

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM NO. 5
16 NOVEMBER 2015	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of the Corporate Director for People and Communities / Resources

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REVIEW OF OUTCOMES OF PETERBOROUGH SELF IMPROVEMENT SCHOOL NETWORK

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 A report was brought to this committee in November 2013 and March 2014 which provided an overview of the School to School support arrangements proposed for Peterborough. This paper provides an update on the first full year of operation and the action areas where refinements / updates will be taken to ensure outcomes are impacted.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members of the committee are asked to review the progress to date and also note the new arrangements for the Schools Performance Clinic which commenced in October 2015.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 Single Delivery Plan - Programme 1 – Creating jobs through growth and improved skills and education.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In November 2010, the Department for Education published the schools White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching', which set out a radical reform programme for the schools system with the inference that schools would be freed from the constraints of central Government direction and teachers placed firmly at the heart of school improvement. One of the key elements of the paper was an expectation that school improvement should be school led replacing top down initiatives both from central and local government.
- 4.2 SLE Associates were commissioned by the Local Authority to work with schools independently to develop a school to school partnership, drawing on the recent experience of LAs such as Wigan, where school to school support has been introduced with significant success.
- 4.3 A task and finish group was formed consisting of Headteachers from both primary and secondary sectors and they have worked with SLE associates over the summer and at the start of the autumn term to develop the 'Peterborough Self-Improving Schools Network'. This process was finalised in the summer 2014 and full implementation began in September 2015. The school to school support system developed can be found in appendix 1 – the 'system on a page'.
- 4.4 The premise of the arrangements was that schools, in partnership with the local authority, would through a school improvement strategy determine shared priorities through the Peterborough School Improvement Board, which will be commissioned to undertake the local authority's school improvement responsibilities. This strategy is captured in the public value proposition which was developed at the outset of the development -

"A sustainable school to school support network will raise the aspiration and achievement of all

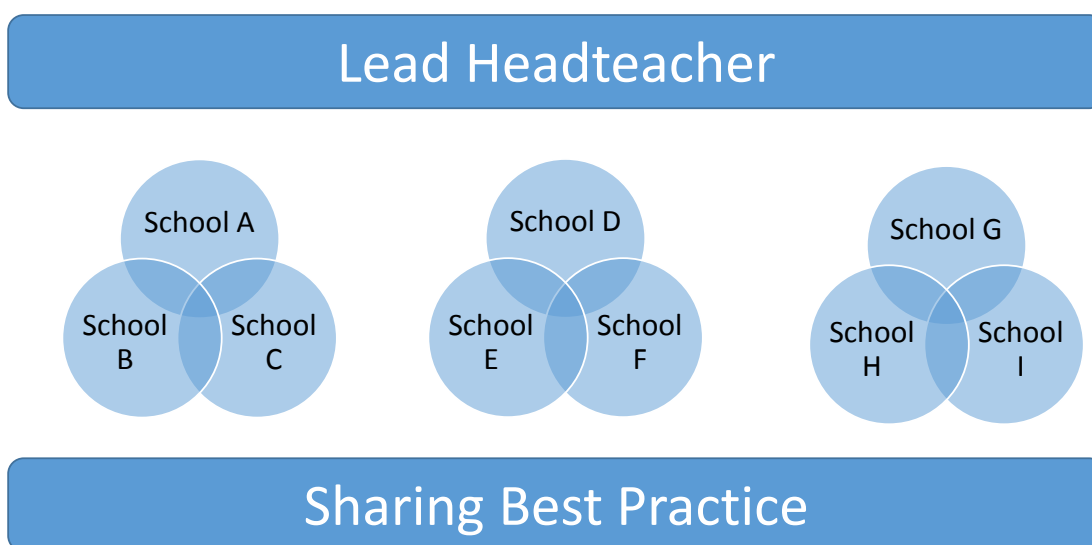
children and young people in Peterborough, resulting in a significant improvement in progress, attainment, and realised potential, so that Peterborough is an outstanding and inspiring place to work and learn.”

4.5 The system developed is organised into 3 blocks -

4.7 1. Collaboratives

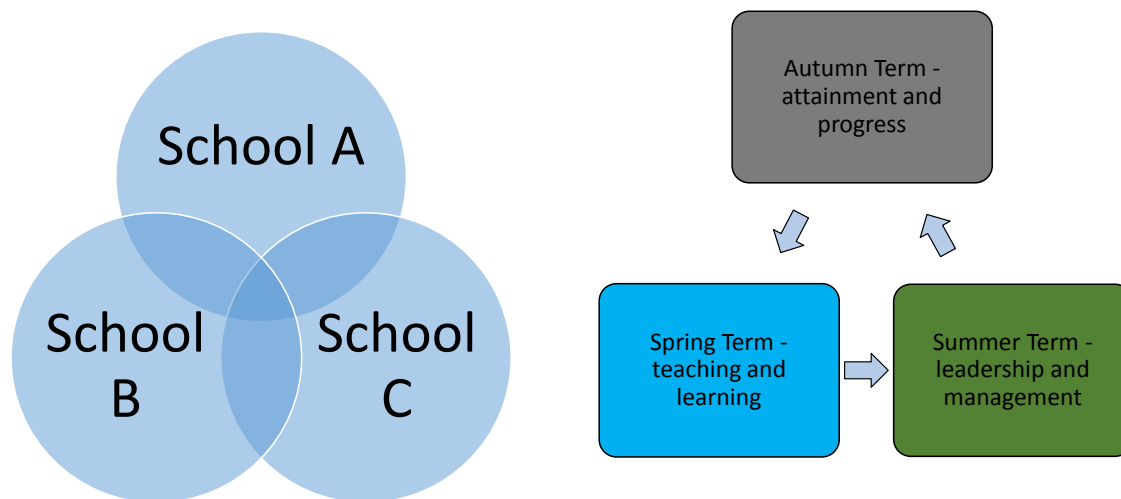
Schools have been set in phase-specific Collaboratives to drive improvement. Primary school collaboratives are composed of six or nine schools, which were drawn in equal proportion from across the city. The design principle was established to ensure that each collaborative reflects the full range of school contexts in Peterborough in terms of the community they serve, OFSTED rating and access to Headteacher leadership expertise. Secondary and special schools work as single collaboratives by their sector.

Each collaborative will designate a Lead Headteacher who will be ratified by the School Improvement Board. The Board will agree a specification for the Lead Headteacher role, with designation based on three criteria: leadership of a good or outstanding school; track record of collaborative working; credible evidence of leading successful school improvement. The Board will commission dedicated time to enable Lead Headteachers to undertake their role. The collaboratives will be supported to foster and develop further system leadership capacity from Headteachers and senior leaders in schools.



4.8 2. Triads

The key focus for collaboratives will be a School Review and Support programme. Headteachers in each collaborative will work in triads, challenging each school's self-assessment in order to identify strengths, vulnerabilities and priorities for support. Triads will work to common processes to be set out in a School Support and Review Handbook. Collaboratives will meet each term to review the outcomes from school reviews and commission support required. Priorities, areas of focus and progress from each collaborative will be reviewed each term by the School Improvement Board, to which the collaboratives will be accountable. Each school will be assessed against a three point scale based upon their performance and Ofsted framework criteria.



Individual schools and the collaboratives will be able to draw on a wide range of flexible, timely and tailored school improvement support from a range of sources including Peterborough schools within and across collaboratives, the Peterborough Learning Partnership (PLP), Teaching School Alliances and Academy Trusts, the local authority's core and traded services, and other support from beyond Peterborough. The School Improvement Board will broker the strategic deployment of National, Local and Specialist Leaders of Education (NLEs, LLEs, SLEs).

4.6 3. School Improvement Board

The School Improvement Board provides oversight and direction for the school improvement strategy and maintains an overview of school performance, including schools causing concern. A key part of the work of the Board is to commission and broker support in response to changing needs, holding a commissioning budget for this purpose designated as recurrent funding within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The Board will establish a quality assurance system for the self-improving schools network. The Board has an independent chair, who has been employed by the City Council and accountable to the Service Director – Education. David Crossley has a history of success in education including leading four very different schools including two designated outstanding by Ofsted, a 2-19 international school in S.E. Asia and a regeneration of a previously failing school. He led the highly praised national RATL (Raising Achievement Transforming Learning Programme) which developed an innovative and distinctive approach to raising achievement and involved over 700 schools. It meets formally 3 times a year.

4.9 Sixty eight schools were engaged for the 2014/15 academic year (out of 77 in Peterborough – 80 if all through arrangements are separated out) and the collaborative and triad arrangements can be found in appendix 2. The numbers are across both academies and maintained schools.

4.10 Total Funding of £580k was agreed by Schools Forum to be topsliced from the Dedicated Schools Grant in both 2014/15 and 2015/16 to support the system. Schools in triads receive between £2k and £3k for their work with the rest of the funding being allocated to collaboratives and the school improvement board to fund larger scale projects.

5. KEY ISSUES

5.1 In order to validate the work that has been undertaken, the authority commissioned SLE associates to undertake a review (See appendix 3) into the successes in the first full year of operation and the areas for development that were needed. As this was a completely new system, a number of lessons have been learned and the report outlines the area for development.

5.2 The report is self-explanatory and outlines many areas of success. These include –

- Identification and sharing of best practice across the city
- Successfully embedding the peer challenge programme and engaging 70 out of the 77

schools across the LA. Those schools that have not yet engaged either have new Headteachers who are still familiarising themselves with their schools or are in challenging circumstances and working closely with the SI Team

- Affirming headteachers' professional judgement and building relationships based upon trust and confidence which have increased headteacher stability
- Extending the reach of the programme beyond headteachers to sustain long-term learning and sharing. For example, the secondary collaborative has set up meetings at the same place on the same day between Heads of Department, Heads of Sixth Form, Behavioural Leads and Deputies who are now all working together to provide collaborative support. Primary deputies are working together to lead a project on moderation
- Developing both primary ('Heads Up') and secondary management programmes and other CPD programmes.
- Developing Ofsted readiness skills for Headteachers and leaders in schools.
- Development of a parallel governor network which has already had an impact especially around sharing best practice.

5.3 An action plan is being developed with the Lead Headteachers and the LA to address the key areas for development in 4.12 of the SLE report. Ofsted has agreed to review the arrangement in the Spring and will also be providing training for the challenge part of the process.

5.4 The 2015/16 academic year model has commenced and a further 8 schools have joined the arrangements – leaving only 4 schools not engaged. No other system of this type has this level of engagement elsewhere in the country.

5.5 **School Performance Clinic – Accountability and Improving Standards**

5.6 In our Ofsted Inspection of School Improvement Arrangements in February 2014, inspectors commented that we needed to ensure Local Members and Senior Officers in the council continued to have good knowledge of schools to help them assess both the outcomes for children and young people but also to review the effectiveness of the School Improvement function.

5.7 There is some good practice elsewhere in the country and having visited a number of authorities, it has been proposed to instigate a process from Bedford Borough Council called a 'School Performance Clinic'.

5.8 The process is outlined in appendix 4. Essentially, for every school in the city data is reviewed on a termly basis and explanations are given for schools that are flagged as red i.e. causing concern. This could be due to a number of reasons including standards, staff issues, financial challenges, governance concerns etc. At each meeting the list is reviewed and the process to drive improvement is assessed including officer action and whether there is an impact. It covers all schools in the city including academy schools. Actions from previous meetings are followed up at the next meeting to ensure things have moved in schools.

5.9 The clinic is attended by the

- Lead Member for Education (and the Leader of the Council),
- Chief Executive,
- Corporate Director – People and Communities,
- Chair of Creating Opportunities Tackling Inequalities committee,
- two members of the committee who have led on schools data (Cllr Shearman and Al Kingsley)
- Service Director – Education
- School Improvement Team – Head of SI and Senior School Improvement Advisors

6. **IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 None. The findings of the review have been discussed at School Improvement Board meeting in September 2015 and will be shared with all schools. The action plan will be discussed at the next board meeting in December 2015.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 Action plan will be completed and implemented before the end of the year.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

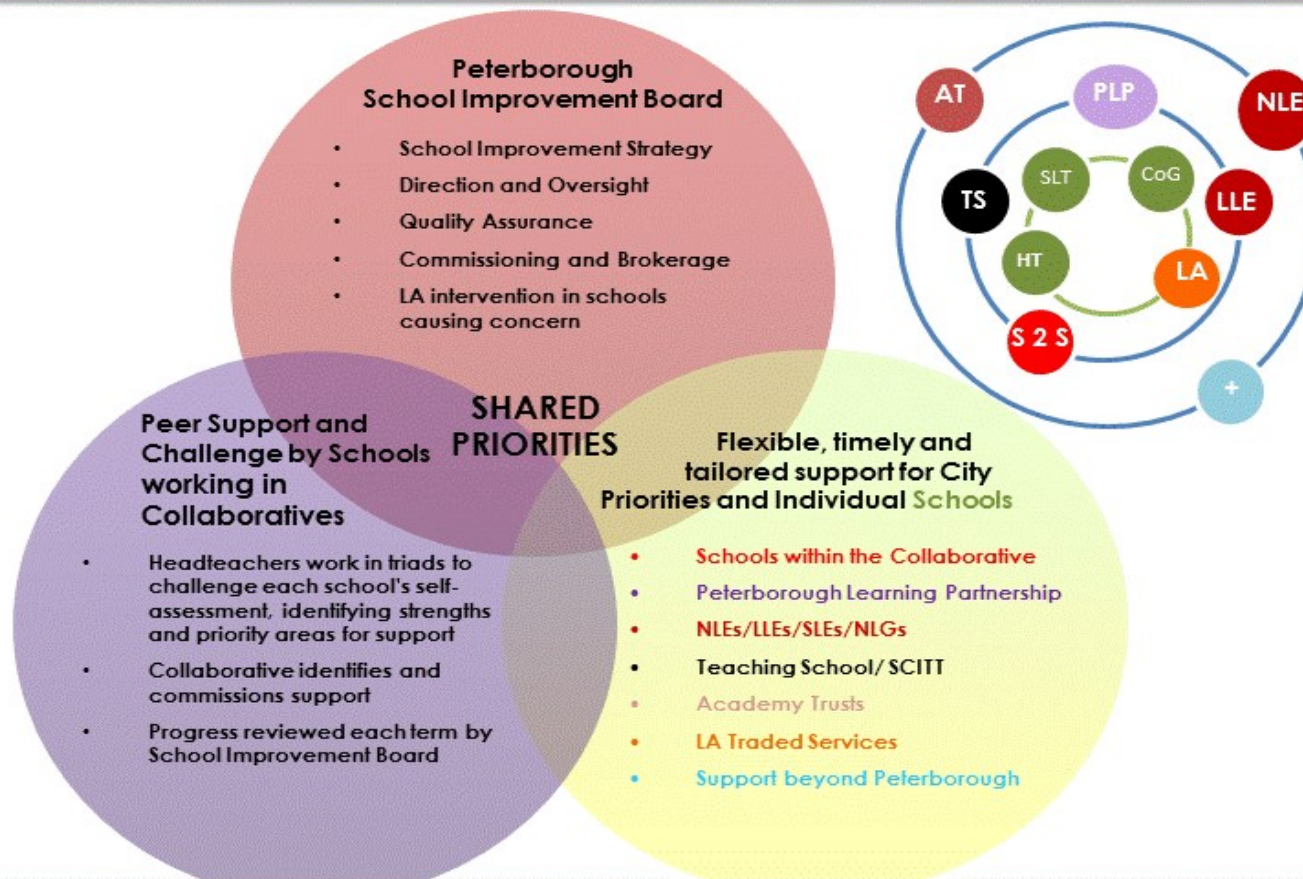
- 9.1 None

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Peterborough Self Improving Schools Network
Appendix 2 – School Collaborative and Triad Arrangements – 2014/15 Academic Year
Appendix 3 – SLE Associates Review
Appendix 4 – School Performance Clinic

PETERBOROUGH SELF-IMPROVING SCHOOLS NETWORK

A sustainable school to school network will raise the aspiration and achievement of all the children and young people in Peterborough, resulting in a significant improvement in progress, attainment and raised potential so that Peterborough is an outstanding place to work and learn.



LOCAL AUTHORITY PROVIDES KEY FUNCTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE NETWORK

Appendix 2 – School Collaborative and Triad Arrangements – 2014/15 Academic Year

Lead Headteacher	School	Lead Headteacher	School
Simon Eardly (Primary)	Orton Wistow Brewster Avenue Hampton Hargate Nene Valley John Clare Heritage Park St Botolphs Northborough Wittering	Collete Firth (Primary)	Winyates Woodston Newborough Watergall St Johns Queens Drive
Anne Byrne (Primary)	Hampton C (KS2) Kings (KS2) TDA (KS2) Paston Ridings Hampton Vale Castor Oakdale Dogstrophe Infants Old Fletton St Thomas More	Tim Smith (Primary)	The Beeches Southfields Eyrescroft All Saints St Michaels Eye
Tracey Cunningham (Primary)	Norwood William Law Peakirk Cum Glington Welbourne Discovery Abbotsmede Barnack St Augustines	Eric Winstone (Secondary)	Nene Park Jack Hunt St John Fisher OBA Stanground KSCS TDA Kings Hampton AMVC Voyager PRU
Jane Dooley (Primary)	Duke of Bedford Gladstone Highlees Longthorpe Werrington Ravensthorpe Thorpe West Town Braybrook Middleton Sacred Heart	Sue Bailey (Special)	Pheonix Nenagate Marshfields Heltwate COPASS Clare Lodge

SLE Associates

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REVIEW OF PETERBOROUGH SELF-IMPROVING SCHOOLS NETWORK

SEPTEMBER 14TH – 18TH, 2015

A sustainable school to school support network will raise the aspiration and achievement of all children and young people in Peterborough, resulting in a significant improvement in progress, attainment, and realised potential, so that Peterborough is an outstanding and inspiring place to work and learn.

SISN Public Value Proposition

1. Background to the Peterborough Self-improving Schools Network

In April 2013, Peterborough City Council agreed a new role in supporting education in the city, one aspect of which was to ‘*support schools to develop their own school improvement strategies and work between schools within the city and traded with those schools outside of the area*’. Following a conference for all schools in June 2013, the City Council commissioned SLE Associates to work with a Task and Finish Group of Headteachers and Governors to develop and implement proposals for ensuring effective school-to-school partnerships in the city.

SLE Associates developed proposals for a Peterborough Self-Improving Schools Network (PSISN) and coordinated consultation with schools in October 2013. The proposals received overwhelming support and, following a report to the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee in November 2013, SLE Associates were commissioned to establish a pilot programme and support arrangements for full operation from September 2014.

A pilot programme took place in the Spring Term 2014 involving 18 schools (12 primary, 3 secondary, and 3 special schools). The pilot programme tested out school review and support by headteachers working in triads, the coordination of support through school collaboratives which brought together two to three triads, and working arrangements for the School Improvement Board. The evaluation of the pilot demonstrated key benefits for schools and, following a dissemination conference in May 2014, preparations were made for full operation from September 2014. Lead Headteachers were appointed for secondary, special and primary school collaboratives. Detailed guidance documentation was prepared and headteachers were trained in their collaborative groups in June/July. David Crossley of SLE Associates was invited to undertake the role of independent chair of the School Improvement Board

A final progress report from SLE Associates was presented to the School Improvement Board on July 11th 2014 and a handover meeting took place on July 15th. SLE

SLE Associates, acting by John Harris Consulting Ltd.

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Registered for VAT Number 105 9008 40

Associates confirmed that the Peterborough Self-Improving Schools Network was now ready for full implementation. The report highlighted a number of areas where the City Council would need to take forward further developments.

At the last meeting of the Peterborough School Improvement Board, the Chair (David Crossley) and the Service Director (Jonathan Lewis) agreed that SLE Associates should be commissioned to undertake a formative review of the PSISN's progress to date. Although this is unlikely to show a definite impact upon school performance data after just three terms of operation, the review will be able to capture the quality and impact of the programme at triad and collaborative level.

A workshop involving members of the School Improvement Board and invited members of the original Task and Finish Group will consider findings from the review and recommend ways forward for the next phase of development of the Network at an extended School Improvement Board meeting on September 29th 2015

2. Aim and focus of the formative review

Aim: To review the progress and impact of the Peterborough Self-Improving Schools Network and make recommendations for its further development.

Focus: The formative review focused upon the following themes:

- The quality and impact of the peer challenge programme including:
 - The operation of the triad process including the extent to which it is acting as a catalyst for school improvement activity;
 - The ways it is supporting schools in responding to the current and the new Ofsted arrangements for school inspection;
- The operation of collaboratives and their contribution to school improvement;
- The experience of the lead headteacher role and its impact;
- The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Peterborough Self-improving Schools Network, including the role and effectiveness of the School Improvement Board;
- The use of resources, including the allocation and use of earmarked funding allocated from the dedicated schools grant.
- The ways in which the impact of the Peterborough Self-improving Schools Network is being measured and evidenced
- Plans for the next stage of development and their sustainability.

3. Structure of the formative review

The assignment was undertaken for SLE Associates by Jonathan Crossley-Holland (preparation of review question sets), John Harris (JH), Karen Barnes (KB), Sharon Bruton (SB) and Gill Jones (GJ), facilitated by David Crossley in his capacity as Chair of the Peterborough School Improvement Board. A summary of the experience of the SLE Associates team is attached at Appendix 2. The review took the form of interviews with the following Peterborough colleagues, all of whom have been involved in the PSISN during both

The pilot and roll-out phases, to ascertain their views on the progress of the programme to date:

Interviewees	Number
Service Director: Education, People Resources and Corporate Property	1
Lead headteachers:	8 (including 3 telephone interviews)
Primary headteachers (excluding Lead Heads):	11 (including 1 telephone interview)
Secondary headteachers:	2 (excluding Lead Head)
Members of School Improvement Team:	3
School Governors:	1 (by email)
Elected Member (Leader of Council):	1
Total interviewees	27

The question sets for the review process are attached at Appendix 1. These were designed to elicit feedback on the following key areas:

- Purpose of the PSISN
- Feedback on core elements:
 - Triad Peer review process
 - Collaborative Meetings
 - School Improvement Board
 - Professional development and support offered by the PSNIS at a triad, collaborative, system level
- Comparison with previous school improvement system
- Role of governors in the PSISN
- Leadership and management of the SISN
- Impact and grading
- Plans for the next stage of development and their sustainability – risks and recommendations

The review programme was very well organised and administered by Helen Amendola. We received a positive welcome and excellent engagement and support throughout the process and were extremely impressed with the transparency and commitment to improvement evidenced by all interviewee and by their enthusiasm for the programme.

4. Key Findings

4.1 Purpose of the PSISN

National policy changes proposed in the 2010 White Paper *'The Importance of Teaching'* placed greater emphasis on local authorities meeting their responsibilities by enabling and promoting more effective school-to-school support. In common with other councils, Peterborough LA faced the combined challenges of driving further improvement in performance, reconfiguring the arrangements for supporting school

improvement, and making significant savings. It was in response to these challenges that the Peterborough Self-improving Schools Network was conceived in April 2013. Ofsted carried out an inspection of Peterborough Council's arrangements for school improvement between 3 and 7 February 2014. The overall support for school improvement was judged to be effective, recognising improvements that had been made across GCSE results, attendance, reducing exclusions and improving students' highlighted that 'in 2013, a review of school improvement activities led to the establishment of a 'Self-Improving Schools Network' overseen by a School Improvement Board' and recommended that the LA should now 'embed high quality school-to-school partnership in order to promote the sharing of good practice and increase the autonomy of primary schools'.

In discussing the purpose of the PSISN, interviewees highlighted the fact that budgetary constraints meant that school improvement support has been mainly reserved in recent years for schools causing concern. Good and outstanding schools received only one two-hour annual visit from a member of the SI team and did not have access to LA-wide support initiatives. Hence, a core objective of the PSISN was to extend support to all schools, not just those in difficulty. As one headteacher expressed it:

"Our schools were going backwards because other schools are improving all the time and my staff didn't know what was out there, like reading recovery and first-class maths. We are now getting to see these things in other schools as part of the triad and the collaborative and, therefore, it will help to improve our school."

Other objectives identified included the following:

- The PSISN will provide support to get schools from 'good' to 'outstanding' which is equally as important as moving them from 'RI' to 'good'
- Headteachers already had good networks, plus the expertise and capacity within schools to provide support, so a peer support network is a viable solution
- Headteachers of good schools needed more support and challenge and were looking outside the area to access this. The PSISN will provide similar support within Peterborough
- School-to-school support encourages a more collaborative focus and ethos which will be a positive benefit for Peterborough schools
- Operating in triads and collaboratives of small numbers of schools meant that support could be more targeted and personalised than would be the case with city-wide school improvement initiatives
- Headteachers challenging each other's schools is more cost-effective option for the LA
- Turnover at director level within the LA is higher than at headteacher level which can have an impact on policy – schools offer more continuity
- We need to improve the life chances for young people in Peterborough if we want to attract people to live and work here and the PSISN will help us to do so

4.2 Comparison of the PSISN with the previous school improvement system

Headteachers felt that the school-to-school support programme had engendered an ethos of collaborative working which was expressed as a 'passion for Peterborough'. Instead of solely being concerned about the performance of their own schools, there now is a genuine commitment to improving standards across the City, particularly in

those schools where improved results will help to move Peterborough up the LA league tables:

“Although we were employed for our own schools, this is about everybody helping Peterborough.”

“We’re in this for all children in Peterborough...we’ve got to get it right.”

“We all benefit from a school that does well.”

“There is a moral purpose and we can step up”

Headteachers’ responses indicated that the SISN offers additional benefits over the previous system in that it is enabling all schools to access peer-led support. All interviewees felt that they had already benefited, even from just sharing best practice.

“Good and outstanding schools don’t just maintain themselves”

“As good schools we were left behind. We didn’t know what was available. We now know what’s out there.”

Previously, the school improvement system seemed more ‘top down’. People felt constrained by the system rather than seizing the initiative to come up with a different model, particularly at primary level. Special and secondary schools were already working collaboratively but the SISN has further developed and reinforced this. Although, eleven out of the twelve Peterborough secondary schools are members of academy chains that already benefit from a similar school-to-school support model, the PSISN replicates existing successful practice and all academies were keen to be involved.

4.3 Motivations for Lead Headteacher engagement

Peterborough headteachers were overwhelmingly willing to participate in the pilot and roll out phases as these presented an opportunity to help drive school improvement and to develop the peer-led model for the ‘greater good’ of Peterborough schools. Looking outwards and having accountability for a group of schools has been challenging - the Lead Head role constitutes a valuable development opportunity for headteachers to which colleagues are already aspiring. However, the role is more time consuming than expected with Lead Heads spending at least twenty days per year on SISN business, rather than the ten days that was originally envisaged.

4.4 The triad model

A high level of energy and commitment to the triad model was much in evidence from all headteachers with the triads being valued for sharing learning and varying degrees of challenge across groups:

“I feel that it has pushed me as a head to look at things that I wasn’t looking at - not just about standards because we were pretty good results wise but other aspects within the school that will help us move towards an outstanding grade at Ofsted.”

Headteachers agree that seeing each other’s schools has been very beneficial – for example, the opportunity of viewing differing contexts across the LA such as the high number of service children in some areas. The discussions at triad level have provided an opportunity for ‘warts and all’ professional dialogue to identify common issues and

enable schools to share successful strategies and resources - e.g. for example, the Arbor data package for OFSTED readiness. Triads have also encouraged schools to share data so that they will be more comfortable doing this going forward – for example, during Ofsted inspections.

“There has been a big improvement in self-evaluation in schools”

“I was asked challenging questions during my triad but I already had the answers for them - it was good to have that validated.”

Initial concerns about triad composition were probably oversensitive. However, relationships are perceived as being crucial: the right mix of people needs to be together in the triad with a good balance of different experience.

‘It’s about the people who are with you - you build up a professional relationship and trust.’

“Just the chance to see each other’s schools is incredibly beneficial - what it eventually produces is more people to pick up the phone to when there’s an issue.”

There is particular cohesion at triad level when groups share an Identity – for example, as special schools and with some primary groups. There was some discussion as to whether the special schools would add greater value to the programme working in triads with mainstream schools but, on reflection, special school heads felt that the decision to group them together had been correct in that their shared knowledge base allowed them to refine their ability to challenge each other. Examples of school-to-school support that the triads have provided to date include:

- data analysis and developing systems support
- networking and mentoring support for headteachers
- improving the quality of reading - shared ideas development
- support to look at Abacus maths and accelerated reader programmes
- support for positive handling and team teaching strategies
- phonics practice and impact sharing day for phonics leads.
- work on Numicon to support maths T&L
- ECaR work to support reading, especially for Yr2 identified pupils with ECaR strategy
- play-based learning
- outline of AfA strategies for engaging hard to reach parents
- giving numeracy feedback to pupils
- ECaR work to support reading, especially for Yr2 pupils
- outdoor learning within EYFS/KS1
- joint project across triad schools on parental engagement
- developing triads for other members of staff, to include EYFS.
- EAL and MENA – coping with small numbers of new arrivals and Inductions?
- progress and attainment in writing for higher attainers
- moderation of good practice.
- working together to offer joint observations and moderations
- developing an outstanding teacher course to take RI teachers to good
- establishment of joint working groups for Heads of Department, Heads of Sixth Form, Behavioural Leads and Deputies

- subject-specific support and resources
- use of the TEEP framework to improve whole school teaching and learning
- creating a differentiated curriculum
- behaviour for learning

Triad funding has also been used to fund:

- leadership release time for development
- release time for teachers to attend CPD
- writing training
- intervention training,
- a parental engagement project
- the purchase of reading resources

The willingness to engage was overwhelming from all participants in the review. However, there was also an acceptance that not all schools will engage, particularly given the growing membership of academy trusts and chains across the City, and that these schools should be allowed to disengage, providing standards are not at risk.

Of the fifteen Ofsted inspections of the 50 primary schools and 12 secondary schools that have been carried out since the start of the SISN pilot programme in Spring 2014, one school has moved from 'good' to outstanding, five schools have retained their 'good' rating, four schools have moved from 'requiring improvement' to 'good' (schools in RI receive targeted LA support), one school continues to require improvement and two schools have been placed in special measures. Inspectors have recognised the impact of school-to-school support in their judgements – for example:

Ken Stimpson Community School (Secondary Triad 3): The school has been challenged regularly by the local authority and has also begun to gain from initiatives such as school-to-school support, where headteachers work together on common areas for improvement.

Arthur Mellows Village College (Secondary Triad 4): Leaders and teachers work with the local authority and other local schools to share ideas and successful strategies, ensure the accuracy of marking and assessment, and enable staff to observe teaching and learning in other settings. This partnership has helped to improve further the accuracy of assessment and the quality of teaching.

4.5 The collaboratives

The collaboratives are perceived by headteachers as the logical 'next step' from the triads in that they are able to commission larger projects which would not be feasible for just three schools working together. However, the size of the collaboratives ranges in size from four to eleven schools and the workload and time commitment for headteachers of the larger groups is proportionally greater. Also, the fact that all collaboratives receive the same level of funding may need to be reviewed to ensure that the larger groupings of schools are not disadvantaged.

At collaborative level, the commitment to ‘growing across and within’ the LA and the wider pool of expertise is already perceived as delivering a positive impact on teaching and learning:

“Seeing what other people are doing to monitor teaching and learning has been one of the greatest cross fertilisations.”

The whole borough has undertaken a reading project as part of their Collaborative work and this is where progress across Peterborough schools is most consistently evident.

The role of the collaborative versus existing school clusters was raised by some participants who had originally thought that the clusters could undertake the collaborative role. However, the fact that the collaboratives operate across the LA rather than being geographically based was felt to be an advantage that should be retained. There may be some duplication in their collaborative projects for those academies that operate as part of a trust but this was not perceived to be a problem.

4.6 Professional development and support offered by the PSNIS at a triad, collaborative, and system level

Headteachers are very clear about the differing support offered at triad, collaborative and system level. Having identified projects for their collaboratives and discussed these with colleagues at the School Improvement Board, some headteachers initially volunteered to run them across the City but then realised that they were duplicating support offered through the LA school improvement system. The benefit of working in triads and collaboratives is that they can be much more focused in designing the projects to meet the specific needs of their member schools.

The provision of funding at triad and collaborative level was very much welcomed by headteachers as a means of supporting local needs. However, more clarity is needed on funding, together with a mechanism by which money is paid to the collaboratives to undertake projects and a notification of when the funds are available. There was some debate as to the financial year to which the SISN is working and headteachers would appreciate seeing ‘the bigger picture’ in financial terms to enable them to track spending and give them more control at collaborative level.

Further clarity is also needed on the role of PLP within the SISN in order to avoid duplication of effort in putting together programmes of support. Initially, headteachers planned collaborative support strategies and then found that PLP had drawn up parallel programmes from which they could select suitable elements. This may have been due to some misunderstanding at the beginning of the programme; however, having an agreed process for the commissioning of support would help to avoid such duplication in the future.

Some headteachers have used PLP very successfully to facilitate professional development from a wide range of providers to address identified professional development needs – for example, PLP has sourced and organised NPQML training for primary middle leaders through the East Midlands Leadership Centre so that colleagues from one collaborative can undertake the training as a cohort. On the other hand, PLP

is also acting as a CPD provider through the delivery of tendered services and having an ex officio seat on the School Improvement Board gives them a distinct advantage in terms of identifying and meeting identified training priorities. Whilst this can also be perceived as a positive advantage, PLP's role as both a facilitator and a provider of training requires transparency of process to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

PLP has also been commissioned by the Board to compile the online Directory of Services which will outline the support that individual schools can offer across the LA. This has been tested by two primary schools and is awaiting resolution of a few issues before going live. The review raised the question as to whether the suggested contribution of the individual schools needed to be quality assured prior to inclusion into the Directory and, if so, who would carry this out.

Highly effective system level support is also provided by the LA School Improvement Service although this is mainly directed at those schools causing concern - that is, schools that have been identified as Priority 3 by the SISN as their main source of support is provided centrally by the LA. Headteachers interviewed during the review felt that these schools needed this kind of concerted support from the LA team if they were to improve and fully appreciated the value and impact of this central intervention.

4.7 The LA School Improvement Team

At the review meeting, members of the Peterborough LA School Improvement Team were keen to reiterate their support for the SISN. As the Head of School Improvement has been unable to participate in the roll-out of the programme due to prolonged absence, this may have reduced opportunities to integrate the central LA school support with the peer-led SISN to provide a fully holistic offer and ensure 'buy-in' from all key stakeholders. However, other members of the team have made a positive contribution to discussions at the SIB during this period and now that the Head of School Improvement is available to support the initiative, this should help to develop a more integrated and coherent strategy with all stakeholders sharing ownership of the programme.

The School Improvement Team welcomes the fact that they can focus more on those schools that are causing concern now that the SISN is supporting good and outstanding schools although this does mean that they will have less contact with some schools. In view of this reduced contact, it is important that Lead Heads are familiarised with the level of detail that will need to be recorded on the triad visit forms so that this can be shared with the School Improvement Team and provide an audit trail for future Ofsted inspections. In return, the School Improvement Team could provide Lead Heads with a data analysis for the schools in their collaboratives which would help them to identify priorities before their visits. It may also be possible to provide Lead Heads with joint results by triad and collaborative on a year on year basis plus access to data for their Collaborative schools through FFT Aspire.

'How can we use the data to identify which are the schools that are holding us back and how can we help them? For example, by allocating them more money from the collaborative.' (Lead Heads discussing working for 'the greater good')

The School Improvement Team identified the need to speed up the time lapse between Collaborative bids being submitted and approved in order to expedite the impact of projects at school level. If there were a central officer coordinating the submission of

bids and evaluating their quality, this would accelerate the process. The SI Team could also help to embed quality assurance throughout the SISN process by working with heads to moderate a sample of visit reports.

The School Improvement Team would also welcome the opportunity of working with Lead Heads to refine the paperwork that is completed during the triad visits, drawing upon the Team's expertise to support the headteachers' increasing school improvement role. A one-day meeting between the Team and Lead Heads would provide sufficient time to work on the content and detail of the reports and to discuss possible support for data analysis.

4.8 The School Improvement Board (SIB)

The opportunity for the LA-wide perspective of the SISN that the School Improvement Board provides was welcomed by participants as was the open challenge from the independent Chair.

As the sole programme board for the PSISN, the SIB has been obliged to cover both operational and strategic issues which has proved both challenging and time consuming. In order to address the more operational issues, Lead Headteachers have started to schedule SIB pre-meetings to share details of their Collaborative projects across the groups, so as to have more time to devote to strategic issues and discussions at the SIB. It would be useful to review the success of this strategy and, if appropriate, to include such operational meetings as a formal part of the SISN business cycle. The standing agenda for these meetings would include the approval process for Collaborative projects and the allocation of funding as these have proved particularly time consuming at SIB level, resulting in a delay in funding being made available.

The consensus from the review was that the SIB should have a more strategic role, setting the future direction for the SISN and reinforcing shared ownership to ensure that feedback and decision-making involves all groups. :

“The School improvement Board still has an element of reporting back to the local authority at meetings. I had pictured it as more of a governing body where we would all have equal voting rights.”

Disappointment was expressed that the SIB is not yet making enough impact at system leadership level by engaging senior colleagues, with the exception of the Service Director who has been extremely supportive:

‘If you really want this to make a difference, those people have got to be there because they’ve got to buy into it.’

The visioning day on 29th September will be useful in helping to clarify the role of the SIB going forward and to clarify the sequence and steps of the business cycle. (See 4.10: Leadership and Management)

4.9 The involvement of school governors in the SISN

The governor leadership group has set up a parallel network for governors. Due to initial governor involvement, not all schools are engaged at present and the groups do not all mirror the school-to-school network but governors felt that this was a positive and would not be seen as governors trying to check what their heads had discussed. Conversely, the consensus of opinion both from headteachers and the LA School Improvement

Team is that governors are integral to the SISN and should be involved in the school triad system, rather than creating a parallel network.

“Governors need to be part of our triads...they need to be joined up with our schools.”

The first meetings of two to three governors were held in the summer term and focused on leadership and management – for example, leadership structure, governing body format, committee structures, how governors ensure effective challenge, and access to school data. Each meeting then fed back a report to the leadership group which was correlated, anonymised and a summary report containing feedback and ideas will be shared with all governors in the autumn term. Initial feedback indicates that governors found a great deal of common ground - format of committees, size of governing body and ensuring a good skills mix, curriculum meetings, using the most appropriate data to challenge and teacher recruitment in certain subjects areas.

Governors have agreed to share best practice and are already seeing the value of the network:

‘It definitely provides a format to share ideas and develop governors. As a chair, I was able to share experiences and ideas with my counterpart at (name of school) and he gave me some good ideas for link governors and other topics. Our hope is it will help raise governor engagement across the city.’

The two governors who serve on the School Improvement Board are able to feed back activity to the governor leadership group which has started to raise awareness and should provide the catalyst for more governor-led feedback into schools. Suggestions to date are as follows:

- All schools should share their triad visit reports with their governing bodies
- A governor could join one of the triad meetings each year to hear direct feedback from heads and give feedback from the equivalent governor meetings.

The school governor who took part in the SISN review felt that the networking process can support governors in responding to current and new Ofsted arrangements for school inspection by sharing best practice, ideas on how to improve the structure of governing bodies in line with Ofsted's guidance on being smaller and more focused and the challenge of recruiting skills based governors. In the broader sense, ensuring clear visibility of progress data, school targets and the impact of pupil premium spend are all topics where governing bodies can share ideas and improve practice. It does rely on governors being open to share and open to learn, but Peterborough benefits from good chairs of governors across the city and those involved to date have been very positive about the process.

4.10 Leadership and management of the SISN

The review highlighted the immense contribution made by the Service Director to the successful introduction of the Peterborough Self-improving Schools Network both in terms of strategic leadership and driving the programme forward at an operational level. At triad and Collaborative level, there was much praise for the quality of leadership from the Lead Headteachers which has been a significant factor in building trust and

confidence between participating schools, particularly with respect to good communication skills, transparency and openness.

The establishment of the SISN has started to change the balance of school improvement within Peterborough, widening the traditional, LA-led model by moving towards a school-led model which also has the ability to commission its own professional development support, either through PLP or directly. The principal challenge to the leadership and management of this new system lies in:

- setting the direction for the central LA, school-led and PLP teams so that all stakeholders are clear as to how their remits fit together and can bring to the programme the strengths of their respective experience and
- integrating the contribution of stakeholders to provide schools with a seamless model of school improvement that may involve input from both central and school-led colleagues

Consequently, there is a need for a new role with overall operational responsibility for the PSISN that can provide an interface between all of the diverse programme stakeholders – triads and collaboratives of Lead Heads and headteachers, the School Improvement Team, PLP and other providers – and pull together their individual contributions into an integrated solution:

‘We are great believers in school-to-school support and the democracy and collaboration that this generates. Nonetheless, there still should be some direction from the local authority because somebody has to have that overview, somebody has to have their finger on the pulse in terms of individual schools and somebody actually has to say to us, the headteachers, ‘sharpen your thinking and focus on these particular issues’.

The School Improvement Board should be involved in designing the job description for this central role and for recruiting the post holder, perhaps on a secondment basis or by re-focusing an existing role.

This sharper programme management needs to be supported by good quality systems that will clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and provide a ‘blueprint’ for how these should be sequenced. As is to be expected during any project initiation period, some time has been lost due to duplication of effort and there has been some confusion over the support that can be accessed by the SISN but with the benefit of experience, straightforward business process systems can now be put into place and communicated at the visioning day on 29th September:

‘We need a big plan of who does what and where the money comes from. Once we have that as a visual, we will all have a better understanding.’

‘The wall needs to be covered with paper showing what is available from different sources – PLP, school improvement colleagues. We don’t need to be doing anything that’s already covered – we need to be spending the funding on raising standards.’

4.11 Impact of the PSISN

The PSISN has already had a significant impact on the level and focus of the school-to-school support available within Peterborough LA, as highlighted in Section 4.4 (Page 6). In addition to the positive effect upon the quality of teaching and school leadership and management, the PSISN has generated a great deal of goodwill and commitment and a

wide range of other benefits that add to school ethos and wellbeing have already been identified from collaborative working. These include:

- successfully embedding the peer challenge programme and engaging 70 out of the 77 schools across the LA. Those schools that have not yet engaged either have new headteachers who are still familiarising themselves with their schools or are in challenging circumstances and working closely with the SI Team
- affirming headteachers' professional judgement and building relationships based upon trust and confidence which have increased headteacher stability
- extending the reach of the programme beyond headteachers to sustain long-term learning and sharing. For example, the secondary collaborative has set up meetings at the same place on the same day between Heads of Department, Heads of Sixth Form, Behavioural Leads and Deputies who are now all working together to provide collaborative support. Primary deputies are working together to lead a project on moderation
- developing both primary ('Heads Up') and secondary management programmes

Improving Ofsted readiness

Feedback from all headteachers affirmed that their involvement in the PSISN had both refined their own skills and enabled them to enhance the leadership learning of their colleagues in preparation for Ofsted conversations. Headteachers have found that their confidence increased through the process by having to articulate the school's position and clarify answers from their peers.

Headteachers also reported that the triad visits had also required schools to share performance data for detailed analysis and challenge by their peers. This has led to a *'big improvement in self-evaluation'* and a greater willingness to undertake the challenging conversations on data that future Ofsted inspections will require. This more robust approach, allied to a greater readiness for challenge through critical questioning that the triad process has engendered, is essential to retaining 'good' in the new Ofsted framework.

Headteachers have also been involving deputy heads in the triad conversations wherever possible, to familiarise them with the level of challenge and data analysis that will be expected at the Ofsted interview. This experience is helping to ready prospective new headteachers for the rigour of the new Ofsted inspection process.

Data:

SLE Associates were presented with the surface data from the LA Team and, from this analysis are able to make the following broad brush stroke conclusions:

- At primary level, data for attainment is above 80% at Level 4 for all but 7 schools and of those schools, only 2 are below all 3 floor progress measures. One school at above 80% is also below the floor for the 3 progress measures
- The whole borough has undertaken a primary reading project as part of their Collaborative work and this is where progress across Peterborough primary schools is most consistently evident. An overview of progress suggests that English is stronger overall than maths across the borough and, therefore, that the initiatives undertaken in this improvement round have had impact within this area,

particularly in reading

- At secondary level, all mainstream schools have achieved above the national average for 5 A* to C including English and maths at GCSE with the exception of the school in special measures which has achieved the national average. All schools have achieved expected progress in English and all but two schools, one of which is in special measures, have achieved expected progress in maths

If the recommended central project management provision were to be put into place, this would facilitate a more detailed, ongoing analysis at triad, collaborative and LA level, linked to each school's analysis of their priorities for development.

The DfE has published the results of the 2015 phonics screening check for Year 1 pupils in England. Although the percentage of Peterborough pupils achieving the expected phonics standard is still below the national average, Peterborough schools have been improving at a slightly higher rate than the national average since 2012. (See Appendix 3 for more detailed analysis)

Grading:

Given the relatively short time that the SISN has been in operation, all stakeholders found it difficult to evaluate its overall impact on a scale of 1 (excellent), 2 (significant), 3 (limited) and 4 (very limited), preferring to allocate grades for the different elements of the support. The triad work which has provided so many opportunities for peer challenge and support at headteacher level and for collaborative work at middle leader and deputy level was graded as significant, as was the impact that the PSISN has already had upon relationship building and in increasing stability of staffing across the City by providing increased headteacher support. Whilst all interviewees expressed the conviction that the PSISN would deliver at least a significant impact on pupil achievement once it is fully embedded across the system, most evaluated it as 'limited' at the current stage of operation.

4.12 Plans for the next stage of development and their sustainability

Challenges and recommendations

1. Involve Lead Heads/Schools in the recruitment of the replacement Service Director. All headteachers expressed concern that the continuity of the PSISN could be adversely affected when the Service Director leaves the LA as he is the first port of call for heads if they need information and has provided stability whilst other senior colleagues have changed
2. Appointment of a central programme manager to plan, coordinate and integrate the contribution of all stakeholders, manage effective communication and information sharing, streamline arrangements and ensure that meetings are sequenced in a realistic timeframe and are communicated well in advance to aid planning. This role to include the establishment of clear business processes, perhaps accompanied by flowcharts, to avoid duplication of activity and optimise communication. The central programme manager will also facilitate central administrative support so that headteachers can 'work smarter'

3. Clarify the role of the SIB as the forum that will maximise shared ownership of the PSISN across all stakeholders, including the new programme manager, to shape the vision and set the direction for the programme with a specific focus on outcomes, challenges and pupil performance. The SIB will be responsible for formulating and sharing clear plans and objectives for the next phases of the PSISN – short and long term - which will be key to sustaining momentum and engagement. The SIB will delegate triad and collaborative operational issues to an operational committee from which regular reports will be considered as standing SIB agenda items
4. Facilitate professional development for headteachers, in their roles as triad facilitators, on 'questions for challenge' to capture and share good practice, developing the skills of 'respectful challenge' whilst refining clarity and focus. This would also optimise Ofsted readiness. This professional development should be extended to deputies, other teaching colleagues and governors as the CPD programme builds. In addition progress and embed plans already in place for some collaboratives to sustain long term learning and sharing
5. Increase the rigor and consistency of the triad visits by clarifying the process of identification and evaluation, tightly matched to analysis of priorities. Streamline the triad report forms to scaffold responses and ensure coherence of approach, better engagement and therefore quality of outcomes for all
6. Ensure that triad visits focus on actions and that reports are concise but sufficiently rigorous to serve as an audit trail for future Ofsted LA inspections
7. Investigate ways in which senior local authority colleagues can engage with the programme within the limitations of their time constraints
8. Integrate the key contributions of the LA School Improvement and the school-led teams to provide a seamless support package for schools
9. Explore the development of a self-assuring QA process that will build in quality through the framework design and develop the Leads Heads' QA role both within their Collaborative and collectively across their group in conjunction with the LA lead
10. Identify and clarify those functions that are more effectively carried out centrally, and ensure that the SISN takes advantage of these – for example, using PLP to commission external providers rather than headteachers having to research and source their own CPD and Integrate the teaching school alliance into the SISN programme to benefit from its expertise and experience Explore the role of the local teaching school alliance in the SISN including increased involvement of NLEs, SLEs and LLEs in the school-to-school support process

Performance Data

In advance of the meeting, the Performance / Data Team produce performance papers which are circulated to all attendees. The information provided:-

- 1) current contextual data for each school including Watchsted Performance, Census data, financial profile, Governor vacancies and changes, exclusions, attendance
- 2) Comparative data for LA, statistical neighbour and national data.
- 3) Current OFSTED category
- 4) Current LA agreed category
- 5) PSISN Grading
- 6) Predictions and last set of submitted data

Peterborough Termly School Performance Clinic

Purpose:-

Politicians and Senior Officers hold the school improvement team to account to ensure the best outcomes for ALL pupils in Peterborough

Activity:-

- Service Director provides overview of key issues / performance
- Senior School Improvement Advisers provide brief update information on:-
 - 1) previously identified schools causing concern (LA rated red and amber and OFSTED judgement 3 or 4) and progress towards required outcomes,
 - 2) outcomes of any recent OFSTED inspections and where appropriate actions taken and outcomes achieved and
 - 3) any schools that have changed LA category or are at risk of changing LA category, explaining reasons for the concerns and actions being taken.
- Politicians and Senior Officers provide robust challenge, through insightful questioning and by setting challenging tasks and outcomes.
- Key outcomes and targets are agreed at conclusion of meeting
- The meeting is minuted and these minutes provide the start of the accountability process for the next meeting.

Personnel Attending

Challenge provided by:-

- Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Education (Chair)
- Lead Member Children’s Services
- The Chief Executive
- Corporate Director – People and Communities
- Chair of the COTI Scrutiny Committee + 2 nominated reps

LA Officers providing reports:-

- Service Director - Education
- Performance Manager
- Head of School Improvement
- Senior School Improvement Advisors Primary
- Lead Headteacher Secondary

Outcome

Politicians and Senior Officers have a good knowledge and understanding of individual school and Peterborough performance and can effectively hold Officers to account to ensure further improvement.

Performance Pre- meeting

Prior to the Performance clinic the Service Director Education holds a school review meeting to receive updates from all key members of staff including commissioned service

Agenda and Focus

Autumn – September

- Provision data

Spring - January

- Predictions and Census

Summer – June

- Ofsted position

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