

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – Date 30th November 2021

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Title : De-delegated budget for school improvement support and behaviour

support update

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Forum on the services delivered from the Behaviour Support and School Improvement functions funded by de-delegated school budgets.

1.2 For the financial year the following breakdown highlights the funds that are allocated to the de-delegated budgets for schools' improvement and behaviour support.

	5/12ths De-delegated	7/12ths Buy-back	Total
School Improvement	62,300	87,300	149,600
Behaviour Support	58,000	81,300	139,300
	Primary	Secondary	Total
School Improvement	122,909	26,691	149,600
Behaviour Support	107,488	31,812	139,300
	Primary	Secondary	
School Improvement	£5.83 per NOR	£7.92 per NOR	
Behaviour Support	£17.35 per SEN	£29.04 per SEN	

1.3 The local authority has a responsibility to have regard to the Schools Causing Concern statutory guidance. This guidance is clear, local authorities must exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards.

1.4 The local authority has launched a new school improvement strategy, this was approved by the Children's, Families and Education committee in September 2021, the strategy is attached as appendix 1.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The local authority has several statutory duties and must exercise its function in these areas. In relation to oversight of Standard Assessment Tests.

2.1.1 Moderating of the teacher assessments carried out at the end of key stage 1 and 2 by schools in at least 25% of maintained schools each school year and ensure that every school will be subject to moderation at least once every four years.

2.1.2 Appointing a person to complete the assessment moderations who has recent

experience of provision of the National Curriculum in primary schools.

2.1.3 Monitor the administration of the phonics screening check in accordance with Key stage 2 tests and phonics screening check.

2.2 The local authority has responsibility to support higher standards of education across the school it maintains. In addition, the local authority should work in partnership with the Regional Schools Commissioner to share any concerns they may have in relation to a local academy. To support this the local authority has produced a new school improvement strategy that will be implemented over the next three years. The School Improvement Strategy is appendix 1.

2.3 The Strategy sets out a vision for school improvement to: raise aspirations and improve outcomes for all children in Wirral. It aligned to the proposed Wirral Plan 2026 and the priority to secure brighter futures for all regardless of their background. It outlines activity which is structured around the following themes:

- **Leadership and governance:** Effective school leadership is critical in improving educational outcomes, promoting high expectations and meeting the rigorous demands of Ofsted and the Department for Education. The School Improvement Strategy set out plans to empower headteachers, governors and senior leaders to build leadership capacity, secure better teaching and learning and deliver whole-school improvement.
- **High Support, High Challenge:** The local authority has a role to monitor, challenge and, where necessary, intervene in maintained schools. The Strategy sets out a plan to build on the current banding process and develop a prioritisation model which allows for school improvement support to be coordinated appropriately. This will also include setting out a transparent Schools Causing Concern policy, where early-stage monitoring and challenge do not result in rapid improvement.
- **Self-improving school system:** Strong governance and accountability is essential to success of an effective self-improving system and effective collaboration and partnerships provide the foundations for this. The Strategy outlines how the local authority will work with key stakeholders to develop a robust self-improving system which enables schools to hold each other to account for progress and performance and quality assurance measures which assess the impact of partnership activity.
- **Learning and innovation:** There is huge value in using evidence-based learning to inform professional practice and organisational decision-making. Research and evidence have a significant role to play in informing practice in schools and in school improvement. The Strategy outlines plans to ensure that our future schools and education leaders utilise effective improvement strategies based on evidence-based research whilst also having opportunity to explore innovative solutions to complex problems.
- **School Improvement Wirral:** The COVID-19 pandemic impacted on the provision of a dedicated school improvement function to perform effectively. Transitioning out of the pandemic will enable resources to increase capacity in the School Improvement Team, appointing permanent school advisors to enable the local authority to fulfil its duties in monitoring performance and brokering school improvement provision.

2.4 To support the School Improvement Strategy the de-delegated budgets articulated at the start of the report will be used in a more strategic way to support our maintained schools. The following CPD/quality assurance/commissioned offers have been sourced to support our maintained schools with the use of these funds.

2.4.1 A key cornerstone of the school improvement strategy is the support of a school assurance professionals to quality assure the current position of our maintained schools. This will be facilitated by education professional with the relevant experience to articulate with schools leaders and governors areas each school should be developing during the current academic year. This offer will be free for all maintained schools, academies can access this support, but this will have a cost associated.

2.4.2 To support school improvement on Wirral recovering from COVID-19 pandemic, the local authority has worked with a education provider to develop a “Leading with Strength” program that will work with schools over the next two years. The program will offer a number of key note training sessions with follow-up smaller group sessions to support both school leaders and governors in developing a schools approach in the following areas; COVID-19 recovery; staff wellbeing; curriculum development; behaviour & inclusion and SEND. The program will be free for all maintained schools, the offer is available for academies, but they will have to cover the costs associated. The first session in booked for the beginning of December.

2.4.3 A number of key areas of focus have been identified as key areas of focus and the need for additional CPD in these areas, namely; early years education; curriculum development and literacy across the curriculum. To support these areas, the local authority has commissioned support from a range of education specialist that will offer bespoke CPD in these areas. The offer of this support will be free for maintained schools and the focus of this support will be for maintained schools initially. Academies who are interested in the support should contact the Head of School Effectiveness.

2.4.4 In addition, further CPD support is currently being developed, through engagement with local leaders to identify the support that schools require as the education system moves to a more normal footing post COVID-19. One of the key areas of development will be the support offered to maintained schools in relation to governance, with an offer high quality training and support, with the aim of making sure local governing bodies have the relevant knowledge and expertise to support their schools from a strategic perspective.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Endorse the developments in relation to the strategic use of de-delegated budgets to support school improvement and behaviour support.

3.2 Receive a further update in relation to de-delegated budgets in six months.

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