

- 49.1% of pupils are from black or minority ethnic (BME) groups, compared to 28.6% nationally

#### **OVERVIEW OF CITY EDUCATIONAL PROVISION:**

- There are 114 schools in the City - 60 of which are classed as most deprived or deprived by Ofsted. The City has only 1 school in the least deprived category.
- The city invests significantly in early years provision so that children have as positive start as possible to their formal education. 93% of eligible 3 and 4-year olds access free early education, compared to 96 % nationally, ranking the City 113<sup>th</sup> nationally. 82% of 2 year olds in funded early education with good or outstanding providers (compared to 85% nationally) and 73% of 3 and 4 year olds (up 9% on 2014) which is below the national figure of 85%.
- Wolverhampton's primary school provision consists of 7 nursery schools, 5 infants schools, 5 junior schools, 64 primary schools. Of these 48 are maintained schools, 3 are sponsored academies, 12 are academy converters and 1 is a free school (Overall 20% are academies).
- There are 21 secondary schools, including 5 maintained schools and 12 academies of which 1 is a single sex selective girl's academy, 4 are sponsor led, 2 are free schools and 5 are Independent Schools. There is also 1 FE Colleges in the City.
- Wolverhampton has 8 Special Schools (specialist designations), of these: 5 are maintained, 2 have academy status and 1 is a free school. 6 out of 8 are currently judged as Good or Outstanding, with 2 currently un-classified.
- Outreach to schools is currently held by the 6 Special Schools identified as Good/Outstanding. Feedback to Special Schools who provide outreach would indicate that mainstream schools benefit from wide-ranging outreach support in the form of INSET and peer-to-peer support.
- There are 10 mainstream schools with an attached resource provision for SEND. Of these 4 provide secondary and 6 primary places. This provision is currently under review (Appendix C12)
- There are 4 Pupil Referral Units in Wolverhampton: 1 primary, 1 KS3, 1 KS4 and 1 medical needs.

#### **OVERVIEW OF ATTENDANCE :**

- The overall absence rate has significantly decreased for primary schools, from 5.4 per cent in 2012/13 to 4.3 per cent in 2013/14. The percentage of primary pupils classed as persistent absentees have decreased, from 3.7 per cent to 2.2 per cent.
- The overall absence rate has decreased for secondary schools, from 6.4 per cent in 2012/13 to 5.2 per cent in 2013/14. The percentage of secondary pupils classed as persistent absentees have decreased, from 7.7 per cent to 5.0 per cent..
- As a result of adaptations to practice following changes in legislation in September 2013 around leave of absence in term time, Wolverhampton has seen a significant drop in the number of persistently absence pupils, both in primary and secondary, with the main reason of unauthorised holiday, suggesting the issuing of penalty notices is having an impact. Wolverhampton's absence and persistent absence in both primary and secondary is higher than the national average and also high compared to statistical neighbours. However, further analysis shows that Wolverhampton's overall reduction in absence and PA across

both phases is improving more rapidly across the academic years than the national average. Behaviour & Attendance Officers employed by the local authority undertake Statutory Legal work to support improvement of attendance in schools. This can involve meetings to inform of the consequences of continued poor attendance and action through the Magistrates' Court, which can result in a number of outcomes, ultimately involving a prison sentence of up to 3 months. In 14/15 for cases where the local authority intervened there was a 7.7% average reduction in unauthorised absence

#### **OVERVIEW OF EXCLUSIONS :**

- The data shows a significant increase in the number of permanent exclusions during 13/14 and 14/15 – This is due to a number of reasons; schools no longer collectively fund the preventative element of the Behaviour Support Service. This is offered as a traded package of support to school but in 14/15 only 18 schools (all primary) bought in the support. In addition there has been a change to local policy and practice. Historically schools would put a pupil out of school and the Local Authority would take responsibility for sourcing alternative provision in order to avoid a permanent exclusion and this resulted in a number of years of zero permanent exclusions. This practice was reviewed and it was felt that it was not encouraging schools to take responsibility for their more challenging pupils and led to artificially low exclusion rates.
- Permanent exclusions for primary schools in 2013/14 were 6, in 2014/15 there were 14. So far in 2015/16 there have been 2.
- Permanent exclusion for secondary schools in 2013/14 were 4, in 2014/15 there were 29. So far in 2015/16 there have been 11.
- The most recent DfE data release for 13/14 shows that Wolverhampton permanent exclusions were below the national average and those of statistical neighbours. However, as the significant increase was in 14/15 we await the DfE release in July 2016 to confirm Wolverhampton's current position.
- During 14/15, 73% of primary permanently excluded pupils were placed in provision by the 6<sup>th</sup> day, so far in 15/16 this is 80%. Similarly, during 14/15, 71% of secondary permanently excluded pupils were placed in provision by the 6<sup>th</sup> day, so far in 15/16 this is 78%.

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#### **Key Achievements:**

- ✓ Significant drop in persistent absences at both primary and secondary.
- ✓ Overall nearly 80% of all permanently excluded pupils are placed in provision by 6<sup>th</sup> day.

#### **Areas for Development:**

- ❖ SEND review of provision underway – to be completed by September 2017
- ❖ More monitoring of early intervention of attendance support by LA since transfer to traded model in April 2015.
- ❖ Continue to develop the "Troubled Families" programme to support selected families improve school attendance.
- ❖ Development of "Exclusion Prevention" guidance for schools

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#### **OVERVIEW OF WOLVERHAMPTON'S OFSTED PERFORMANCE:**

- The City's schools have been on a rapid journey of improvement in the last two years: Primary school Ofsted outcomes were in December 2013 the worst in

the country when the Local Authority was rated 152<sup>nd</sup> out of 152 – the Local Authority is now rated as 135<sup>th</sup> in the country (January 2016) and is rising up the league tables.

- Secondary schools have been on a similar journey with the Local Authority being rated as 108<sup>th</sup> in the country in December 2014 and in 2015 being rated joint 81<sup>st</sup> and giving the City of Wolverhampton the accolade of being in the top 20% of most improved authorities in the country.

**Primary & Secondary (combined):**

September 2013 (63%)  +14% September 2015 (77%)  +2% April 2016 (79%)  +6+% September 2016 (predicted) (85+%)

**Secondary Schools:**

September 2013 (57%)  +20% September 2015 (77%)  +4% April 2016 (81%)  September 2016 (predicted) (81+%)

**Primary Schools:**

September 2013 (61%)  +13% September 2015 (74%)  +4% April 2016 (78%)  +6% (min) September 2016 (predicted) (85+%)

- **Nursery schools:** All nursery schools are judged to be good or better. Strengths identified have been used by the Local Authority to improve outcomes, provision, leadership and management of other Nursery schools. Eg Bilston Nursery – Eastfield Nursery, Ashmore Park Nursery- Phoenix Nursery
- **Special Schools:** All special schools are judged to be good or better apart from New Park Academy and the free school which are currently un-classified.
- **PRU's:** The primary PRU is currently in Special Measures and awaiting conversion; all of the other PRU's are judged to be Good.

**Key Achievements:**

- ✓ Rapid improvements in Ofsted outcomes from 63% in September 2013 to 79% in April 2016 with further improvements predicted by September 2016 (85%).
- ✓ Secondary Ofsted position now at joint 81<sup>st</sup> in the country (December 2016) from 108<sup>th</sup> in December 2015.

- ✓ All nursery schools and special schools in the City are at least good.

**Areas for Development:**

- ❖ Primary school performance requires further challenge to ensure all RI schools are rapidly moved to good or placed in a strong academy partnership.
- ❖ Percentage of outstanding schools to improve.

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**OVERVIEW OF WOLVERHAMPTON'S END OF KEY-STAGE PERFORMANCE** (Appendix OWEOKSP1)

**Early Years Foundation Stage** (Appendices OWEOKSP2 & OWEOKSP3)

- For pupils at the end of reception year in 2015 there is a 5% increase in the percentage assessed to 61% (from 56% in 2014 and 44% in 2013) as reaching a "good level of development". This is an upward trend for the last three years – although the gap between the City and national has widened slightly.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged (FSM) children in the City in 2015 are in-line with the national average at 51% (from 47% in 2014) an achievement when the very low starting point of these children is taken into consideration.
- The local gap between boys and girls achieving a GLD is 15pts which is in line with the gap seen nationally.

**Key Stage 1** (Appendix OWEOKSP4)

- While the City has a 5 year upward trend for attainment at key-stage 1 across all subjects it still remains significantly below national figures.
- The percentage of pupils at level 2 + improved by 1% in reading to 88% compared to 90% nationally (from 87% in 2014 and 83% in 2013). While this is a three year improvement trend it still remains significantly below national figures. Wolverhampton's national position is 128th out of 152 Local Authorities (from 129th in 2014 and 145th in 2013).
- The percentage of pupils at level 2+ improved by 1% in writing to 83% compared to 88% nationally (from 82% in 2014 and 79% in 2013). While this is a three year improvement trend it still remains significantly below national figures. Wolverhampton's national position is 144th out of 152 Local Authorities (from 136th in 2014 and 147th in 2013)
- The percentage of pupils at level 2+ remained the same in maths at 89% compared to 93% nationally (from 87% in 2013) and this remains significantly below national figures. Wolverhampton's national position is 146th out of 152 Local Authorities (from 139th in 2014 and 144th in 2013)
- The percentage of pupils working at or above the phonics screening threshold (a score of 32 or more) improved by 2% to 76% compared to 77% nationally (from 74% in 2014 and 66% in 2013). This is a three year improvement trend. Wolverhampton's national position is 88th out of 152 Local Authorities (from 74th in 2014 and 113th in 2013). Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in the City remains above national figures for the third year running at 70% compared to

66% nationally .

### **Key Stage 2** (Appendix OWEOKSP5)

- The percentage of pupils @ L4+ combined in reading, writing and maths: 80% placing the City of Wolverhampton in-line with national figures (80%). This is increase on 2013/14 (+1%) and continues the 3 year upward trend. The City is now above 9/10 statistical neighbours and 79<sup>th</sup> out of 152 LA's. Lower and middle prior-attainers both attain above national figures with the city significantly above for combined results, higher attainers achieve in-line with national figures.
- City of Wolverhampton is significantly above national figures for the attainment of disadvantaged pupils at combined L4+, with an upward trend and an increasing positive gap (72% compared to 70% nationally). The City is also above national for disadvantaged pupils in all individual subjects with sig+ in reading and SPaG.
- Combined L5 attainment is slightly below national at 23% compared to 24% nationally. Although L5 maths attainment is 2% below national figures at 43% compared to 45% and is Sig-. Middle and higher prior-attainers both attain significantly above national figures in both combined and all individual subject.
- Combined L5 attainment for disadvantaged pupils is significantly above national figures at 15% compared to 13% nationally. Attainment for pupils with EAL attain significantly above national for combined L5 attainment at 26% compared to 21% nationally.
- The City is in the top 30% Local Authorities in the country for KS1-KS2 value added for all subjects (from 49<sup>th</sup> in 2013). The LA is ranked for mathematics at 29<sup>th</sup> percentile (from 47<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2013), reading at 35<sup>th</sup> percentile (from 61<sup>st</sup> percentile in 2013) and writing at 24<sup>th</sup> percentile (from 46<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2013). These are significant improvements across all subjects and shows impact of LA actions over the last two years.
- The percentage of pupils making expected progress at end of key-stage 2 in reading: 91% placing the City in-line with national figures (91%). The City is now in-line or above 9/10 statistical neighbours and 87<sup>th</sup> out of 152 LA's (2014-68<sup>th</sup>, 2013-105<sup>th</sup>). Expected progress of disadvantaged pupils in reading is slightly below national at 92% compared to 95% nationally.
- The percentage of pupils making expected progress at end of key-stage 2 in writing: 95% placing the City above national figures (94%). The City is now in-line or above all statistical neighbours and 50<sup>th</sup> out of 152 LA's (2014-70<sup>th</sup>, 2013-55<sup>th</sup>). ). Expected progress of disadvantaged pupils in writing is slightly below national at 89% compared to 92% nationally.
- The percentage of pupils making expected progress at end of key-stage 2 in maths: 91% placing the City above national figures (90%). The City is now in-line or above all statistical neighbours and 62<sup>nd</sup> out of 152 LA's (2014-68<sup>th</sup>, 2013-98<sup>th</sup>). Expected progress of disadvantaged pupils in maths is below national at 89% compared to 91% nationally.

- The percentage of pupils making more than expected progress at end of key-stage 2 in reading: 38% placing the City well-above with national figures (33%). More than expected progress of disadvantaged pupils in reading is well above national at 39% compared to 33% nationally.
- The percentage of pupils making more than expected progress at end of key-stage 2 in writing: 41% placing the City well-above national figures (36%). More than expected progress of disadvantaged pupils in writing is above national at 38% compared to 37% nationally.
- The percentage of pupils making more than expected progress at end of key-stage 2 in maths: 38% placing the City well-above national figures (34%). More than expected progress of disadvantaged pupils in maths is below national at 32% compared to 37% nationally.

#### **Key Stage 4**

- The percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSE's at A\* to C grades (Including English and maths) has improved by 6% to 52% (from 46% in 2014) compared to 56% nationally. Wolverhampton's ranked position has improved by 18 places to 127th out of 152 Local Authorities (from 146th in 2014). This ranking places the City above the average for our statistical neighbours though is still significantly below national figures – this is mainly due to the performance of boys in the City who only attain 44% GCSE's with English and Maths compared to 51% nationally; Girls attain at just 1% below national at 59%. Higher attaining pupils also perform well below national figures.
- Disadvantaged pupils in the City perform at national levels with 35% achieving 5 A-C (with English and Maths). Looked After Children in particular perform above national figures with 23% achieving 5 A-C (with English and Maths) compared to just 16% nationally.
- The percentage of pupils making expected progress from KS2 to KS4 in English is just below national figures at 66% compared to 69% nationally. Pupils making more than expected progress is also just below national at 28% compared to 30% nationally. 56% of disadvantaged pupils make expected progress and 21% make better than expected progress in English (no national figures available)
- The percentage of pupils making expected progress from KS2 to KS4 in maths is just below national figures at 63% compared to 66% nationally. Pupils making more than expected progress is also just below national at 28% compared to 30% nationally. 49% of disadvantaged pupils make expected progress and 18% make better than expected progress in maths (no national figures available)

#### **Post 16: (Appendix OWEOKSP6)**

- Wolverhampton students continued to perform strongly in vocational subjects in 2015, making Wolverhampton an impressive 3rd in the country with an average points score of 740.4 at Key Stage 5.
- For all level 3 qualifications (A level, Academic and Vocational combined) the City of Wolverhampton is ranked 14th nationally (2014 - 12, 2013 - 39, 2012 - 84, 2011 - 109, 2010 - 137) for average point score per student, (753.1 compared to a national average of 717.8). The City has a higher APS per student than any of our regional or Statistical Neighbours
- Nationally the City are ranked 26th nationally (2014 - 19, 2013 - 42, 2012 - 68, 2011 - 79, 2010 - 129, 2009, 145, 2008 - 145) for average point score per entry, (217.4 compared to a national average of 215.9) and the City have a higher APS per entry than any of our regional or Statistical Neighbours

**Key Stage 4 Destinations:**

- Overall percentage of pupils going to sustained education or employment/training destination (destinations in 2013/14 of 2012/13 Key Stage 4 pupils) is in line with national at 91% for all pupils and 85% for disadvantaged pupils.

**Special School Achievement:**

- Wolverhampton Special Schools are not consistently uploading data to CASPA to provide within city comparison. Ofsted's Data Dashboard Trend data is likely to be unreliable in Special Schools because the co-hort can vary so greatly year on year and across the whole school. The LA has now ensured that CASPA will be used as a benchmarking tool in order to analyse all special schools data which will be submitted to the LA from Summer 2016. In addition CASPA can be used by any LA maintained school in order to track progress and benchmark pupils significantly below age related expectations.
- Measured against 2011 Progression Guidance, 6 out of 7 of our Special Schools continue to ensure good or outstanding outcomes for the majority of pupils;

**Key Achievements:**

- ✓ The percentage of children in receipt of FSM achieving a good level of development at end of EYFS is above national figures – this is from a very slow starting point on entry due to high levels of deprivation in the City.
- ✓ The percentage of disadvantaged children achieving the required standard for phonics in year 1 is well above national figures.
- ✓ The percentage of pupils attaining combined L4 at end of KS2 is now in line with national figures and is well above national for disadvantaged pupils.
- ✓ L5 attainment for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with English as an additional language is significantly above national.
- ✓ The City is in the top 30% Local Authorities in the country for KS1-KS2 value added for all subjects (from 49th in 2013). The LA is ranked for mathematics at 29th percentile (from 47th percentile in 2013), reading at 35th percentile (from 61st percentile in 2013) and writing at 24th percentile (from 46th percentile in 2013)
- ✓ KS1-2 more than expected progress in all subjects for all pupils and for disadvantaged pupils is well above national.
- ✓ KS4 attainment (5 GCSE's with English and maths) for disadvantaged pupils is in line with national and for LAC is well above national.
- ✓ KS5 L3 vocational and L3 combined vocational and academic is well above national.

**Areas for Development:**

- ❖ EYFS performance while improving still requires further development – in particular transition to KS1.
- ❖ KS1 achievement overall requires significant improvement.
- ❖ KS2 higher attainment in maths.
- ❖ Boys attainment at KS4 (5 GCSE's with English and maths) requires significant improvement.
- ❖ Higher attainment at GCSE level need improvement.
- ❖ Benchmarking of special school data.

## Aspect 1: Corporate leadership and strategic planning

The City of Wolverhampton Council's vision for Education is:

“To create an education system in Wolverhampton that promotes the very highest standards for all children and young people, closes the attainment gap and allows every pupil in Wolverhampton to reach their full potential. The Council celebrates school autonomy and supports school leaders and teachers in leading City wide collaboration and school improvement.” (Appendix CLSP1)

This vision is fully aligned with the council's strategic vision and ensures that elected members are well informed, fully engaged in the education and school improvement agenda and are able to robustly challenge officers. The City of Wolverhampton Council Corporate plan (Appendix CLSP2) has raising standards in Education as one of the council's key strategic goals and this is cascaded down into the School Standards Corporate plan objective for 2016 (Appendix CLSP3) which is to “challenge and support schools to provide the best education for children and young people”. The approach to delivering this aim is clearly detailed in the City of Wolverhampton School Improvement and Governance Strategy 2016 (Appendix CLSP4) which was written in consultation with schools, the strategic leadership of the Council and Cabinet. Regular updates on education planning are provided by the Education Directorate to Strategic Executive Board of the Council, the Elected Member for Education, C&YP Scrutiny Panel and full Council (Appendix CLSP5) – ensuring that all are able to confidently challenge and question officers and hold them to account for their actions and school performance.

Wolverhampton School Improvement and Governance Strategy (Appendix CLSP4) was put in place from September 2014, after the appointment of a new Head of Service (now Assistant Director of Education), in response to the LA's Ofsted position and focus school inspections in Summer 2014. The strategy was implemented following a thorough consultation process with all Headteachers via Headteachers briefings, schools e-bulletin and the various schools networks. The impact of the strategy is currently being reviewed and evaluated, through consultation with Headteachers and will be amended to reflect this evaluation as well as any changes in local circumstances and/or national policy. The Councils Audit Team is currently in the process of auditing the implementation of the strategy and the outcomes of this will also be reflected in the reviewed policy from Easter 2016 (Appendix CLSP6).

Through the implementation of the School Improvement and Governance Strategy (Appendix CLSP4) the LA provides coherent and consistent challenge to maintained schools to ensure a good quality of education for all. The strategy reflects the need to rapidly improve educational standards across the authority while still allowing schools to exercise their autonomy. It clearly outlines the LA's approach to challenging all schools in the City through a staged and differentiated approach based on the schools individual LA category which is based on a clear, published and fully consulted criterion. All schools are informed, through a letter (Appendices CLSP7 & CLSP8), of their LA School category at the start of the Autumn term of each academic year; this letter outlines the category, the evidence base for the school categorisation, the level of advisor time the school will receive, which is clearly differentiated, and whether or not the

school will be placed within the school improvement board process and if so the frequency of the meetings. School categories are reviewed half termly by the school improvement team and any changes are communicated with the school through the same format as above. The strategy also clearly outlines the processes for challenging and supporting schools in each category including the School Improvement Board process and the LA's use of statutory powers (see accountability flowchart in School Improvement Strategy 2016).

When a school is found by the LA, Ofsted or through their own self-evaluation, to require support, training or leadership and management expertise this is brokered by the LA through local partnership working – this may be through one of the City's three teaching school alliances, Connect-Ed (Wolverhampton schools network), local Academy Trusts or through local quality assured independent providers (Appendix CLSP9)

This strategy is reinforced through transparent communication and consultation with schools through a variety of methods that includes: consistent communication of school categorisation (Appendix CLSP8), half-termly Leadership Briefings (Appendix CLSP10), weekly electronic school bulletins (Appendix CLSP11), consistent use of agenda's and paperwork for advisor visits (Appendix CLSP12) and a service website with all relevant documentation ([www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/7615/School-Standards-Service](http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/7615/School-Standards-Service)). These messages are further reinforced to school governors through Chairs/LA governors Forum (Appendix CLSP13) and a Governors e-bulletin (Appendix CLSP14) which mirror those given to schools.

The strategy has proved to be very effective in enabling schools to improve as well as preventing schools from deteriorating – this is clearly evidenced through the improvements in the % of primary and secondary schools increasing from 63% in September 2013 to 79% in April 2016. In addition, the number of schools categorised as “high-risk” by the LA is rapidly reducing due to structured and differentiated challenge provided by LA through the processes outlined in the School Improvement Strategy which includes a School Improvement Board process for these schools. The LA's ambitious target is for all schools in the City to be judged to be good or better by September 2017 with an increasing number of these being judged to be outstanding.

The City no longer has an Area Prospectus platform or conducts the full 16-19 statement of need (last completed 2012). Therefore this currently means that the Council are not able to fully articulate the Post 16 offer across the City and therefore cannot ensure that the City is fully exercising its duty in relation to securing sufficient provision for 16-19 year olds – This information is however currently (April 2016) being collated in preparation for the post 16 area based review. The Connexions service delivers the September Offer and reports on participation rates which evidence high rates of engagement across the City and the Education Directorate, in partnership with People and Place, have commissioned a full review of post 16 provision through an independent consultant. Participation of all 16-18 year old in education, training or apprenticeship is promoted in a number of different ways but the core RPA message is communicated via the Keep on Learning campaign (<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/keeponlearning>). This campaign has included marketing via City billboards and social media. The LA's Connexions service provides targeted support to those young people at risk but they also deliver the September Offer, ensuring young people have secured their next step. The

Education Business Partnership team deliver a range of activities in schools that reinforce the participation message but have also worked with local employers to raise their awareness and understanding. The LA also promotes participation through a number of partners including, Wolverhampton College and local training providers. Events such as local Job Fairs and the Real Apprentice road show support the participation message. (Appendices OWEOKSP6, CLSP15 & CLSP16)

**Key Achievements:**

- ✓ Rapid and effective whole council response to the LA's Ofsted position and focus school inspections in September 2014 leading to a fully aligned City Council vision for Education being implemented.

**Areas of Development:**

- ✓ City-wide post-16 provision in need of full review.

## Aspect 2: Monitoring, challenge, intervention and support

The LA's School Improvement and Governance Strategy (Appendix CLSP4) clearly sets out the LA's approach to supporting schools and intervening in schools that are causing concern, particularly in respect of LA maintained schools. It details the process taken by the LA for supporting and challenging all of the schools in the authority through a transparent, coordinated and differentiated approach that effectively contributes to school improvement whilst still recognising and supporting school autonomy.

All School Improvement Advisors (SIA's) are ex-Headteachers or school senior leaders and have a thorough understanding of school improvement processes, which have been supportive of over 120 Ofsted Inspections in the City. SIA's have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the maintained schools to which they are allocated (Appendices MCIS1, MCIS2, MCIS3, MCIS4, MCIS5 & MCIS6). The use of pertinent data has supported an upward trajectory of performance of learners and schools within Wolverhampton. This is indicative of the increased precision and coherence in the use of data sets by the Local Authority to review and revise improvement strategies (Appendix MCIS9). The services Research and Assessment Team provide comprehensive and effective individual datasets for every school (Appendix MCIS10) in the City that include pupil performance in addition to further information linked to attendance, exclusions and a school's present budgetary position allow for the review of the effectiveness of school improvement strategies to be undertaken regularly. The SIA's utilise this data, along with their own intelligence gathering from school visits, to challenge and benchmark outcomes against a tiered use of performance data at national, regional, city and individual school levels. In addition the criteria applied to indicate effectiveness allow adjustments to be made to improvement strategies that enhance achievement within schools and groups of pupils within the city. This understanding is then utilised to categorise schools against the published LA (Appendix CLSP7) and allocated Advisor time (Appendix MCIS11) in a differentiated manner to offer flexible, bespoke levels of support and challenge to schools.

This approach has led to improved outcomes across schools, for example: (Appendices MCIS12 & MCIS13)

B2 schools:[A comparison of performance at L4+]

67% performed better in SPaG than in 2014

83.3% performed better in Reading

83.3% performed better in Writing

100% performed better in Maths

50% performed better in RWM

C schools:[A comparison of performance at L4+]

78% scored higher in SPaG

44.4% scored higher in Reading

89% schools scored higher in Writing

55.5% scored higher in Maths

67% scored higher in RWM

Recent Ofsted inspection reports acknowledge that the local authority support is effective and well-targeted at those schools that need it the most:

*"The local authority has played an effective role in helping move the school forward. It knows the school well and has an accurate view of its effectiveness. During regular focused visits from the local authority, senior leaders have opportunities to discuss school improvement. The local authority helped set up the very effective link with the National Leader of Education and her national teaching school, which has supported improvement very well" (Bilston CofE Primary)*

*"The local authority provides a good level of support to the school that has successfully developed more effective governance, increased the rigour of target setting and improved*

*the accuracy of leaders' monitoring of school performance" (Castlecroft Primary)*

*"The local authority knows the school well and provides termly support. Having witnessed the excellent leadership of the executive headteacher, it approached the governors, who then agreed to support a local school. Leaders at Elston Hall have benefited from this relationship, as they have been able to practise and develop their skills at both schools" (Elston Hall Primary)*

*"The local authority has provided effective support and challenge to the school since the last inspection. The local authority advisor has visited the school frequently and the resultant reports have accurately acknowledged where improvements have been made and given clear advice about the next steps to be taken" (Villiers Primary)*

*"The local authority has made a significant contribution to this school's improvement because they responded quickly following the previous inspection. They put in a new governing body with a knowledgeable Chair. Knowing the current headteacher could not start straight away, the local authority seconded an interim headteacher from a local outstanding school to ensure continuity. The current school improvement partner knows the school well. The support provided is good and has been an important factor in moving the school on" (Woodthorne Primary)*

*"The local authority also judges the school to be outstanding, and maintains an effective partnership providing moderation of teaching and learning, and assessments. They also hold the funding for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs centrally. They provide advice on how to plan and meet these pupils' individual needs. Governors have benefitted from training, for example, in safeguarding and how to make better use of data about pupils' progress. As capacity in the school is exceptionally strong, leaders provide advice and support for weak and failing schools within the local authority" (Holy Trinity Catholic)*

*"The local authority has made a strong contribution to the school's development since the previous inspection. The local authority's adviser visits the school termly, and this has helped it to build an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The impact of the local authority's support in raising the quality of teaching has been significant" (St Andrew's CofE Primary)*

Schools are quickly identified as weak or causing concerns through the school categorisation process, outlined in the School Improvement and Governance strategy, and are tackled promptly and decisively. A differentiated programme of support is provided to these schools (for Category C schools this amounts to 16.5+ officer days, for B2 schools 14.5 officer days, for B1 schools 8.5 officer days and A schools 4 officer days per year)). No school can move to an A category until it has received a judgement of Good or better from Ofsted and schools are therefore continuously monitored until that time. The reduction of support for good or better schools ensures not only the most effective targeting of the LA's finite resources to where they are needed the most but also ensures that good or better schools take responsibility for their own school improvement processes (Appendix CLSP4).

In addition, School Improvement Board meetings (Appendices MCIS14, MCIS15, MCIS16 & MCIS17) are also implemented for those schools placed in LA B or C categories – these are used to hold school leaders robustly to account for rapid school improvement against their priorities. Sustained underachievement is swiftly tackled through either the establishment of a strong partnership with a local partner school (with a possible view to a future structural solution being implemented) or the use of LA statutory powers of intervention. SIB's ensure that the school is working effectively towards its OfSTED priorities and that action plans and support work are fit for purpose, quality assured and targeted towards to most effective actions to ensure rapid and responsive school improvement. The impact of this process can be seen through the improvements in data, for example: Of those primary schools identified as being a Category C at the start of the 2014/15

academic year: 22% of them improved in all areas (SPaG, Reading, Writing, Maths, combined) 78% improved in 3 or more areas and of those schools identified as being a Category B2 at the start of the 2014/15 academic year: 50% of them improved in all areas [GPS, Reading, Writing, Maths, RWM] 83% improved in 3 or more areas. A City secondary school subject to the SIB process since going into Special Measures in Summer 2014 has just moved from SM directly to good; the actions of the LA in challenging and supporting the school to this outcome have been praised (see appendix – case study St Mathias)

Since the implementation of the School Improvement and Governance strategy the LA has deployed its formal powers of intervention promptly and decisively to ensure rapid and effective improvements are made in failing schools: (Appendices MCIS18, MCIS19, MCIS20 & MCIS21)

- 3 pre-warning notice
  - 3 warning notices
  - 4 IEB's
  - 2 strengthening of governing bodies with additional governors

In the past 18 months, the LA has successfully started to engage local systems leaders from good and outstanding schools as well as the LA's three teaching school alliances, to support improvements in those schools most in need across the City. This has led to the number of high-risk schools in the authority reducing at a rapid pace – from 18 schools in September 2014 to just 7 in April 2016 – and the establishment of many new and very successful local partnerships that effectively support improvement of school standards and pupil achievement across the City (Appendices MCIS20, MCIS21 & MCIS22)

In addition, the LA has actively promoted school-to-school improvement partnerships through its implementation of HMI's Peer to Peer review programme – this was initially supported by HMI and targeted at RI schools but has since been further developed by School improvement Advisors to support good schools looking to move to outstanding. These groups of schools have continued to work together beyond the life of the project and are beginning to develop into established networks of school to school support (Appendix MCIS23).

Some of the headteachers that took part in the project made the following comments:

“It has been the single most useful thing in developing both my confidence as a head but also understanding the process of school review”

“An intense but useful experience”

“This has been a really useful piece of professional development. It was challenging, though provoking and developed professional and personal skills due to the nature of the tasks carried out in the reviews and the feedback being given. Thank you!”

The Headteachers Development Programme (Appendix MCIS24) delivered at a fully subsidised rate, ensures that not only are Headteachers supported in all aspects of school leadership in their first twelve months in post or when they require support during their career they are also encouraged to build and develop sustainable networks that will further support their development and support effective school improvement in the future. ASPIC (Association of Special Provision in

the City) meets regularly to share practice and develop consistent response to DfE statutory guidance and LA Advice across the Special Schools within the City.

The continued development of effective school to school networks is a key area of development over the next twelve months. The LA is working closely with schools in to explore approaches to school to school working that would allow for improvements within individual schools but also across the group of schools in:

- Teaching and Learning
- Leadership
- Pupil Outcomes.

This pilot programme of activity will initially be developed with two groups who would largely be self-selecting based around schools that are already holding informal discussions. Furthermore this might allow for school leadership's to examine and explore possible opportunities for future academy partnerships if appropriate. This programme would be supportive of governance change taking place in a well-managed and well informed way leading to the minimum disruption to Wolverhampton children and their learning. [\(See appendices – School to school Collaboration pilot project\)](#)

The LA continues to deliver quality services to schools in order to support schools improvement; these are funded either through Service level agreements (Appendix MCIS25 & <https://cloudw.sharepoint.com/sla>) or DSG funding in some cases (Appendix MCIS26). The services are well regarded and have an increasingly high level of take-up from our schools, both maintained and academies. The LA are now exploring a variety of options around the creation of an arms-length trading company in order to fully utilise and strengthen its services to schools offer beyond its statutory requirements.

The LA also works strategically with the three teaching school alliances in the City ensuring that their work is targeted effectively at the high-risk schools in the city – these relationships will continue to develop and build over the next twelve months with greater levels of partnership working and joint delivery of school improvement and support services. In addition, there are a number of private providers in Wolverhampton, including Connect-Ed into which the vast majority of schools buy in, with whom the LA is committed to building excellent relationships with in the future in order to quality assure and support service delivery to its schools.

The LA, through its School Improvement and Governance Strategy (Appendix CLSP4), continue to monitor standards in its Academies through an annual desk top analysis of data and trends. Any concerns are discussed with the Headteachers of the schools concerned through a meeting with the School Improvement Advisor for that school. This process and academy relations are outlined in the Academy's Protocol 2016 (Appendix MCIS27) which was established through a series of "getting to know" meetings with all academy trusts and sponsors in the City and a full consultation process. Where the standards in an academy continue to be a cause for concern the LA then reports those concerns to the DfE directly through regular meetings with the Regional Schools Commissioner, DfE Broker and DfE representatives – this has led to swift action being taken to tackle academy performance through a partnership approach from the LA and the RSC – in particular the current discussions around the possible re-brokering of a failing academy trust in the City has been a positive experience (Appendix MCIS28)

Across the City there are well-developed links to FE, vocational and higher education providers - for example: the Employability Partnership brings together ESF/Work Programme Providers, Wolverhampton Provider Network brings together apprenticeship, traineeship and study programme providers. There are both strategic and operational links with the college and the University. Operational links with the College include EBP SLA to support student work placements and the college are also a Board member of the Jaguar Land Rover Education Centre partnership. The Wolverhampton Graduate offer is delivered via a partnership with DWP, Wolverhampton City Council and the Uni. The purpose is graduate recruitment and retention. The Council is also working with the University (and funding) the Inspire programme providing support for graduates with disability or disadvantage (Appendices OWEOKSP6, CLSP15 & CLSP16). Further work on monitoring and challenging the quality of post-16 provision is needed and this will form part of the post-16 review currently being undertaken (Spring-Summer 2016) by an external consultant.

**Key Achievements:**

- ✓ Full restructure of Schools Standards Service has led to improved use of resources and a higher quality of targeted services in schools.
- ✓ Implementation of targeted and differentiated challenge and support to schools through the School Improvement and Governance Strategy has led to improved outcomes for schools.
- ✓ Quality services to schools beyond statutory functions offered to schools through SLA's

**Areas of Development:**

- ❖ Partnership working between key stakeholders and schools, while improved, still requires further development.
- ❖ A need to develop a new model for trading with schools in the City and sub-regionally.
- ❖ Further development and strengthening of relationships with academies across the City.
- ❖ Further work on monitoring and challenging the quality of post-16 provision in the City.

### Aspect 3: Support and challenge for leadership and management (including governance)

The LA continues to build strong and effective working relationships with educational leaders in its area through effective communications (Half-termly leadership Briefings, weekly e-bulletins, Chairs/LA Governors Forum and governors e-bulletins CloudW web pages for NQTs and WALC) (Appendices CLSP10, CLSP11, CLSP14 & CLSP13) and strategic working relationships with teaching school alliances, academy sponsors and maintained schools supporting other schools, as well as “Peer to Peer” Reviews (Appendix MCIS23), School Improvement training and development days led by SIA’s and schools with effective practice (Appendix SCLM1).

In addition to the range of “in-house” training and support services, funded through SLA’s and DSG funding, the LA has from September 2015 offered a comprehensive and high-calibre, appropriately differentiated training programme for all schools leaders at every stage of their school career. The programme is fully subsidised and is offered to all schools in the authority regardless of designation; it is run in partnership with Edge Hill University and the Local Education Partnership (Inspire). The partnership has created a range of bespoke training and development programmes to meet the needs of school leaders throughout the city based around a number of strands – 1. Development and support of new Headteachers 2. Supported Headteachers development programme (aimed at B1 and B2 schools), 3. Ofsted preparation workshops for all Headteachers 3. Aspiring Headteachers and middle leader’s development programme 4. Chimp Mind Management Programme for good or better Headteachers and 5. A comprehensive training programme for Governors (Chairs, aspiring Chairs and all other governors). All of the leadership programmes are fully accredited through Edge Hill University and are attended by the headteacher and their deputy headteacher to ensure that the support is fully embedded and sustainable in the schools involved (Appendix SCLM2).

The local authority is providing strong support for schools on their role in the Prevent agenda and fundamental British values. The School Standards service has 8 PREVENT trainers that have delivered PREVENT to training to all schools and governing bodies across the City; the training has been adapted to local circumstances to ensure relevance and impact (Appendix SCLM3).

Support and challenge for school governance is well-developed across the authority. All maintained schools have reconstituted their Governing Bodies in the past 18 months and the service now holds a clean data set for every governing body (add link??) and there is now a clear and established process for a biannual refresh of the information as well as effective relationships with all of the City’s clerking providers to provide the service with updates as and when changes occur.

The service has given every governing body an initial RAG rating based on Ofsted Inspection reports, SIA work in the school and data – these RAG ratings have then been used to target support to governing bodies in a differentiated manner (Appendix SCLM4). This is now being built upon through a systematic process of audit and review involving; examining minutes of governing body meetings, interviewing Headteachers and Chairs of Governors, intelligence from School Improvement Board Meetings and School Improvement Advisors that will enable the service to effectively RAG rate the quality and effectiveness of each governing body and identify the personalised, targeted support necessary to drive improvement through a greater synchronicity between high risk schools and those governing bodies where support or intervention is most required (Appendices SCLM5, SCLM6 & SCLM7). Furthermore, the increase in participation (from 6 schools at the first forum to 40+ now) in the termly Chairs’ and Local Authority Governors’ Forums (Appendix CLSP13) enables participants to act as conduits of information both to and from the Council into and from schools. The success of the weekly Headteachers e-bulletin is now being capitalised upon with the

establishment of an e-bulletin for governors (Appendix CLSP14) to run alongside it and mirror the information sent to schools.

The recruitment and retention of governors was recently reviewed (Appendix SCLM9, <http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/2554/Becoming-a-School-Governor>) to ensure that it is skills lead and robust in terms of quality assurance processes. A nominations panel meets regularly to consider recruitment needs and applications; 16 new LA governors were recruited and placed in schools in 2014/15 through these new processes. The service is about to embark on a further recruitment campaign, both internally and with local charities and businesses (eg 100x100 & RAF campaigns) to establish a pool of 30+ governors good quality who are aware of emerging challenges to governance and are equipped with effective strategies to overcome them – these governors will be able to fill vacancies, support governing bodies with specific challenges where they have appropriate skills (eg: finance, HR) and be deployed into schools causing concern to strengthen governing bodies or become members of IEB's when necessary.

The service offers a range of quality development opportunities for governing bodies as part of the LEP leadership transformation programme, including: DfE Chairs and Aspiring Chairs – Leadership Development Programme, a core package of training for all governors on key-aspects of the role , additional training organised according to Chairs and LA forum need/emerging policy and practise, regular network meetings and briefings. As the training packages are fully-subsidised there is a high expectation that all governors in maintained schools will engage with the training and development programmes offered (appendices SCLM10 & SCLM11)

Since the implementation of the School Improvement and Governance strategy the LA has deployed its formal powers of intervention promptly and decisively to ensure rapid and effective improvements are made in failing schools:

- 3 pre-warning notice
- 3 warning notices
- 4 IEB's
- 2 strengthening of governing bodies with additional governors

Pre-warning and warning letters are issued alongside advice to governors which if implemented serves to improve practise immediately and in two cases has meant that the implementation of an IEB was not necessary (Claregate & East Park). The aim of the new audit process is, however, to begin to prevent governing bodies from requiring such formal interventions; RED RAG rated boards are supplied with a report (Appendix SCLM8) and clear recommended actions to improve and are followed up at both 3 and 6 months to ensure implemented, this may include bespoke training and support provided through the governors service. The LA are now also effectively supporting those schools at greatest risk into places of greater safety through effective local partnerships, leading to academy sponsorship.

**Key Achievements:**

- ✓ Effective communication from the LA to schools (inc governors) through a variety of formats now in place.
- ✓ Fully subsidised leadership transformation programme (WALC) offered to all schools from September 2015 to ensure effective school leadership is developed

at every level, inc governors.

- ✓ Strong support for schools around the PREVENT agenda and Fundamental British values.
- ✓ Effective and targeted use of LA Statutory Powers of Intervention where required.

**Areas of Development:**

- ❖ Completion of detailed RAG rating for every Governing Board in the City remains a priority.
- ❖ Continued work with schools at the greatest risk to ensure they are effectively partnered with a local academy trust to ensure improved outcomes.

#### Aspect 4: Use of Resources

The Council's budget setting processes are directly influenced by education priorities. These include consideration of corporate priorities/ performance indicators, emerging national and local issues, levels of current performance and targets for school improvement. Budget setting processes recognise statutory duties, changes in levels of demand for services, seek to secure value for money and are themselves informed by consultation with education & children's services stakeholders. Education is a priority area within the Corporate Plan (Appendix CLSP2) and this is reflected in the deployment of Education General Funds, capital investment, the deployment of partner resources and the deployment, monitoring and evaluation of the Dedicated Schools Grant. For example: the Council must make budget reductions of £134 million from 2014/15 through to 2018/19 - despite this the Council has been prepared to be flexible in its resource allocation in order to support Education priorities and Cabinet agreed in October 2014 to defer savings of £1 million approved for 2015/16 into later years and in February 2015 subsequently agreed to re-profile these further into savings of £250,000 in 2016/17 and 2017/18 and £500,000 in 2018/19. In addition, the Education Directorate effectively trades with schools within the authority and beyond generating additional income to support school improvement and ensuring that despite reductions in overall mainline funding the service continues to deliver "More for less" through a more targeted and effective (seen through improved outcomes) school improvement offer to all schools.

The Council is currently completing a £275 million secondary and special schools "Building Schools for the Future" Programme. Following independent verification of demographic projections the Authority has successfully bid for additional Basic Need allocations to reflect increased pressure on its places and in February 2015 and secured top up funding for 2015/16 of £1.8 million and £3.7 million for 2016/17. In 2017/18 it will receive Basic Need allocation of £4.1 million. The Council also agreed to ring fence capital receipts from the sale of sites released through the Building Schools for the Future programme to support the expansion of primary schools. In total the Council has invested £32.4 million, initially through prudential borrowing in advance of receipt of basic needs grant, on the primary school capital programme resulting in the expansion of 23 good or outstanding schools and worked with Free Schools to ensure sufficient places across the City

(see appendices – BSF programme/schools expansions). This can also be evidenced through the increasingly high number of secondary pupils from neighbouring authorities that chose to attend Wolverhampton secondary schools rather than their local school.

The Local Authority also maintains a positive working relationship with the Local Education Partnership and has successfully secured additional resources in successive years to drive forward its vision for school improvement and secure improved outcomes. This has included the Leadership Transformation Programme, Governors training programmes and an EYFS Project (Appendix UOR2 & EYFS Project final report)

The Council has a purposeful / robust relationship with the Schools' Forum (Appendix UOR3). All decisions about the use of the ring fenced Dedicated School Grant (DSG) are made in consultation with the Forum and, where significant changes are being considered, with the wider school community. In 2015/16 95% of the Local Authority school budget has been delegated at school level. This level of high delegation allows schools to have significant influence over the use of resources and enables them to commission services they identify as crucial to their school improvement priorities. Additionally Schools Forum has agreed to allocate £1.2 million of DSG to a growth fund to support expanding schools. An extensive, independent review of the centrally managed and de-delegated Dedicated School Grant was undertaken in autumn 2015. This review was commissioned by Schools Forum and has identified a number of areas for development and provides a basis for further development work. Reviews of all aspects of the local school funding formula are done in detailed discussions with sub group of School Forum. (see appendix – copy of review)

All schools are subject to review by Internal Audit (Appendices UOR5, UOR6 & UOR7) Reports are presented to Cabinet (Resources) panel on the level of balances held by schools in the city. Robust monitoring is undertaken on schools with licensed deficits. Schools with surplus balances are required to submit surplus balance returns, schools with surplus balances and poor outcomes are visited by LA officers to discuss the plans for the use of resources. Budget plans from all schools are submitted and reviewed twice a year.

In recognition and in support of the National priority around universal infant free school meals the Local Authority has made its own commitment to this agenda and agreed to discount the cost to schools to equate to the funding being provided.

**Key Achievements:**

- ✓ **Complete re-build of the secondary estate and refresh of the primary estate means excellent learning environments across the City.**

Positive relationship with Schools Forum ensures DSG funding is used to commission council services to effectively support school improvement priorities.

**Areas of Development:**

- ❖ Continue to deliver quality services to challenge and support school improvement in a climate of increasing budgetary restraints.