



03 July 2018

Dear Colleague

SUFFOLK LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT NETWORK: NEXT STEPS.

Thank you for confirming your school's participation in the Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network programme of peer review and joint practice development, beginning in September 2018. There has been a very high level of interest and sign-up from more than 100 Suffolk schools.

Attached with this letter is a briefing sheet and Frequently Asked Questions with more details about the programme and key dates in the autumn term so that you can plan ahead for your school. Please complete and return the **Participating School Information proforma** by email to: ELStandardsandexcellence@suffolk.gov.uk by **no later than Friday 13 July**.

Please take note of the following:

Confirmation of Peer Review Triads

Monday 16 July, following consultation on draft proposals at the SASH/SPHA conference on Thursday 5 July.

Peer Review Training

Whole-day training: Primary Schools: Group 1; Tuesday 02 October; Group 2: Tuesday 09 October; Group 3: Wednesday 17 October. Secondary Schools: Monday 15 October.

Peer Review 'Windows' for completing the cycle of reviews in each triad

Primary Group 1 – Monday 29 October – Friday 16 November

Primary Group 2 – Monday 05 November – Friday 23 November

Primary Group 3 – Monday 12 November – Friday 30 November.

Secondary Schools - Monday 12 November – Friday 30 November.

Joint Practice Development (JPD) – please confirm the programmes you want to access

Participating schools can access JPD in Mathematics offered by Mid Suffolk TSA and Unity Research School. JPD in Language and Literacy is offered by West Ipswich TSA and Unity Research School. So that final arrangements for the JPD can be planned, **please indicate on the Participating School Information proforma, the programmes your school wishes to access.**

Funding

Your school will be funded for supply cover to enable headteacher attendance at the peer review training, to undertake peer review visits to the other schools in your peer triad. The funding also includes supply cover for teachers taking part in the Joint Practice Development.

And finally...Peer Review Champions – Expressions of Interest

Peer Review Champions are serving Suffolk headteachers who will coordinate peer reviews for a group of four triads. Expressions of interest are invited by Thursday 06 September. A training and accreditation day for prospective peer review champions is scheduled for Thursday 20 September. See details attached.



The Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network represents a major opportunity to take forward school-led improvement in Suffolk. I look forward to working with you to make a difference as we develop our programme in the coming months.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John H. Harris'.

John Harris (SLIN Project Facilitator)



The SLIN Programme in 2018-19

Peer Review Programme, Formation of Triads and Training

Your school will take part in two peer review cycles during the year. You will work in a triad with two other serving headteachers. The 'windows' for completing peer reviews in the autumn term are:

Primary Schools

Group 1 Monday 29 October – Friday 16 November

(Ipswich S/W, South Suffolk, Sudbury)

Group 2 Monday 05 November – Friday 23 November

(Coastal, Ipswich N/E, Lowestoft/Waveney, Framlingham/Leiston)

Group 3 Monday 12 November – Friday 30 November

(Bury St.Edmunds, Forest Heath, Haverhill, High Suffolk, Stowmarket, Thurston)

Secondary Schools

Monday 12 November – Friday 30 November.

You and the other members of your triad will need to programme your three peer review visits and complete reports within the relevant peer review window.

Confirming the Triads

We have promised to consult schools about the criteria for forming triads. The following are our proposed criteria:

1. Triads operate on the basis of a clear set of roles, responsibilities and peer review behaviours which apply no matter what the combination of schools in the triad.
2. Feasibility in terms of travel (this means grouping the triads into five localities).
3. A mix of school types and contexts.
4. A mix of SSIF priorities in each triad.
5. Opportunity to work in a triad with a school or schools outside the immediate locality of your own school.

We will be consulting schools about the criteria and considering provisional proposals for each triad at the SPHA/SASH conference on Thursday 05 July. Triads will be confirmed on Monday 16 July.

Peer Review training will be available for headteachers in October 2018. These will be one-day training sessions led by serving headteachers with experience of successful peer review programmes, covering: the peer review process, peer review skills and peer review behaviours. To complement the peer review training, the day also includes training on the 'Foundations for Good Implementation' led by Samuel Ward Academy Research School (see below).

The provisional training dates for primary schools are: Group 1: Tuesday 02 October; Group 2: Tuesdays 09 October; and Wednesday 17 October. You will be asked to attend the training day reserved for your triad. The training date for secondary schools is tbc. All training days are 09.00 am for 09.30 am – 4.00 pm.



Peer Review Champions

Peer Review Champions will each coordinate a programme of peer reviews for four triads (twelve schools). They will pull together key themes from peer reviews to inform the commissioning of joint practice development. Peer Review Champions will also quality assure the peer review programme, by sampling peer reviews at other schools. Peer Review Champions must be serving Suffolk headteachers. The Peer Review Champion role will include a flat rate contribution of £5,000 to their school, along with supply cover costs for quality assurance visits.

We are inviting expressions of interest from Suffolk headteachers (see note attached) by September 6th 2018. We are looking to accredit 7 primary and 2 secondary Peer Review Champions in the first instance. Prospective Peer Review Champions will be invited to attend a training and accreditation day on September 20th 2018, and to attend the peer review training session for the triads that they will be coordinating.

Joint Practice Development

Participating schools will be able to access evidence-based JPD funded through the Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network as follows.

Mathematics

Recent randomised trial evidence for Mastery Learning in Maths (EFF 2015) shows that for a relatively modest cost this programme has a significant impact for low attaining pupils and provides a framework for time-limited intervention focused on narrowing the gap for disadvantaged pupils with up to six months additional progress as a result. EFF evidence highlights the importance of good planning and implementation at school level. Case study and research workgroup evidence are now starting to show a positive impact from Teaching for Mastery in the new GCSE Mathematics.

The following areas of JPD, led by Mid Suffolk TSA and Unity Research School can be accessed by participating schools:

Mastery Learning in Maths
Maths Leadership in Primary Schools
Teaching for Mastery in GCSE Maths

Language and Literacy

JPD in language and literacy will draw on the EFF guidance reports. West Ipswich TSA will lead the JPD for primary schools, focusing on Oral Language Intervention. A number of meta-analyses and systematic reviews show good impact on oral language skills and reading comprehension at relatively low cost. JPD at KS3 and 4, will be led by Unity Research School, drawing on its work with the EFF Literacy Group. Teachers will be upskilled in their own literacy knowledge and effective approaches in the classroom, such as explicit teaching of vocabulary, which has been found to be a barrier for learning with disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils.



The following areas of JPD can be accessed by participating schools:

Early Language Development (West Ipswich TSA)

Secondary School Language Development (Unity Research School)

To ensure that the Teaching Schools can plan ahead, please complete the Participating School Information proforma to indicate the JPD programmes that your school will be looking to access in 2018-19 by Friday 13 July. The relevant TSA/provider will contact your school to confirm the names of participating teachers, programme dates and venues.

SUFFOLK LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT NETWORK

A school- led system of peer review and joint practice development,
designed by school leaders in Suffolk

What is the Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network (SLIN)?

The *Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network* is a collaborative partnership between publicly-funded schools in Suffolk that promotes collective responsibility for the educational outcomes of children and young people in the county's schools. The aims of the Network are to:

- Foster and embed ambition, high aspiration and achievement for all the children and young people educated in Suffolk;
- Establish a distinctive and sustainable 'Suffolk' approach to support for school improvement, created, developed and owned by Suffolk schools, and founded on the principles of 'system leadership', in which school leaders contribute to school improvement beyond their own school
- Adopt an approach to school improvement through robust peer review that supports and challenges all schools at whatever stage of their improvement journey
- Provide a systematic approach to the commissioning and brokering of joint practice development, drawing on research and leading practice in Suffolk and nationally.

Why are we making these proposals – and what does success look like?

The Headteacher Associations in Suffolk, the School-to-School Support Partnership and the local authority have recognised the importance of establishing a self-improving school system to address the key educational challenges in Suffolk, particularly in raising attainment and progress in all phases to meet and exceed that found nationally. The **impact** of the *Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network* will be measured by a balanced scorecard covering **quality, attainment and progress**, the **workforce**, and **partnership behaviours**. We will also measure our impact against the **Suffolk Performance Challenge**.

What is the Suffolk Performance Challenge?

The *Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network* promotes ambitious and challenging shared outcomes for Suffolk children and young people in terms of educational attainment and progress. Schools have told us that rather than a county-wide set of aspirational performance targets they would prefer an approach that is meaningful for each individual school. The Suffolk Performance Challenge will do this by setting the expectation of a minimum level of attainment and progress in agreed areas of the curriculum for every school, combined with a 'stretch' percentage improvement for schools whose outcomes already exceed the minimum. This approach will enable every school to contribute in accelerating the rate of improvement in attainment and progress in Suffolk, building on its previous best. The Suffolk Performance Challenge will provide a context for each school's peer review and enable more effective brokering of school to school support.

The Programme Board will set the first Suffolk Performance Challenge in September 2018 relating to: **KS1 Maths EXS+; KS2 Maths EXS+; KS2 Maths Progress; KS2RWM EXS+; KS2 Dis RWM EXS+; KS4 Maths 5+; KS4 Dis En&Ma 4+; KS4 Dis Maths Progress.**

Peer review sounds good in theory – what does it mean in practice?

- Schools will have two peer reviews during the year. Peer Review 1, scheduled for the Autumn Term, will focus on Teaching, Learning and Assessment. Peer Review 2, scheduled for Summer Term 2019, will focus on leadership and management, including an evaluation of the school's work to promote a climate for good implementation and the classroom impact of joint practice development.
- Peer reviews will be undertaken by serving headteachers working in triads. They make visits to each other's schools in pairs to support and challenge the school's self-evaluation, identify strengths from which other schools can learn, vulnerabilities and priorities for support, particularly focusing on the Suffolk Regional Improvement Board priorities (Mathematics, Language and Peer to Peer Leadership Support).
- The peer review visit will normally include: discussion of the school's SEF, priorities and actions in the School Development Plan, performance information, learning walks with the peer reviewers, book scrutiny, conversations with school staff and pupils, and a review meeting to agree overall conclusions from the visit. **To ensure that the process is not over-complex, schools do not have to produce any additional documentation for the peer review.**
- Each visit results in a short report with a copy for the school and one for the **Peer Review Champion** linked with the triad. The findings are confidential with the following provisos:
 - a. The headteacher shares the outcomes with their Chair of Governors/MAT CEO.
 - b. A summary of the findings is incorporated into the Peer Review Champion's report to the Programme Board;
 - c. If the triad cannot agree the report, it must be submitted to the Peer Review Champion to clarify and resolve areas of disagreement.

How will the triads be arranged?

Once we have the confirmed list of participating schools we will consult them about criteria for making up the triads and work up a first draft proposal. Schools will be consulted on the draft list and we will refine the list in response to any requests from schools. Any changes will need to be based on 'best fit' and consistent with the agreed criteria.

How will headteachers be trained and supported for Peer Reviews?

The Peer Review process will be supported by a detailed Peer Review Guidance, setting out peer review protocols, preparation for the visit, roles and responsibilities, a model visit programme, and supporting document formats for the visit report. There will be a training session for headteachers in September 2018, looking not only at the peer review process but also practising 'peer review behaviours'. The trainers will include serving headteachers with recent, relevant and successful leadership of peer review programmes in schools. Each triad will be supported by a Peer Review Champion.

What is the role of the Peer Review Champion and how will they be appointed?

- Peer Review Champions will each coordinate a programme of peer reviews for four triads (twelve schools). They will pull together key themes from peer reviews to inform the commissioning of joint practice development. Peer Review Champions will also **quality assure** the peer review programme, by sampling peer reviews at other schools. Peer Review Champions will be a key point of liaison between the SLIN Programme Board and

participating schools. We are looking for 7 primary and 3 secondary PRCs in the first instance.

- Peer Review Champions must be serving Suffolk headteachers. They will have demonstrable commitment to, and a track record of, effective collaborative working with other schools, particularly in improving the quality of leadership or teaching and learning. They will have a well-developed understanding of system leadership and its application to the Peer Review Champion role.
- The Peer Review Champion role will include a flat rate contribution of £5,000 to their school, along with supply cover costs for quality assurance visits.
- We are inviting expressions of interest from Suffolk headteachers. Appointments will be made after a training and accreditation day, probably in September.

How will we ensure that the Peer Reviews are robust?

One session of each Triad's Peer Review will be quality assured by a Peer Review Champion during the year.

What is the Joint Practice Development offer and how does my school access it?

Participating schools will be able to access evidence-based joint practice development as follows.

Strand 1 – Foundations for Good Implementation (All Schools)

Headteachers from all participating schools will be encouraged to take part in JPD, led by Unity Research School, on the Foundations for Good Implementation. This draws on the evidence from the EEF report *'Putting Evidence to Work'*, which highlights that good improvement plans on paper are often impaired by poor implementation. This JPD is intended to enhance headteachers' expertise in creating a 'leadership environment that is conducive to good implementation', and sustainable improvement.

Strand 2 – Improving Teaching and Learning in one of the SRIB priority areas of focus (Schools have access to the following):

The following areas of JPD led by the Mid Suffolk TSA and Unity Research School can be accessed by participating schools:

Mastery Learning in Maths

Primary Maths Leadership

Maths Leadership in Primary Schools

Teaching for Mastery in GCSE Maths

Language Development

The following areas of JPD can be accessed by participating schools:

Early Language Development (West Ipswich TSA)

Secondary School Language Development (Unity Research School)

How can my school access other school-to-school support after the peer review?

Schools will be able to access other school-to-school support as now, through the framework established by the School-to-School Support Partnership.

What is the role of the Programme Board? Is this another layer of accountability?

- The Programme Board provides oversight and governance of the Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network. The Board:
 - identifies gaps in school improvement support in Suffolk arising from peer reviews;
 - recommends priorities for JPD to be commissioned and brokered through the School-to-School Support Partnership;
 - identifies good practice for inclusion in Suffolk's school-to-school support offer;
 - considers any requests from schools for early support to address the risk of underperformance.

- The *Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network* is a 'permissive' (i.e. voluntary) arrangement between schools who have chosen to join it and work within its framework for peer review and JPD. The role of the Programme Board does not affect, nor have any implications for, the current accountabilities of individual schools.

How is the Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network funded?

- The local authority, on behalf of a partnership including the headteacher associations and the School to School Support Partnership has made an application to the DfE Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) Round 3, for September 2018. Additional funding is also being provided through *Raising the Bar*. If the SSIF application is not successful, a reserve fund from *Raising the Bar* will cover the shortfall.
- The funding includes provision for a Project Facilitator, the Peer Review Champion roles, JPD delivery, supply cover for headteachers to carry out peer reviews and peer review training, and supply cover for teachers participating in the JPD.

What does this mean for Standards and Excellence Officers?

- The role and work of the Standards and Excellence Officers (SEOs) who provide face to face support and challenge for school leaders in their leadership of school improvement will continue. The Local Authority retains its statutory responsibility to secure high standards for pupils. The work of the team and the SLIN will complement each other and contribute to fulfilling this responsibility.
- The frequency and agenda of SEO visits will continue to be bespoke and will not duplicate or clash with the peer review. Individual discussions with Headteachers will confirm the arrangements for each school.
- The SEO will continue the relationship with the school to maintain current knowledge about the pace of school improvement and to ensure an evidence-based depth of knowledge about the quality of education in Suffolk.
- Where Headteacher's opt to engage with the SLIN, support and challenge for school leaders will be through a combination of the peer review process and the continued work of the standards and excellence team. We will work with headteachers to co-construct the detail of this blend of support and challenge and refine it over time so that it is fit for purpose and reflects the principles of SLIN.

PEER REVIEW CHAMPIONS FOR THE SUFFOLK LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT NETWORK

We are looking for interested serving Suffolk headteachers from schools participating in the Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network to become Peer Review Champions. Peer Review Champions will each coordinate a programme of peer reviews for four triads (twelve schools). They will pull together key themes from peer reviews to inform the commissioning of JPD. Peer Review Champions will also quality assure the peer review programme, by sampling peer reviews at other schools. Peer Review Champions will be a key point of liaison between the SLIN Programme Board and participating schools.

For the first year of the SLIN programme we are looking for 7 primary school and 2 secondary school Peer Review Champions in the first instance.

All Peer Review Champions will have a common training and accreditation programme in September 2018 to prepare for the role.

The Peer Review Champion role will include a flat rate contribution of £5,000 to their school, along with supply cover costs for quality assurance visits.

PEER REVIEW CHAMPION ROLE SPECIFICATION

1. Coordinate and support the programme of peer reviews for four peer review triads.
2. Liaise with participating schools in the SLIN programme.
3. Prepare relevant reports (including monitoring and evaluation) for the Project Coordinating Group and SLIN Programme Board.
4. Contribute to the wider development and evaluation of the SLIN programme.
5. Promote collaborative working and sharing of good practice.
6. Attend Project Coordinating Group meetings as required.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Colleagues interested in the role of Peer Review Champion should meet the following criteria:

- Commitment to, and a track record of, effective collaborative working with other schools, particularly in improving the quality of leadership or teaching and learning;
- An understanding of system leadership and its application to the Peer Review Champion role.

EXPRESSING AN INTEREST AND JOINING THE TEAM

Please submit a 1xA4 supporting statement to: ELStandardsandexcellence@suffolk.gov.uk by **Thursday 06 September 2018**. In your statement you should show how your experience matches the person specification and confirm that you have the support of your Chair of Governors/Trust for taking up the role. You will then be invited to attend the training and accreditation event for Peer Review Champions on **Thursday 20 September 2018**.