



North Northants Schools Forum: 14th December 2023

Agenda Item 11

2024-25 De-delegation : School Effectiveness for Maintained Schools

1 Background

- 1.1 The School Effectiveness Team (SET) is funded from the Central Schools Services Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).
- 1.2 The current team has a Head of Service.
- 1.3 There is an Associate Head Teacher (AHT) whose purpose is to:
 - lead and facilitate school improvement in schools causing concern and/or;
 - to provide additional support within individual settings to facilitate rapid improvement, and/or;
 - undertake the duties of the Head Teacher where a school maybe experiencing leadership issues.
- 1.4 The team also consists of School Improvement Partners (SIPs) who work with Primary, Secondary, Governors and Early Years, (including schools with nurseries and also our Maintained Nursery School (MNS) settings).
- 1.5 The SET provide essential services enabling SIPs and the AHT to provide direct support for maintained schools requiring specific targeted improvement including:
 - Provision of an Interim Head Teacher in a school through the AHT;
 - Coaching and mentoring for the Senior Leadership Team and Head Teacher where required by the AHT;
 - Middle leader development;
 - Head Teacher recruitment support for Governors and representation of a SIP on the recruitment panel to ensure that the process is carried out appropriately;
 - Brokerage of school- to-school support for schools needing to improve a specific aspect of their provision;
 - The initiation of a time limited Targeted Improvement Group (TIG) where more intensive 'team around the school' work is required;
 - Specific training and support for Governors; and
 - Working with external partners, such as the English Hub and the University of Northampton (UoN) for example, to further support schools.
- 1.6 This report covers
 - School Effectiveness funding and review of Impact;
 - School Effectiveness priorities for academic year 2023-2024.

2 School Effectiveness Funding and Review of Impact

2.1 For 2023-24 School Effectiveness de-delegation was approved by Northamptonshire Schools Forum in October 2022. Forum agreed to continue with School Effectiveness de-delegated funding of £12 per pupil from Maintained Schools to create an estimated budget of £115, 800 for North Northamptonshire Maintained Schools in 2023-24.

2.2 The work of the SET is predominantly focussed upon Maintained Schools. The SET work with all schools regardless of their Ofsted outcome. Naturally, much of the intensive work is with schools that are Requires Improvement (RI) or Inadequate. The SET work with schools who experience any of the following where:

- The outcome of an ungraded inspection suggests, from the evidence gathered, that the inspection grade might not be as high;
- A school's provision for early reading and/or phonics is not sufficiently well developed or securely implemented;
- A school's curriculum provision requires improvement to be good;
- A school's data is below national average in one or more key measures or where data has declined significantly which may put them at risk of an adverse inspection;
- The school is at risk of an inadequate judgement or is given an inadequate judgement by Ofsted;
- The school is at risk of a Requires Improvement (RI) judgement or is given a RI judgement for a first, second or further times by Ofsted;
- Safeguarding is not effective as judged by the Local Authority or by Ofsted;
- Leadership and Management is a cause for concern, (including Governance);
- There are financial concerns
- There are significant concerns with any or all of the following:
 - attendance
 - behaviour
 - exclusions
 - the number and type of complaints received by Ofsted about a school

2.3 In the 2022-2023 academic year the SET were deployed as follows:

- Engaged intensively with 2 schools that escalated to a School Causing Concern (SCC) level of intervention, triggering bespoke significant support packages and regular monitoring and scrutiny of progress towards specific targets;
- Engaged in the TIG process with 2 schools, triggering detailed action plans and school to school support programmes of work. The AHT took the role of Head Teacher in one of these schools for 18 months from April 2021;
- Careful planning and delivery of the amalgamation of two schools, with an unswerving and significant focus on the quality of education prior to, during and after the merger. This work remains ongoing;
- Significant focus on several schools due to be inspected, ensuring that they were 'Ofsted ready';
- Regular monitoring of schools at all levels;
- Leading on the statutory assessment and moderation training, deployment of moderators across the county in June 2023 and conducting unannounced monitoring visits of the Key Stage 2 Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in May 2023 and the Phonics Screening Checks (PSC) in June 2023.

2.4 The **impact** has been:

- Overall the number of Good and Outstanding maintained schools in North Northants at the end of July 2023 was 85%.
- This is partly as a result of the work that the SET have undertaken, collaboratively with Head Teachers, Senior Leaders and staff, converting RI schools to Good, or maintaining the Good rating of schools which have needed higher than average levels of support.
- Of the pupils that attend maintained primary schools in North Northants, 89% of them are now attending Good/Outstanding maintained schools.
- As a consequence of the work that the SET undertook, collaboratively with Head Teachers, Senior Leaders and staff in maintained primary schools last academic year, 2 schools at risk of being inadequate achieved an RI rating, some with good in certain areas.
- Therefore, in summary, the overwhelming majority of inspections have all been favourable in the maintained primary schools supported by the DSG;
- Although many improvements are evident this year, standards overall in North Northants are below national and below that of East Midlands.
- It is important to note that whilst North Northants still sits below national in all areas, there were improvements in the maintained schools unvalidated data at the end of July 2023:
 - Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Good Level of Development (GLD) data increased by 2% bringing it within 1% of the national figure.
 - The percentage of pupils passing the Year 1 PSC in June 2023 rose by 4% reducing the gap to national to 2%.
 - At Key Stage 1 (KS1) the Reading, Writing and Maths (RWM) combined percentage was broadly in line with NCER national; and
 - At Key Stage 2 (KS2) the Reading, Writing and Maths (RWM) combined percentage was up by 2% from the end of July 2022.

2.5 **Review of Last Year's 'Future Priorities':**

1. Plan bespoke school improvement priorities together in collaboration with schools, using locality data:
 - *Work has begun in this aspect. 2 groups have been formed in East Northants and in Wellingborough.*
 - *This is still in its infancy and will remain a priority for this academic year to be rolled out to all 4 locality areas.*
 2. Improve outcomes in reading, writing and maths at KS2 across North Northants;
 - Work together with maintained schools and MATS to improve outcomes for all pupils across North Northants, identifying good practice in locality areas;
Unvalidated attainment headline data for North Northants as a whole is still below national but does show the following increases:
 - ❖ *A 4% increase in GLD outcome overall compared to July 2022;*
 - ❖ *A 5% increase in year 1 pupils passing the PSC in June 2023;*
 - ❖ *A 3% increase in KS1 RWM combined attainment;*
 - ❖ *A 1% increase in KS2 writing attainment;*
 - ❖ *A reduction in the gap to national in KS2 reading.*
 - Continue to focus on and improve the 'quality of education' (the curriculum) so that schools maintain an ambitious curriculum that is aspirational for all pupils and groups
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of pupils and where pupil knowledge is securely built over time and across phases of education;

85% of all schools in North Northants are Good and/or Outstanding, the highest percentage to date including data from the legacy council.

- Reduce the achievement gap for disadvantaged pupils.
This gap has not yet reduced significantly and work will continue in this aspect.

2.6 It is currently estimated School Effectiveness resources will be fully utilised in 2023-2024. In the unlikely event that School Effectiveness is not fully utilised at the end of March 2024, the underspend would be rolled forward to be used in future years for School Effectiveness.

3 SET Priorities for 2023-2024 Academic Year

- To develop and implement a new school effectiveness strategy;
- To ensure that all Local Authority Maintained schools are rated at least good;
- To improve educational outcomes for North Northamptonshire so that they are at least in line with the regional average;
- To ensure that appropriate provision is available for all children to support inclusion;
- To facilitate early intervention and high quality curriculum development in the early years so that our youngest children are school ready;
- Work with providers to broaden Post 16 curriculum offer;
- Develop links between education providers and local business to ensure qualifications meet needs.

4 Proposed next steps

4.1 The council intends to consult upon its intention to ask maintained schools' representatives to increase de-delegation for this purpose to £12.78 per pupil. This is a 6.5% rise.

4.2 It should be noted that school improvement contributions from the DSG, known as the Local Authority Monitoring and Brokering (LAMB) Grant, ceased in April 2023. This means that there is less resource in this area for the Local Authority.

4.3 The proposed increase in the amount per pupil will continue to help the LA to economically secure the continued provision of the services of the SET enabling the LA to be more agile in responding to the needs of schools as well as build relationships with the sector.

4.4 Further conversion of one primary school into an academy since the 2023-24 de-delegated budget was set meant that there is currently less resource in the pot to deliver the required services going forward. Council officers propose to include School Effectiveness de delegation in the School Budget consultation with the following questions:

- a. Do you agree with the proposal for de-delegation to be made for maintained primary schools to create a maintained school improvement grant?
If yes:
- b. Do you agree with the proposed increased rate of £12.78 per pupil?
- c. If no, what rate would you consider reasonable?

5 Recommendations

5.1 Schools forum members were asked to agree the consultation proposals and questions or propose alternatives.

6 Consultation Outcome

- 6.1 The de-delegation for School Effectiveness work relates only to Maintained Schools and so only this group so of schools were asked to respond to the consultation. In total five schools responded, one secondary and four primary.
- 6.2 Of the five responses received, four indicated support for the de-delegation of School Effectiveness work. One school commented that this was more appropriate for primary schools than secondary and so did not support de-delegation.
- 6.3 In relation to the level of the de-delegation, again four out of five schools agreed with the increased rate of £12.78 per pupil, with one school expressing a view that the current level of £12.00 should be retained. Another school said that they would not agree with the £12.78 per pupil rate if Maintained schools are charged for LA training, this would constitute as a 'double charge'.

7 Legal implications

- 7.1 Under Schools Forum regulations, the responsible local authority has the power to propose to maintained schools de-delegate funding from maintained schools with agreement of its schools forum or any direction by the Secretary of State for Education.

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
De-delegation for mainstream maintained schools for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">contingenciesadministration of free school mealsinsurancelicences/subscriptionsstaff costs – supply coversupport for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groupsbehaviour support serviceslibrary and museum servicesSchool improvement	Proposes	Maintained primary and secondary school member representatives will decide for their phase. Middle schools are treated according to their deemed status	Will adjudicate where schools forum does not agree LA proposal

8. Risks

- 8.1 The risk, should schools forum not agree the de-delegation, is that the authority will not have the resources required to support and challenge schools causing concern. This is likely to result, at best, in standards failing to improve or, at worst, poorer pupil progress and achievement.

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