

Report Title	School Improvement and Monitoring
Meeting	Schools Forum
Meeting Date	December 2023
Chair	Jenny Simms
Report Author(s)	Kieran Holliday, Acting Strategic Lead for Education Jane Morgan, Head of SEND Support and School Improvement
Open/Exempt	Open

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Government's long-term ambition is for all primary schools to become academies by 2030 and that LAs need to adjust to this and bring maintained schools in line with Multi Academy trust to support school improvement. However, there is a gap from now until then on how to support schools that are maintained by the Local Authority as well as how the Local Authority can ensure it can exercise its minimum duties to schools.
- 1.2. It was agreed at Schools Forum in October 2022 to de-delegate funding as set out in Appendix B in order to fund the LAs core minimum duties, however Schools Forum requested that for de-delegation be agreed annually as part of the normal budget setting process

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. For maintained schools to agree in principle to de-delegate a collective sum of £50,837 to fund the core / de minimis responsibilities of the Local Authority following the Government's decision to remove the School Improvement and Brokering Grant. The final sums will be confirmed at the February Schools Forum meeting in February 2024.

3. What are the core / de minimis duties of the Local Authority?

- 3.1. The Local Authority has a number of statutory duties related to school improvement activities for maintained schools. The Government defines these core duties in the following way:
 - **To understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data as a starting point to identify any that are underperforming, while working with them to explore ways to support progress;**
 - There can be a clear emphasis on how to ensure if schools are being inclusive and Cognus should provide a core offer, including an annual leadership and learning visit, for all maintained schools with possible bespoke support that is available for schools. This could include:

- Governorship and curriculum development
 - Additional headteacher support through coaching and mentoring.
 - Establishing clear systems which secures services from the best-quality provider and carefully evaluates impact on outcomes for pupils.
 - Working through the SEND peer review priorities to ensure all schools and school leaders are providing an exceptional SEND offer.
 - Re-visiting and refreshing the educational vision in the light of new government and Ofsted changes.
- **To work closely with the relevant Regional School Commissioner (RSC), diocese and other local partners to ensure schools receive the support they need to improve;**
 - The RSC is only as good as local intelligence in what is happening in schools and that can only be provided if the LA is in attendance of the local maintained (and academies) schools. The LA could act as an independent and impartial broker and evaluator for school improvement support. Cognus can be seen as being able to take an objective and independent view on the support that could be provided and whether that support had achieved a positive impact for pupils over time. Cognus can undertake the risk assessments and categorisation and not just based on Ofsted grades (as this only happens now within every 5 years and a school can fall by the wayside within a year if the senior leadership is constantly changing) so it can include:
- **Leadership and management - the capacity to maintain or improve standards and manage change. Things to include could be:**
 - Attendance
 - Curriculum development
 - Exclusions
 - Changes in leadership
 - Finance issues
 - SATS
 - SEND monitoring
 - Governorship (for instance the governing body is responsible for the strategic direction of the school, and it would be difficult to argue that it is fulfilling this responsibility if it does not have a strategic improvement plan).
 - Safeguarding which a local authority has a duty to monitor regardless of if a school is maintained, free or an academy.
 - In primary schools, monitor the update of the 2-year-old entitlement (from April 2024) and 30-hour children in EYFS.
- **Where underperformance has been recognised in a maintained school, proactively work with the relevant RSC, combining local and regional expertise to ensure the right approach, including sending warning notices and using intervention powers where this will improve leadership and standards.**
 - You can only do this if a school's data is analysed when recent data has been published but that alone cannot be sufficient as data does not tell the whole story of the school. Ofsted has recognised this, and local school improvement partners are asked about the capacity for improvement of schools they support.

And

To encourage good and outstanding maintained schools to take responsibility for their own improvement; support other schools; and enable other schools to access the support they need to improve. This is already taking place through Challenge Partners which are now well established in the SET schools, but further work needs to be carried out the other maintained schools, to further develop the work that took place working in partnership with TT Education in 2021/22

- 3.2. There are 22 schools in the Borough (excluding Specialist Provision) who are currently maintained. The School Improvement and Brokering Grant is funded based on a per pupil amount (approximately £11 per pupil) to fund the above de minimis responsibilities. The LA is requesting contributions from schools as set out in [Appendix B](#) for 2024/25 based on January 2023 census data.
- 3.3. These figures are indicative only at this stage and will be finalised once confirmed information has been received from the DfE on school allocation.

Appendix A - 2024/25 School Improvement Programme

Possible funding for 2024/2025

Current School Improvement Activity	De minimis / core?	Spend in 204/2025	Core Duty
School Specific Support - total spend in 2024/2025			
KIT meetings with maintained schools / general School Improvement Advisory Services and data review (currently provided by Jamie Hassan)	Yes	£20k	To understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data as a starting point to identify any that are underperforming, while working with them to explore ways to support progress which includes the evaluation of SEND practices and how the curriculum supports statutory tests.
Specific support for schools - e.g. training and CPD for specific schools / support for New Headteachers from NLEs etc...	No	£2k	N/A
CPD and Programmes			
Inclusion Support Bespoke and Universal packages	No	-	All schools need to be able to meet the changing SEND profile within our borough. Staff need to have the skills and expertise to be able to meet the additional needs of the majority of SEND pupils within a mainstream setting.

Curriculum Development / work to assess QA education	Yes	<i>Incorporated in KIT meeting funding</i>	To understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data as a starting point and whether it is inclusive of all learners for those who may need support until Ofsted has completed a more recent inspection.
Further work on Challenge Partner 'role out' so all maintained schools become self-evaluating until becoming part of a MAT	No	-	
Providing good quality two-year-old provision.	No	-	Exploration of how schools can develop an outstanding provision and appropriate curriculum.
Expanding 30-hour provision.	No	-	The flexibility of this opportunity such as no longer be any minimum session length (it is currently 2.5 hours), but the maximum session length will still be 10 hours . There will be no mandatory pattern of delivery.
Supporting wrap around care in primary schools (by 2026)	No	-	

Salaries and Cognus charges - total spend £30k			
Cognus salaries/consultant fees Covers role of Head of School Improvement plus an allowance for admin, or equivalent provided by external consultants.	Yes	£30k	<p>To understand the performance of maintained schools in the area, using data as a starting point to identify any that are underperforming, while working with schools to explore ways to support progress;</p> <p>In effect would pay for the work involved in the allocation and deployment of residual</p>

			school improvement activities, Ofsted visits, data analysis as well as the execution of school improvement powers of intervention should they be needed.
--	--	--	--

2024/25 School Improvement Programme

Improvement component	Forecast spend
School Specific Support	£22,000
Salaries/consultant fees	£30,000
CPD and Programmes	Will be funded through trade offer or through specific delegated funding (e.g cluster funding)

Traded School Improvement offer 2024/25

Cognus is able to further support the school improvement work in our schools through our traded offer, including:

- Training to further enhance Quality First Teaching
- One hour one-to-one virtual consultancies for curriculum leaders in English, mathematics and science with subject specialist consultants.
Thus, one-hour-per-term-per-subject only would be offered as part of an agreement

- Termly newsletters in Teaching and Learning, for Early Career Teachers (ECTs.)
- Twilight virtual drop-in 'Question and Answer' sessions in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- New headteachers twilight drop-in session per term (remote)
- Termly teaching and learning virtual twilight briefing, for middle leaders to provide updates on national developments in teaching and learning.
- An annual Governor briefing to enable governors to fully carry-out their duties in supporting curriculum/subject leaders
- Preparation for Ofsted support packages, universal and bespoke - including support in writing Self Evaluation Framework/School Development Plan and support for subject leaders
- An annual online headteacher briefing on 'Promoting Equality and Diversity in School'.
- Support dealing with complaints that have gone to Ofsted and the school needs support to address it.

(A comprehensive list of traded support packages will be available on the Cognus website from the beginning of the Spring Term 2024)

Appendix B - Draft De-delegation 24/25 - (subject to change when APT received)

School Name	Status	NOR October 22	23/24 £	Per Pupil £
All Saints Benhilton CofE Primary School	VA	421	2,147	5.10
Beddington Infants' School	Foundation	252	1,285	5.10
Culvers House Primary School	Foundation	407	2,076	5.10
Devonshire Primary School	Community	638	3,254	5.10
Dorchester Primary School	Foundation	516	2,632	5.10
Foresters Primary School	Foundation	226	1,153	5.10
Hackbridge Primary School	Community	709	3,616	5.10
High View Primary School	Foundation	412	2,101	5.10
Holy Trinity CofE Junior School	VA	349	1,780	5.10
Muschamp Primary School and Language Opportunity Base	Foundation	602	3,070	5.10
Nonsuch Primary School	Foundation	206	1,051	5.10
Robin Hood Infants' School	Community	265	1,352	5.10
Robin Hood Junior School	Community	361	1,841	5.10
St Cecilia's Catholic Primary School	VA	432	2,203	5.10
St Dunstan's Cheam CofE Primary School	VA	415	2,117	5.10
St Elphege's RC Infants' School	VA	265	1,352	5.10
St Elphege's RC Junior School	VA	387	1,974	5.10
St Mary's RC Infants School	VA	260	1,326	5.10
St Mary's RC Junior School	VA	363	1,851	5.10

St Philomena's Catholic High School for Girls	VA	1,179	6,013	5.10
Stanley Park Junior School	Foundation	373	1,902	5.10
The John Fisher School	VA	930	4,743	5.10
Total		9,968	50,837	