

## Local Authority (LA) high level action

All Suffolk LA maintained schools who meet the criteria are entitled to timely high level action. High level action is proven to work and supports leaders in securing rapid and sustainable impact on pupil outcomes and Ofsted outcomes as part of the Raising the Bar school improvement strategy.

The high level action process is a key part of the school improvement strategy and enables the LA to fulfil its statutory roles and meet expectations as described in the DfE Schools Causing Concern guidance.

High level action is the LA's process to provide a period of intensive support and challenge to school leaders to support them to address the cause of concern. It is not taken lightly. It is taken in LA maintained schools where evidence indicates that, following previous additional support, actions taken by school leaders, including governors, have not or will not secure the improvement at the pace needed. The RtB school improvement strategy summary shows where high level action fits.

To meet the criteria for high level action, the evidence will indicate:

- Leaders' actions are not ensuring that pupils are safe at the school
- Leaders' actions are not mitigating the risk of pupils' significant underachievement
- Leaders' actions are not ensuring the school is likely to be judged good or better at their next Ofsted inspection.

The purpose of high level action intervention is to bring about rapid recovery and ensure the school has the capacity to sustain improvements.

This information provides further detail about the box in section 1 of the school improvement strategy summary that reads; *"Timely high level LA action in schools where progress is not rapid enough"*.

## High Level Action

Bespoke challenge and support from LA through regular Standards and Excellence Officer visits and, if the school is in the Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network, two peer reviews a year.

Evidence seen by Education and Learning Officers, including through the SLIN board, indicates that school leaders are securing the school's improvement at an appropriate pace.

Evidence seen by Education and Learning Officers, including through the SLIN board, indicates vulnerabilities to not securing an Ofsted inspection of good or better or risk of pupils underachieving. Vulnerabilities discussed with school leaders. School leaders access early support via SLIN and / or LSEO.

Evidence seen by Education and Learning Officers or the peer review indicates that school leaders are securing the school's improvement at an appropriate pace.

Evidence seen by Education and Learning Officers indicates that school leaders are not securing the school's improvement at an appropriate pace.

Education and Learning Officers consider the evidence and which high level action fits the concerns. This may be a declaration of concern, preventative warning letter or warning notice. A meeting is held with the chair of governors and headteacher to discuss the concerns; causal factors; agreed actions for the school, LA and any external support needed including through the School to School Partnership, to secure rapid improvement. Timescales (6 school weeks) and process for the HLA period confirmed.

During the six school weeks, LA officers working with the school give clear messages about the pace of improvement and any further evidence needed. At the end of the timescale, the range of evidence goes through a 2 stage moderation by senior officers.

Evidence shows that concerns have been addressed. Meeting with school leaders acknowledges the changes they have made, the impact they have had and why HLA is lifted.

Evidence seen does not indicate that the causal factors of concerns have been addressed or that leaders have changed the way they are working to secure sustained improvement at the pace needed. Meeting with school leaders explains why further high level action will be taken.

### Further High level actions that will be considered are:

- if a pre warning letter has not already been issued, this action may now be taken
- issue a notice of financial concern
- issuing a warning or legal notice (see guidance in DfE schools causing concern September 2019)
- applying to the secretary of state to establish an Interim Executive Board
- appointing strong additional governors or governance advisers
- requiring the governing body to enter into arrangements such as to collaborate with the governing body of another school or to take specified steps to create or join a federation
- suspending the delegated budget.
- liaising with the RSC to secure an academy solution
- request that Ofsted inspect the school or setting