



Peterborough City Council

School Improvement Strategy
2022-2024

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SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY 2022

FOREWORD BY JONATHAN LEWIS

Education remains one of the key priorities for Peterborough City Council. Our schools are diverse in nature but have a common purpose and commitment to providing the best possible education environments and life chances to enable our children and young people to flourish and achieve.

Our aspiration to deliver good outcomes for all pupils is outlined in this strategy. It seeks to outline how we will seek to secure and deliver a high-quality and transparent school improvement approach to all schools.

It has been developed with the aim of providing a framework for the LA to support, challenge and work with every school in Peterborough to continue to improve the life chances for children of all ages.

I am immensely proud of our schools, teachers and all school staff who are vital to the futures of Peterborough's children and young people.

We all acknowledge that there is still more work to do and fundamental to the success of this Strategy will be the vital partnerships between schools, the local authority, academy trusts, governors and wider stakeholders, who, with clear vision and shared desire can support truly outstanding learning outcomes for Peterborough's children and young people.

Jonathan Lewis

Service Director for Education

Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Councils





AN INTRODUCTION

Peterborough is one of the fastest growing cities in the country as a result of investment in growth and development, new housing and an increase in birth rates. We are proud of our schools and the service they provide to the diverse community. There is a pressure on education places in parts of the City and we aim to ensure all schools are at least good so that all parents have access to a school offering a high quality education for their child.

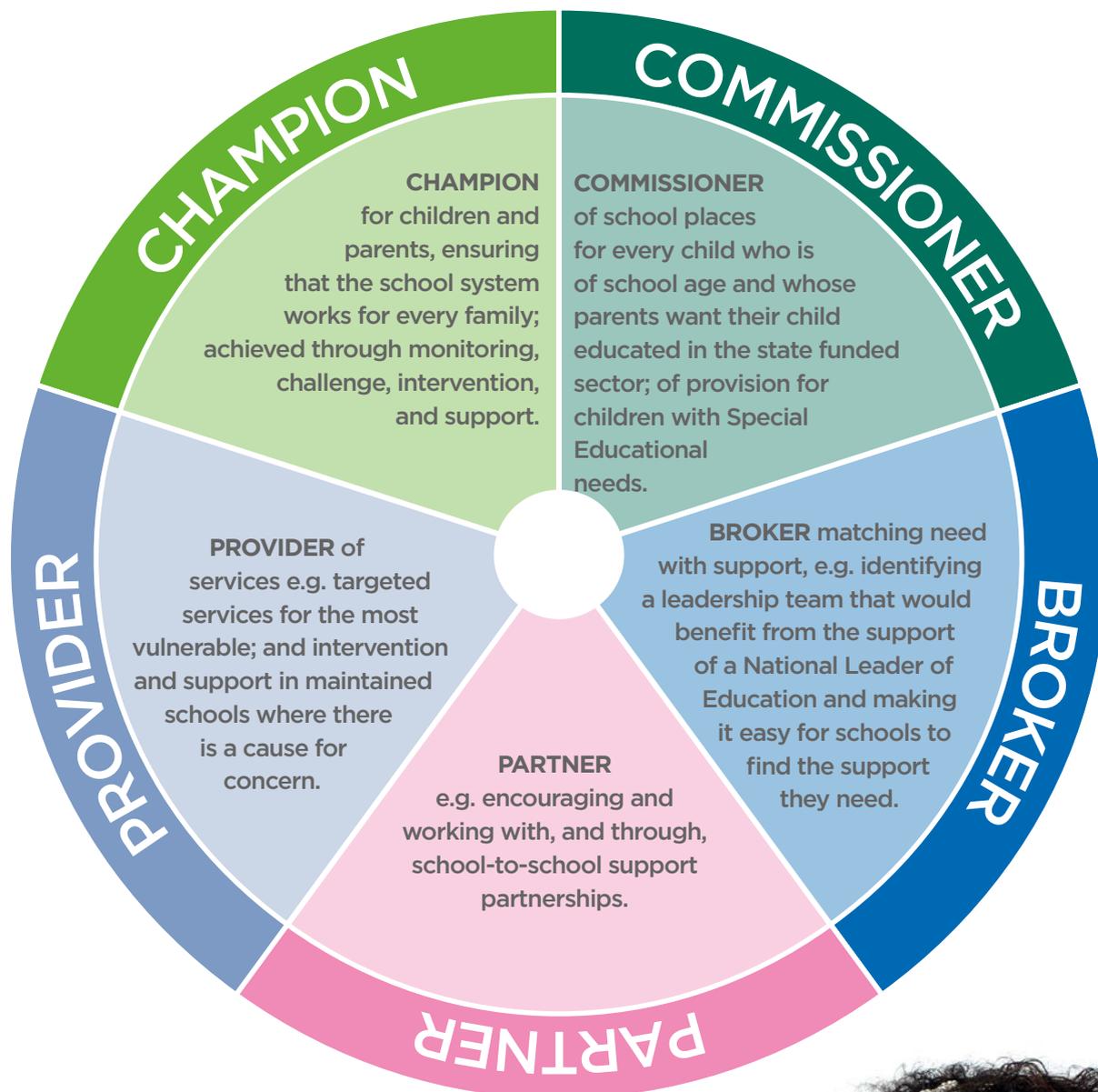
Schools are vital to the future economic and social well-being of our children and young people and we are ambitious in wanting Peterborough schools to be recognised across the country as some of the best to work, teach and learn in.

The School Improvement Strategy sets out Peterborough Local Authority's vision, aims and priorities for school improvement 2021-2023 and has been developed with the aim of providing a framework for the LA to work within in order to support and challenge every school in Peterborough in continuing to improve the life chances of all our children and young people.

The strategy addresses the role and responsibility of the Local Authority, the growth and developing significance of school-to-school support and protocols and procedures that the Local Authority follows when a school or Academy is causing concern. The Local Authority will continue to broker and facilitate school-to-school support, both through formal and informal relationships and through key partnerships such as with the Teaching School Hub and English and Maths Hubs with the aim of further improving standards in education across the City.

The Local Authority also works in partnership with the Opportunity Area, National Literacy Trust and Education Endowment Foundation on targeted initiatives to support schools in raising attainment

PETERBOROUGH LOCAL AUTHORITY'S ROLE CAN BE SUMMARISED AS:



PRIORITIES

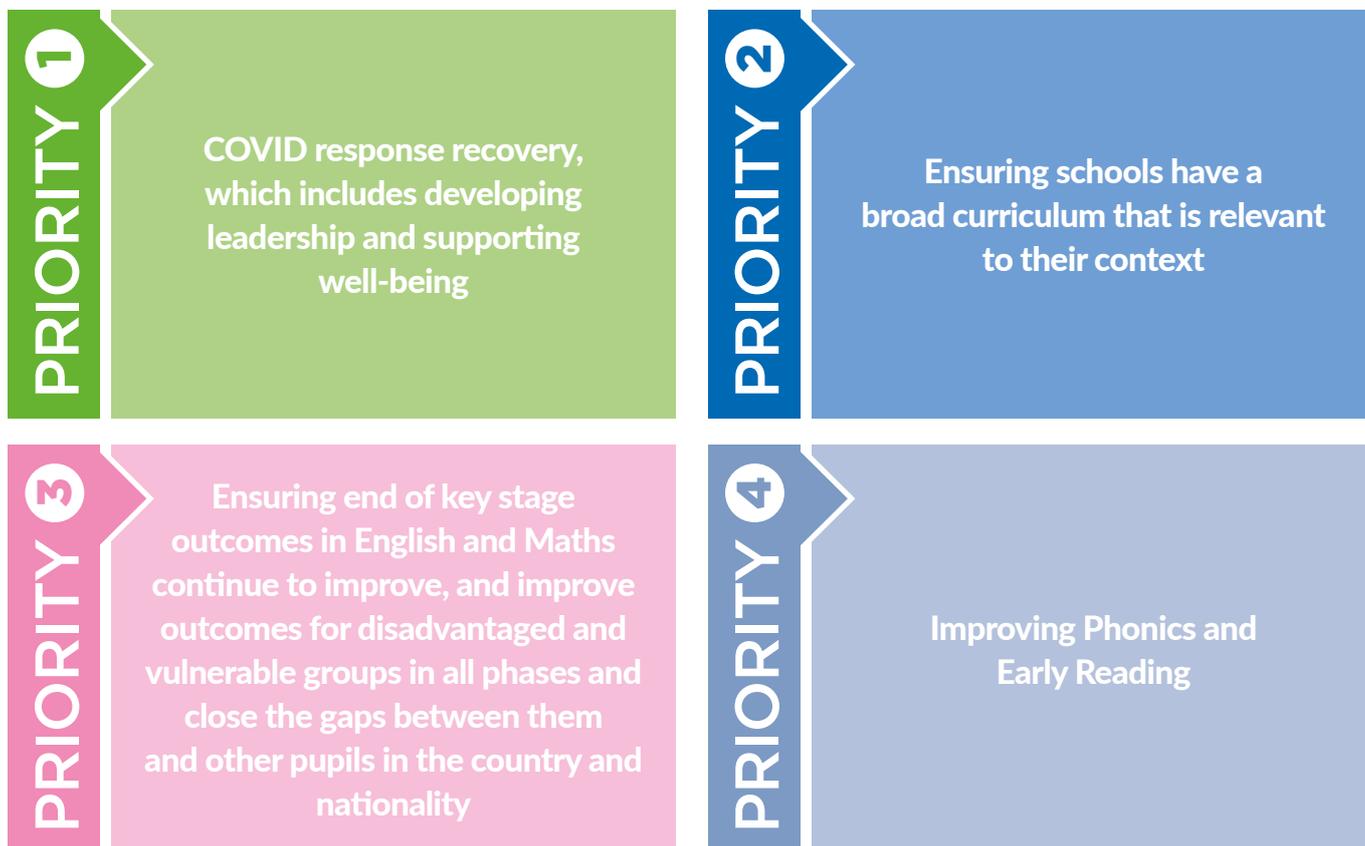
Peterborough strives to achieve the best outcome for every child.

We want to ensure the best possible achievement for all learners by ensuring they go to a great school, setting or provider. We aim for all Local Authority maintained schools in Peterborough to be judged as good or better.

For the period 2021-2023 we have four key priorities which we will support and challenge all schools to achieve.

We recognise that the last two academic years have been very difficult for all schools and we intend to help and support schools in their journey of recovery after the global pandemic.





PETERBOROUGH'S FOUR KEY PRIORITIES

These four priorities will be achieved through the following key actions:

PRIORITY 1

- Visits to LA Maintained schools by School Improvement Advisers
- New Headteacher Induction Programme (available through CCC) and new Headteacher mentoring support
- Brokering of peer support for senior leaders where necessary
- Advice provided on best use of Catch-Up Funding
- Discussion of school pupil outcome targets and their level of ambition (LA Maintained)
- Traded CPD offer to LA Maintained School and Academies.

PRIORITY 2

- School Improvement Adviser support to evaluate the school curriculum and its effectiveness
- Curriculum Project with Haringey Education Partnership
- Traded services offer and links with Curriculum Hubs for English and Maths and Teaching School Hubs.
- Promoting activities for schools and communities led by the National Literacy Trust.

PRIORITY 3

- Advice, support and training by English and maths advisers. Termly Briefings for English and maths subject leaders. Offer to join in programmes with other stakeholders such as the Education Endowment Foundation.

PRIORITY 4

Advice support and training for phonics leaders and targeted programmes for schools in need of additional support. Sharing effective practice between schools, for example through the identification and deployment of "Phonics Champions".



PETERBOROUGH'S FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Schools requiring higher levels of support and challenge in order to improve are identified from a range of sources of evidence including pupil outcomes, attendance data, visits from school improvement advisers and intelligence from other teams within the Education Directorate including the governor services, SEN and Inclusion services and education safeguarding.

Monitoring, challenge, intervention and support for these schools is key to achieving our target to increase percentage of schools that are good or outstanding. Where necessary, the school improvement team will work in partnership with school leaders and colleagues from other teams in order to help to bring about more rapid improvement.

MONITORING

FOR ALL SCHOOLS

First-hand understanding of performance continues to be the starting point for school improvement. The LA examines and evaluates the evidence from attainment, progress and cohort data; information from regular visits by the School Improvement Team; and intelligence from across children's services.

We use this evidence to categorise schools as either 'low support offered' (performing well), 'medium level of support offered' requiring improvement and/or vulnerable) or 'high level of support offered' (significant cause for concern and/or in special measures / serious weaknesses). The criteria used are given in the table below. They are 'best fit', i.e., a school does not have to meet all bullet points listed to be judged in any one category. School ratings may change during the year, so direction of travel is monitored carefully on at least a termly basis.

FOR MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

The LA carries out direct monitoring, including lesson observation, work scrutiny, and discussion with staff, governors, and parents in schools where there are performance concerns. The information gathered is used to guide the nature and form of challenge, intervention, and support.

CATEGORISATION OF LA MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

“ HIGH LEVEL OF SUPPORT SCHOOLS REQUIRE INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT...

These schools will receive support from a link School Improvement Adviser and will be visited at least half-termly (as a minimum). The School Improvement Adviser will discuss with senior leaders the school's capacity to improve from within its own resources, where some external support may be required and where that support might come from. High support schools are expected to take part in the enhanced programme of support from the school improvement offer at a reduced cost. High level support schools may expect an external review of aspects of the quality of education or leadership and management, including governance to establish the school's strengths and areas where further improvement is required.

The progress the school is making will be evaluated through a Monitoring Support Partnership (MSP) group which will be chaired by either the Senior School Improvement Adviser or Strategic Lead for Governance. This group will meet at least half-termly in the first instance.

The MSP group will include the Headteacher and Chair or Vice Chair of Governors and the link SIA. The purpose of the MSP group is to hold the school to account ensuring that it makes rapid progress. It enables all personnel working with the school to come together to discuss the impact of the actions of school leaders and of the support the school is receiving. The support can be refocused if this is considered to be necessary.

The MSP is a confidential meeting, but the summary key points should be shared with the whole governing body after each meeting. If concerns remain, a Formal Warning Notice may be issued. This sets out actions that, if not met, can lead to the removal of the governing body. Elected Members are alerted if a school in their ward is causing significant concern. The Local Authority will seek reassurance from the governing body that the right steps are being taken.

“ MEDIUM LEVEL OF SUPPORT OFFERED ARE SCHOOLS WHICH MAY REQUIRE IMPROVEMENT IN ORDER TO BE GOOD...

These schools will receive a half-day visit from a link School Improvement Adviser each term. Medium-support schools can access additional support through the Primary School Improvement Offer and are expected to take part in the enhanced offer at the reduced rate.

There may be a review of aspects of the quality of education or leadership and management, including governance to establish the school's strengths and areas where further improvement is required.

“ LOW LEVEL OF SUPPORT OFFERED ARE SCHOOLS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO BE JUDGED AS GOOD OR OUTSTANDING AT THEIR NEXT OFSTED INSPECTION...

These schools will receive a half-day visit from a link School Improvement Adviser each term.

Schools can access support through the Primary School Improvement Offer or CPD programme.



SUPPORT – OVERVIEW

FOR ALL SCHOOLS

The Local Authority offers a wide range of services to schools and academies on a traded basis, which contribute to school improvement.

A full listing can be found on our Learn Together website

<https://www.cambslearntogether.co.uk/peterborough-school-improvement>

FOR MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

The Local Authority's Primary School Improvement Offer is available to Primary Maintained schools and academies. All LA maintained schools will receive a minimum entitlement of at least one half-day visit per term from a named School Improvement Adviser.

One visit, typically in the Autumn, will include discussions about the quality of education, the outcomes pupils achieve, the school's self-evaluation judgements, school improvement priorities and pupil targets. The other two visits will be bespoke to the school. All schools can also access an enhanced offer of up to six half-day visits – at least three of which are from the named School Improvement Adviser.

In addition to the Primary School Improvement Offer, a comprehensive CPD programme is available to teachers, leaders and teaching assistants. These operate on a traded basis and are delivered by members of the school improvement teams from both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire.





LETTERS TO SCHOOLS

✔ CONGRATULATIONS LETTER

- Where a school has improved its Ofsted grade or sustained good/outstanding overall effectiveness.
- Where there has been a significant improvement in pupil performance.
- Where a school has significantly accelerated the achievement of disadvantaged groups.

⚠ SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS LETTER

Where one or more of the following indicators apply:

- Risk assessment confirms a declining trend in pupil performance.
- Safeguarding Concerns
- Management of the Schools Finances
- Leadership does not have the capacity to address the school's problems in a timely manner.
- There are concerns that the Governing Body is not effective in holding the school to account.
- A drop in Ofsted rating.
- There is a combination of concerns relating to, for example, parental complaints, moderation, attendance, exclusions, inclusion practice, and staff turnover.
- There are consistently wide attainment/progress gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- There are persistent concerns about achievement and/or teaching quality in one or more key stages.
- Self-evaluation is not robust or realistic enough and engagement with school improvement is weak.

⚠⚠ WARNING NOTICE

Where one or more of the following indicators apply:

- Evidence of unacceptably low standards, i.e. school has been below the floor standard.
- Evidence of a breakdown in leadership or management, e.g. declining school popularity (school rolls falling more rapidly than might reasonably be expected from demographic changes), high/increasing absence rates, high rates of staff turnover or numbers of staff grievances, significant/increasing numbers of parental complaints.
- School leaders are not taking urgent and appropriate action to resolve the problem.
- Governors are not acknowledging the seriousness of the position nor challenging school leaders to secure rapid improvements.
- School is at risk of being put in Serious Weaknesses or Special Measures.
- School is subject to Required to Improve monitoring and/or a Local Authority Improvement Plan but is not making sufficient progress.

⚠⚠⚠ SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS

- School is at risk of being put in Serious Weaknesses or Special Measures.
- School is subject to Required to Improve monitoring and/or a Local Authority Improvement Plan but is not making sufficient progress.

WHERE THE LA HAS CONCERNS ABOUT AN ACADEMY

Where the LA receives complaints from parents about an academy, the LA will advise parents to make their complaint directly to the academy, following its complaints procedure. If parents contact the LA about undue delay or non-compliance by the academy with its own complaints procedure, the LA will advise parents to contact the Education Funding Agency.

ⓘ WHISTLEBLOWING CONCERNS RAISED WITH THE LA WILL BE RE-DIRECTED TO THE EDUCATION FUNDING AGENCY.

The LA has overarching duties under the Children Act of 1989 in respect of the safeguarding of children in need, or those suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, regardless of where those individual children are educated. To comply with these duties the LA will need to work with academy trusts, (or independent schools, wherever the individual child concerned is educated) to investigate what action is needed to safeguard such a child, as it does with maintained schools.

Where the Local Authority has concerns about an academy or free school's safeguarding arrangements or procedures (arising as a result of investigations about individual children or otherwise), these concerns will be reported to the RSC, as well as to the academy / MAT. If, as is often the case, the concern has been raised by Ofsted, the outcome of the investigation will also be reported to Ofsted.





The LA may have its own concerns about an academy. These may relate to one or more of the following issues (but the list is not exclusive):

- declining trend in pupil performance
- high absence or persistent absence
- high exclusions
- persistent underperformance of disadvantaged groups, e.g. those eligible for Pupil Premium or with SEN
- continued reluctance to admit, or provide for, disadvantaged groups
- behaviour and/or safety
- evidence of a breakdown in leadership or management
- refusal to engage with the LA through ongoing processes
- inadequate progress towards becoming a good school
- a drop in Ofsted rating.

Where the LA has concerns, the Director of Education will contact the academy’s principal/headteacher and/or the Chief Executive Officer of the Multi-Academy Trust to arrange a meeting to discuss the concerns. It is hoped that, in most cases, concerns will then be resolved informally, or a way forward agreed.



Should that not be the case, the LA will write formally to the Chair of the Academy Trust, setting out the concerns and seeking a meeting as soon as possible. If this does not lead to a satisfactory conclusion, the LA may escalate matters by, depending on the urgency and nature of the concerns, contacting:

The Education Funding Agency

The Regional Commissioner for Academies

Ofsted

LA senior officers hold regular meetings with Ofsted and the Department for Education. Where the LA has its own significant concerns about an academy, these concerns are likely to be raised at either or both meetings.

PRIORITISATION CRITERIA

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

LOW SUPPORT

- The culture of safeguarding is strong, and all statutory requirements are met
- The effectiveness of leadership to drive school improvement is strong.
- Leaders and governors have a clear vision and ambition for the school that is communicated very well to all stakeholders
- The school's overall effectiveness is judged good or better and is able to maintain this judgement at its next inspection
- Governors understand their role clearly and are effective at holding school leaders to account for the quality of education. They know the school well, and are clear about areas for improvement

MEDIUM SUPPORT

- There are minor weakness in safeguarding arrangements and practice that require attention
- The effectiveness and capacity of leadership to drive school improvement requires support.
- Leaders' and governors' vision and ambition for the school lacks detail and is not consistently communicated
- The school's overall effectiveness is currently RI or at risk of being judged Requiring Improvement or being downgraded
- A new or interim Headteacher in the first year of Headship

HIGH SUPPORT

- Safeguarding statutory responsibilities are not fully met. The culture of safeguarding is weak and of serious concern
- The effectiveness and capacity of leadership to drive school improvement is of serious concern.
- Leaders' and governors' vision and ambition for the school is unclear.
- The school has been issued with a Warning Notice or Significant Concerns letter
- The school's overall effectiveness has been judged or is at risk of Requiring Improvement, Special Measures or to have Serious Weaknesses
- Schools self-evaluation is inaccurate or not current
- Governance is ineffective and leaders are not held to account for the quality of education
- Substantive leadership (HT or governance) is not in place.
- Leadership and staffing is not stable; there is significant turbulence and/or a high level of vacancies and long-term use of agency staff





PRIORITISATION CRITERIA CONTINUED

LOW SUPPORT

- Teachers have consistently high expectations of what each pupil can achieve, including disadvantaged pupils and SEND pupils
- The school's curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced so that pupils gain sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning
- Teaching is securely good or better
- Pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum, and as a result, achieve well

MEDIUM SUPPORT

- Teachers expectations are inconsistent of what each pupil can achieve, including disadvantaged pupils, and SEND pupils
- Leaders' plans to improve the curriculum are at an early stage of development
- Knowledge and skills for pupils are not yet coherently planned and sequenced
- Teaching is inconsistent and requires improvement
- Attainment is broadly in line with national averages at the end of each key stage [See data]
- Attainment is declining over time. [See data]

HIGH SUPPORT

- Teachers' expectations are too low of what each pupils can achieve, including disadvantaged and SEND pupils
- The school's curriculum has little or no structure or coherence, and there are no effective plans in place for the urgent development of the curriculum
- Knowledge and skills for pupils are not coherently planned and sequenced
- Pupils do not have access to the full curriculum which is often narrowed
- Too much teaching requires improvement or is inadequate
- Attainment is consistently below national averages at the end of each Key Stage
- Attainment is declining [See data]

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

BEHAVIOUR & ATTITUDES

LOW SUPPORT

- Attendance is high or, where it is not, it is rapidly improving [See data]
- High expectations for pupil's attitudes, behaviour and conduct. These are applied consistently, and low-level disruption is rare
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their education. They are committed to their learning and take pride in their achievements

MEDIUM SUPPORT

- Attendance is low and not showing sustained improvement or improving sufficiently quickly (See data)
- Expectations of pupils attitudes and behaviour are not high enough and approaches are inconsistent
- A significant number of pupils are not committed to their learning and do not take pride in their achievements

HIGH SUPPORT

- Attendance is consistently low for all pupils, groups of pupils including disadvantaged pupils (See data)
- Behaviour and attitudes are poor and there are regular incidents that disrupt learning
- Significant concerns surrounding relationships between pupils, parents and staff including complaints to the LA
- Pupils' lack of engagement contributes to reduced learning

LOW SUPPORT

- SMSC is of high quality
- Pupils understand fundamental British values including. showing respect for differences; and are well prepared for life in modern Britain

MEDIUM SUPPORT

- SMSC requires development
- Leaders, governors and pupils have a limited understanding of British values, and how to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and this requires improvement

HIGH SUPPORT

- SMSC is underdeveloped across the school and is poorly planned for across the curriculum
- Leaders and governors are undermining fundamental British values. Discriminatory behaviour and prejudice occur and are not challenged. This is of serious concern

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

