

## WIRRAL COUNCIL SCHOOLS FORUM: APPENDIX 1

Date 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025

De-delegated budget overview

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this appendix 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 The de-delegated funds support the local authority in meeting its statutory requirements it has responsibility for in relation to LA maintained schools.
- 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 school improvement strategy is now fully embedded and being further developed across Wirral schools with significantly increased capacity and expertise within the school improvement team. External school assurance professionals have been commissioned to all maintained school and a comprehensive CPD programme offered to all schools. System leadership is being developed from staff within schools to enable a self-sustaining system.
- 1.5 In relation to Behaviour Support the Local Authority has an Inclusion Team consisting of a Senior Manager, three Strategy Managers and six officers Officers. There has also been a recent recruitment of two additional officers to support managed moves and in school support. The teams also have access to a Behaviour and Support officer who administers the paperwork linked to Permanent Exclusions. The team has a wide range of experience including Primary, Secondary, Specialist and Alternative Provisions.

### **2.0 Oversight of activity**

- 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 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 is embedding the school improvement strategy approved by committee last year.
- 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.
- 2.4 The Head of School Effectiveness has had the support of two additional officers as Senior Schools advisors. They have supported schools in relation to strategic objectives regarding

improvement areas. In addition, they will be the main link between the schools and the commissioned School Assurance Professional and any CPD opportunities that are available to the school. The advisers also support maintained schools to be ready for their Ofsted inspections.

- 2.5 The school improvement team have continued to commission a comprehensive CPD programme for Early Years, English, and Mathematics and are currently planning to coproduce the future CPD programmes in collaboration with school leaders. The training is being led by educational professionals who have a background of expertise in the given area.
- 2.6 The school improvement team have developed supported themed projects around Early Years and English and have established and trained teams of specialist practitioners (SLEs) who will be able to audit and support practice in other schools and enhance system leadership within Wirral schools.
- 2.7 The school improvement team have commissioned a leadership programme 'Empowering Leadership' for those new to Primary Headship and those aspiring to be future Primary Leaders. This programme is designed to support the regular planning, monitoring and reporting that leaders undertake in their roles but also endeavours to build a dynamic cohort of leaders who support and share experiences as they develop. Peer challenge is a part of this new programme.
- 2.8 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 professionals with the relevant experience to articulate with schools' leaders and governors areas each school should be developing during the current academic year. The quality assurance visit is aligned to the Council's priorities and reviewed and updated annually. The focus for this academic year's visit has been on SEND. This offer will be free for all maintained schools, academies can access this support, but this will have a cost associated.
- 2.9 An intensive support programme has been offered to schools in Bands 3 and 4 which will compliment the full CPD offer and include thorough data analysis of the previous years' SATs examinations and other key aspects to support the school to improve pupils' outcomes.