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| CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL | Cabinet 12 December 2018 |
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| Report title | School Improvement Strategy 2018-2021 | | |
| Decision designation | AMBER | | |
| Cabinet member with lead responsibility | Councillor Lynne Moran Education and Skills | | |
| Key decision | Yes | | |
| In forward plan | Yes | | |
| Wards affected | All Wards | | |
| Accountable Director | Meredith Teasdale, Director of Education | | |
| Originating service | Education | | |
| Accountable employee | Amanda Newbold | Head of School Improvement | |
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| Report to be/has been considered by | Education Leadership Team | 29 October 2018 | |
| | Strategic Executive Board | 6 November 2018 | |

Recommendation for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

Approve the School Improvement Strategy 2018-2021.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report accompanies the School Improvement (SI) Strategy 2018-2021. It summarises the current position of school improvement and makes recommendations to revise the previous version of the School Improvement and Governance Strategy 2017. The SI Strategy makes provision for the Council to carry out its functions to monitor the performance of schools in the city and ensures that, where improvements are necessary, these are carried out effectively and expeditiously.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The School Improvement and Governance Strategy was first presented to the Council in 2014, at which time school performance in the city was below national averages in terms of academic outcomes as well as the proportion of schools judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted. The Strategy has been reviewed annually with minor amendments being made and approved by the Executive.
- 2.2 Performance of schools has improved significantly during the last three academic years and consequently a number of further changes are being proposed in the revised SI Strategy. At the same time, the number of schools converting to or being sponsored by academies has also increased and the SI Strategy reflects the need for changing relationships with schools and with regional partners.
- 2.3 School effectiveness (as judged by Ofsted) over the course of the School Improvement Strategy 2014 to 2017:

| Academic Year | Proportion of schools judged to be good or Outstanding by Ofsted as at 31 st August 2014 to 2018 | |
|---------------|---|----------|
| | Wolverhampton | National |
| 2013-2014 | 73% | 79% |
| 2014-2015 | 77% | 82% |
| 2015-2016 | 83% | 86% |
| 2016-2017 | 86% | 87% |
| 2017-2018* | 90%** | 86% *** |

* methodology change ** June 2018

***March 2018

- 2.4 Change in school type over the course of the School Improvement and Governance Strategy 2014 to 2017:

| Academic Year | Ratio of Wolverhampton maintained schools to academies & free schools | | |
|---------------|---|-------------------------|--------------------|
| | LA maintained schools | Wolverhampton Academies | National Academies |
| 2013-2014 | 83% | 17% | 17% |
| 2014-2015 | 76% | 24% | 21% |
| 2015-2016 | 67% | 33% | 25% |
| 2016-2017 | 59% | 41% | 29% |
| 2017-2018 | 53% | 47% | 33% |

2.5 Performance of schools during the period of the Strategy has improved. Children in Wolverhampton enter school at levels below national averages and by the end of the Foundation Stage (2018) good progress is made so that approximately 69% of children attain the Good Level of Development. This has increased over the last five years.

2.6 Performance at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage

| Good Level of Development | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| National | 52% | 61% | 66% | 69% | 71% | 72% |
| Wolverhampton | 44% | 57% | 61% | 62% | 66% | 69% |

2.7 Performance at the end of Key Stage 1

Approximately 65% of children leave Key Stage 1 having met the expected standard of attainment in all the subjects of reading, writing and maths. This is similar to national levels of attainment. In each separate subject, in 2018, pupils attained approximately 1 percentage point lower than national averages with 74% achieving the standard in reading, 69% in writing and 75% in maths. Overall, 11% of children achieve greater depth in all three subjects.

2.8 Currently, there is a gap in the performance of boys and girls at the end of Key Stage 1, with more girls reaching the expected standard than boys in all three areas. For children eligible for pupil premium, the gap between this group and their peers is 11 percentage points. The gap for children whose first language is not English, is 3 percentage points when compared to children who have English as a first language. Approximately 14% of children with SEND reach the expected standard in all three subjects.

2.9 Performance at the end of Key Stage 2

Attainment in reading, writing and maths reaches similar to national levels at the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of children attaining the expected standard in all three subjects has increased over the last three years.

| Reading, writing and maths combined | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| National | 53% | 61% | 64% |
| Wolverhampton | 53% | 60% | 64% |

2.10 Performance in each subject separately continues to rise with the proportion of children achieving the expected standard in writing (80%) and in the grammar, punctuation and spelling (78%) test (GPS) being above national averages. In reading (74%) and in maths (75%), there is a 1 percentage point gap from the national average in each subject.

- 2.11 Increasing numbers of children attain the higher standard in reading (25%) and maths (20%) and greater depth in writing (21%); 9% of pupils attain this level across all three subjects. These figures are just below national averages.
- 2.12 Currently, there is still a gap in the performance of boys and girls at the end of Key Stage 2. However, this is similar to national figures at 9 percentage points. A larger proportion, of children in the city who are eligible for pupil premium reach the expected standard in reading, writing and maths than national. This is also increasing each year, at a greater rate than national figures. By the end of Key Stage 2, similar proportions of children with English as an additional language and with English as a first language reach the expected standard in all three subjects. Approximately 22% of children with SEND reach the expected standard in all three subjects.
- 2.13 Progress across Key Stage 2 remains significantly above national averages. In reading this is +0.9, in writing it is +1.2, in maths it is +0.5 and in GPS it is +1.6. This is the third successive year that Wolverhampton has achieved significantly above average performance across all KS2 progress measures.

2.14 Performance at the end of Key Stage 4

Provisional outcomes indicate that Progress 8 increased slightly from the previous year to -0.05. This reflects the improving national picture but remains slightly below the national average, currently showing as -0.02. Attainment measures dropped slightly from 2017 to 44.2. Although provisional, and subject to change, comparisons with similar local authorities rank the city well in its statistical neighbour group.

- 2.15 The proportion of pupils attaining a strong (9-5) pass in both English and Maths has increased to 36% but this remains below national levels (40%). The proportion achieving a standard pass is also below national at 57% compared to 59%.
- 2.16 The current picture is that the gap in performance of boys and girls widens at Key Stage 4, with fewer boys than girls attaining the GCSE in both English and maths. At 11 percentage points, this gap is wider than national for attainment, although the progress gap between boys and girls in the city is narrower than national levels (0.46 compared to 0.5).
- 2.17 Gaps for pupils with English as an additional language have reversed in Key Stage 4 with more pupils in this group achieving strong passes in English and maths, and pupils in this group achieving a higher Attainment 8 score than their peers.

2.18 Performance at the end of Key Stage 5

At Post 16, approximately 9% of Wolverhampton pupils attained 3+ A grade A levels compared to 13% last year. This is below the national levels. The proportion of pupils attaining AAB grade A levels in at least two facilitating subjects was almost 13% compared to 16% nationally. The average points score per entry for A levels is also below national averages. The gap between the performance of boys and girls at this measure

has narrowed this year. Please note that this data is provisional and unvalidated and is therefore subject to change when validated results are available in Spring 2019.

3.0 Key revisions to the School Improvement Strategy

- 3.1 The Council's vision for Education 2030 outlines its commitment to ensuring young people have outstanding opportunities at every stage of their education. The journey of improvement for schools in the city continues to require a balance of challenge, support and intervention that reflects the changing role and responsibility of local authorities in today's education system. The revised SI Strategy details how implementation of school improvement strategies increasingly involves regional and local partners and stakeholders including the Regional Schools Commissioner, Diocesan Authorities, Multi-Academy Trust Boards, Teaching Schools and Ofsted.
- 3.2 The revised Strategy incorporates governance as one aspect of school improvement. Challenge, support and evaluation of governance is offered through the SI Strategy in order to develop all aspects of leadership and management in maintained schools.
- 3.3 Training and development of the school workforce is central to the continuing improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management in schools. The strategy outlines the Council's comprehensive plans for professional development across subjects, phases and career stages from Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) to headteachers.
- 3.4 The revised SI Strategy sets out how collaboration between schools, including targeted peer to peer reviews, are pivotal to strengthening school improvement in the city; this aspect of school improvement, facilitated by experienced LA school improvement advisors, enables leaders to focus on specific areas of school practice that have been identified for improvement either at a school or cluster level, or a as city-wide priority.
- 3.5 Local Authority maintained schools continue to be categorised according to the risk of not achieving a 'Good' judgement at their next Ofsted inspection. The range of criteria to determine the categorisation has been updated to ensure that attainment and progress of pupils at each Key Stage is taken into account more rigorously when categorising schools. Academies continue to receive a table top analysis of performance; this is also discussed in detail with the Chairs of Single and Multi-Academy Trusts as part of the Director of Education's annual meeting.
- 3.6 Since the launch of the Strategy in 2014, the organisation of the Education Directorate and the School Improvement team has changed, impacting on the membership of the School Improvement Boards (SIBs) and more recently the Autumn term Challenge and Support meetings. These amendments are reflected in the revised SI Strategy.
- 3.7 Allocation of school improvement advisor days remain closely linked to each school's categorisation, with schools in most need of support and challenge receiving the highest allocation of days. One additional day per A and B1 school and 2 days for B2 and C (see Annexe 1 of SI Strategy) schools have been included to create additional flexibility into

the use of the allocated days so that peer reviews and focussed project work from various members of the school improvement team can be part of the bespoke offer to all schools regardless of categorisation.

- 3.8 The current Strategy is scheduled for an annual review. However, this Strategy is designed to be implemented over a three-year period and would therefore not require formal review until September 2021.

4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 4.1 The option to proceed without the revised School Improvement Strategy could lead to a reduction in standards of performance and Ofsted judgements in schools which may:
- Limit the Council's opportunity to work in collaboration and influence partners and stakeholders in the city and in the region
 - Restrict the flexibility and effectiveness of the council's school improvement offer to all LA maintained schools in the city
 - Reduce opportunities for school workforce development through CPD that is linked specifically to identified city-wide school improvement priorities
 - Lose the potential benefits and strengthening of the system gained through facilitated school to school peer reviews and other targeted projects and school improvement interventions
 - Limit the LA's ability to identify soon enough schools that have underperformance in Key Stages other than KS2 and KS4
 - Slow down the movement of LA schools judged to be Good or Outstanding
 - Increase the risk of reputational damage to the council, and the city as a whole, if schools are judged to be requiring improvement or inadequate
 - Impact negatively on the Council's strong relationships that have been re-established over the last few years with current school leaders.

5.0 Reasons for decision

- 5.1 The decision to adopt the revised SI Strategy reinforces the Council's vision for education. It would demonstrate the Council's commitment to continue to invest in education, specifically in school improvement as part of the regeneration of the city.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 The cost of implementation and monitoring of the Council's actions to challenge and support schools to improve school performance and increase the number of positive Ofsted inspections has been included in the approved revenue budget for the school improvement service. Ongoing monitoring and review of budgets is taking place in line with the council's policies.

- 6.2 The cost of educational failure is however significant for individual children, for schools, 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.

[JB/01112018]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 Under Sections 13 & 13A 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 promoting high standards in the city.

- 7.2 Recent improvements in attainment and in the performance of schools in Wolverhampton suggest that the Council's duties are being currently being discharged, although this now needs to be maintained.

- 7.3 Changes in accountability for schools are noted in the SI Strategy document.

[LW/10112018/A]

8.0 Equalities implications

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

- 8.2 Analysis of performance data, as part of the School Improvement Advisors' allocation of time for schools, enables a thorough review of outcomes for pupils across the range of vulnerable groups including gender, disadvantage, ethnicity and prior attainment. This also informs the bespoke and targeted offer of support and development to schools.

9.0 Environmental implications

- 9.1 There are no environmental implications as a result of the proposed SI Strategy changes.

10.0 Human resources implications

- 10.1 There are no Human Resources implications for the Council as a result of the proposed strategy changes. However, for schools, national data and anecdotal reports suggest that there are recruitment and retention issues in relation to teaching staff and school leaders; one aspect of partnership in the city is currently considering how to address this issue at a local level.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 11.1 There are no corporate landlord implications as a result of the proposed strategy changes.

12.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

12.1 Information in Section 2 of this report demonstrates that the quality of education offered to children in the city is improving through the implementation of a School Improvement Strategy. Furthermore, evidence indicates that education contributes to the social and economic factors which are the strongest determinants, accounting for approximately 40%, of health outcomes. The SI strategy aims to further improve academic outcomes for children and young people at each Key Stage of their experience of education, preparing them to be ready for success at the next phase of their education, training or future employment.

13.0 Schedule of background papers

13.1 [School Improvement and Governance Strategy 2017](#)

14.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 - School Improvement Strategy 2018-2021