



**Havering**  
L O N D O N B O R O U G H

# CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Subject Heading:**

Havering's New School Improvement  
Strategy

**CMT Lead:**

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HIAS

**Policy context:**

## SUMMARY

In light of the forthcoming Education Bill, 2011, and the wide-ranging and significant changes to both funding and policy in relation to schools and school improvement, the Department for Education (DfE) directed all Local Authorities to submit detailed plans on their strategy to support all schools, and especially those that were failing to provide a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils/students, or those schools that were performing below the new government floor standards.

This report summarises Havering's response to the DfE request and sets out the strategy that will take Havering's school improvement services forward in the coming months and years.

Please note that many of the principles and processes contained in this new strategy are already part of existing practice.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the committee notes the new School Improvement Strategy in its aim to continue to provide high quality educational support for schools and institutions in Havering.

**REPORT DETAIL****1. Key Objective**

The 2011 Education Bill, which takes forward the White Paper, The Importance of Teaching (November 2010), charges all Local Authorities with a 'strong strategic role as champions for parents and families, for vulnerable pupils and of educational excellence.' This new School Improvement document sets out how Havering Local Authority is already ensuring rapid improvements for maintained schools performing below the floor standard, in an Ofsted category and those of some concern - and it sets out how we will support all schools that wish to collaborate to improve educational performance for all our pupils. In Havering we are committed to high achievement through partnership work with all stakeholders. As an education community we are committed to using all our resources, both core staff and the great reservoir of skill and expertise present in our schools, collectively to enhance pupils' learning and improve the overall quality of provision.

**2. Specific Guiding Principles**

- i. We seek to ensure that no schools in Havering are failing to provide an acceptable standard of education for their pupils. Where weaknesses exist we will take decisive action to ensure schools are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, to broker in support where appropriate and provide some centralised support for those schools who are below Government floor standards or in an Ofsted category.
- ii. All key members of Social Care and Learning are clear as to how weaknesses are identified and how resources are commissioned to overcome them.
- iii. The identification process includes rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems which are not focused solely on schools with low raw attainment scores.
- iv. Inclusion is a critical element of effective provision and is central to our focus on closing gaps in performance.

### 3. General Guiding Principles

- i. The highest priority for the LA is to promote high standards of provision and to prevent underachievement or failure at all levels. Key to this is its commitment to supporting self improvement in all schools.
- ii. Self-awareness, derived from accurate school self-evaluation, translated into effective improvement planning and implementation, is at the heart of school improvement.
- iii. Intervention and core LA support must be tailored to meet these identified needs, as well as additional support commissioned from other schools or providers.
- iv. Enduring school improvement comes from embedded change which is owned by and comes from within schools, and which must include improvements in Leadership and Management, teaching, learning and pupil progress. Schools are responsible for their own performance and the achievements of their pupils. However, it is the duty of the LA to challenge schools and to ensure they are supported to commission the right resources to rapidly improve.
- v. The maintenance of the high quality of relationships that have been established between schools, governing bodies, LA officers and Members of the Council, is key to ensuring the efficient and effective functioning of the education community in Havering in its continual drive for improvement.
- vi. Equally important is gaining an accurate and informed view of provision, especially in relation to Leadership and Management and teaching and learning.

### 4. Working with Schools

We are committed to high achievement through partnership because we believe it to be the most efficient and effective route to securing continued improvement.

As an education community, Havering is using all its resources collectively to enhance pupils' learning and improve the overall quality of provision. We are collectively committed to open, transparent communication and honest and frank debate. The LA regularly reviews its practice in relation to its key activities with representative groups of schools and governors, particularly in relation to the nature of the monitoring, challenge, intervention and any core elements of the support provided.

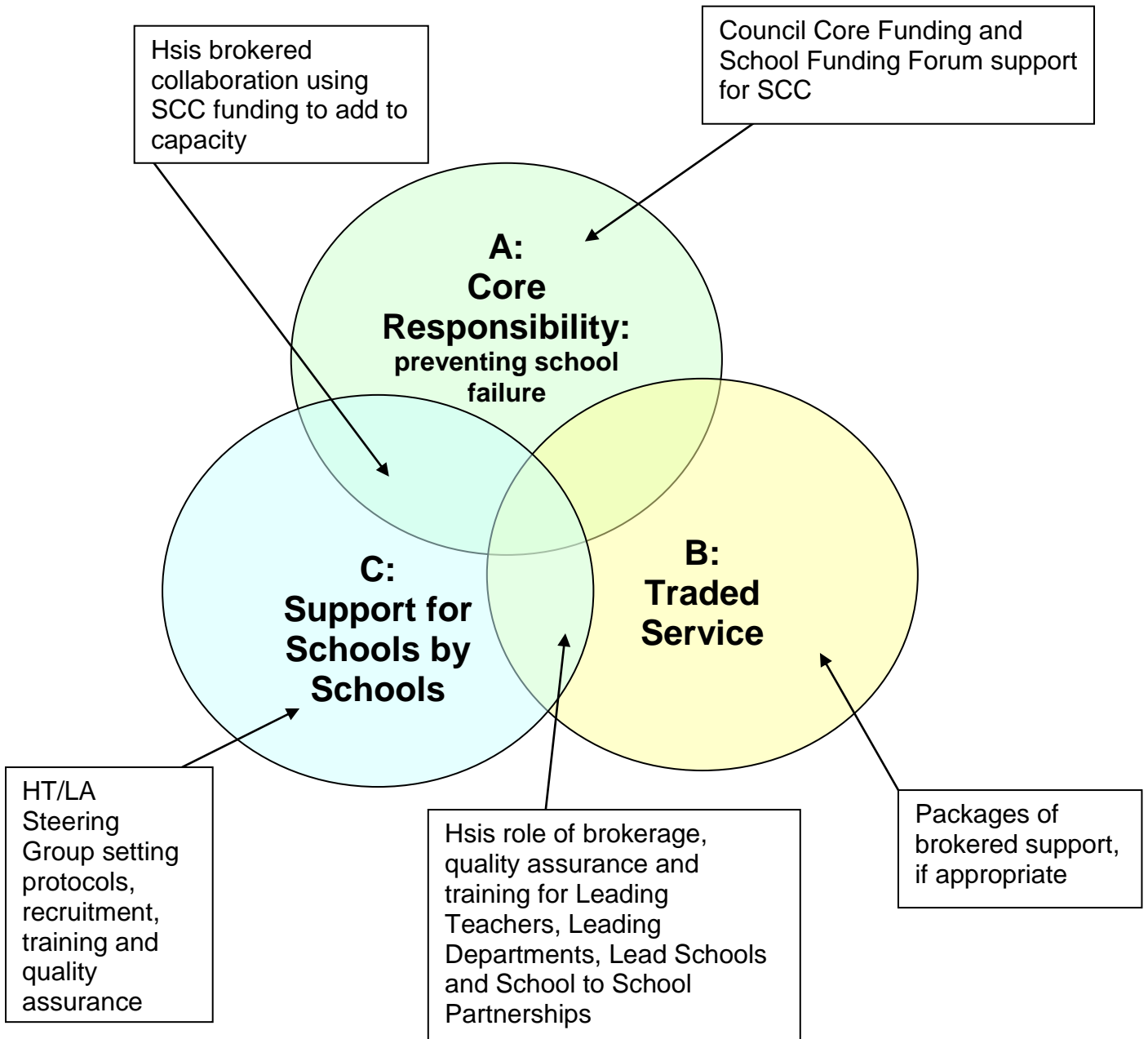
We have the full agreement of schools to:

- partnership working;
- support their ongoing development of effective school self- evaluation and school improvement planning;
- offer appropriate challenge and intervention, this being based on rigorous analysis of all available data;
- monitor and evaluate effectively to identify potential weaknesses at an early stage so as to enable early intervention;
- apply the criteria used to determine the need for intervention;

Our purpose is to develop ways of working, in partnership, that build on existing effective practice.

The three main, overlapping strands, of the work of Hsis are represented in the following diagram:

### THREE STRANDS



## **A CORE RESPONSIBILITY: PREVENTING SCHOOL FAILURE**

### **5. Identification of School Support Levels**

The LA has identified three categories of school support. In all cases there is a discussion between the LA and the school prior to the placing of the school in a category, unless it is an automatic category change such as a school going into an Ofsted category or performing below floor standards.

The key criteria for categorisation are:

- Standards and progress achieved since the last Ofsted;
- Capacity for improvement

These are considered and reviewed annually. In addition, the Schools' Monitoring Group (SMG) meets once every half-term to consider issues arising from across Social Care and Learning, which may cause additional criteria to be considered as part of the categorisation process. Membership of the SMG includes:

- Head of Learning and Achievement
- Principal Educational Psychologist
- Principal Finance Officer
- Manager for Additional Education Needs Services
- Behavioural Support
- Education Officer (SENNS)
- Principal Inspector Performance (Hsis)
- Principal Inspector Development (Hsis)
- Senior Inspectors (Hsis)
- Schools' HR Manager
- Educational Welfare Service Manager
- Governing Body Support Service Manager

The Chair and convenor of the group is a Principal or Senior Inspector. Other officers attend as appropriate. The Hsis Senior Leadership Team reviews all support categories twice yearly. The progress of any school identified as causing a concern is formally reviewed at least every term by LA staff working with the school concerned and the Headteacher. Any particular concerns will be reported to the Chair of Governors at this point. In any case, discussions will be held with the Chair at least every term. For those schools designated as a school causing concern, this may include regular meetings of a Progress Review Meeting or a Monitoring Board evidencing progress against an Action Plan

## **Systems and Processes**

Both schools and the LA review performance in line with key areas covered by the Ofsted Framework. Regular review and completion of a school based self-evaluation process by the school is strongly encouraged as the foundation of that process.

The key areas currently include:

- current performance in terms of achievement and attainment;
- trends over time;
- teaching and learning;
- leadership and management;
- quality of provision;
- personal development and well being; effective safeguarding procedures;
- effectiveness of community cohesion, promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination;
- capacity for improvement; stability; and attitudes.

### **Evidence is drawn from the following sources:**

- analysis of the most recent test data linked to the longer-term trend of each school's performance; Fischer Family Trust data, RAISEonline, LA data and schools' own data;
- school self-review;
- the most recent Ofsted report with specific reference to improvement issues and the impact of actions taken; LA databases on finance, staffing, SEN, attendance, exclusions and pupil numbers; LA/SIP school visit reports;
- any Mid-Ofsted Review that may have been completed; available data on staff turnover, relationships, quality of leadership and management, quality of teaching, school curriculum and school ethos; and Governing Body minutes (where available);
- LA alerts, arising from visits undertaken by Senior Inspectors - annually for Ofsted "good and better" schools and bi-annually in those judged by Ofsted as less than "good".

## 6. Support Levels

### **Category 1: Schools on track for good or outstanding at their next Ofsted**

Schools in which there are no concerns, where there are some outstanding or good elements, where pupils make good or better progress in terms of value added and where their attainment is normally above or at national average.

### **Category 2: Schools satisfactory at last Ofsted and improving**

Schools in this category may have one of the following:

- schools removed from category 3 which remain Category 2 for a minimum of one year;
- schools that have identified that they need to broker in some additional support to build capacity;
- schools amalgamating or federating;
- no substantive Headteacher, but still with the capability to improve;
- new Headteacher (for first year only); and
- schools facing difficulties at a particular point in time (e.g. high number of temporary staff, budget).

### **Category 3A: Schools satisfactory at last Ofsted, potentially vulnerable to remaining satisfactory or an Ofsted category**

Schools in this category are at risk of being identified as requiring a notice to improve at their next Ofsted Inspection.

This will normally include significant identified weaknesses in one or more of the following:

- standards/achievement
- leadership and management
- teaching and learning
- behaviour
- personal development and well being
- home-school relationships
- budgetary control

Schools removed from category 3B remain in category 3A for a minimum of one year. Schools within this category **may** also be identified by the LA as a 'School Causing Concern' in which Statutory Intervention may be needed.

### **Category 3B: Schools in Ofsted category or performing below the floor standard**

- schools served an Improvement Notice by Ofsted;
- schools identified by Ofsted as requiring Special Measures;
- Schools performing below the floor standards;

Schools within this category will be identified by the LA as a 'School Causing Concern' in which Statutory Intervention may be needed.

### **Category 3C: LA Formal Warning Schools**

Schools in this category are identified by the LA and will be subject to a formal warning where it has evidence that:

- the standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so, unless the LA exercises its Statutory Power; and/or
- there has been a serious breakdown in the way that the school is managed or governed which is prejudicing, or likely to prejudice, pupils' standards or performance (e.g. serious financial difficulties); and/or
- the safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by breakdown of discipline or otherwise).

Schools within this category will be identified by the LA as a 'School Causing Concern' where a formal warning and Statutory Interventions are in place.

## **7. Levels and Nature of LA Support**

The focus and level of support will at all times be designed to encourage independence and to build capacity rather than to foster a culture of dependence.

**Schools in Category 1:** There is an offer of 0.5 day of core entitlement – a 'keep in touch' meeting.

**Schools in Category 2:** There is an offer of 1.5 days of core whole school improvement entitlement.

**Schools in Category 3A:** There is an offer of 3 days of core whole school improvement entitlement and a small number of days of subject and aspect support.

**Schools in Category 3B:** There is an offer of 6 days of core whole school improvement entitlement and a larger number of subject and aspect days of support. Schools in this category are likely to have a variety of Statutory Interventions in place eg formal whole School Improvement Partnerships.

For all schools identified as a 'School Causing Concern' to the LA, a Principal/Senior Inspector will ensure that there is a Statement of Action drawn up in negotiation with the school. Time-scales for improvement will be dependent on the nature of the support needed. However significant improvements will be expected quickly. In addition, there will be a formal termly or half-termly meeting between a Principal/Senior Inspector, the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher to review progress against the action plan. All visit report forms will be copied to the Chair of Governors.



School Description	Hsis Category	Core School Improvement Entitlement	Core Subject/Aspect Entitlement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ofsted Category &amp; Below Floor Standard</li> </ul>	3B 3B	6 days 6 days	Days to be agreed Days to be agreed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfactory Schools (potentially vulnerable)</li> </ul>	3A	3 days	Days to be agreed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfactory Schools (heading towards good)</li> </ul>	2	1.5 days	Days to be agreed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Schools</li> </ul>	1	0.5 days	--
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outstanding Schools</li> </ul>	1	0.5 days	--
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academies</li> <li>Free Schools</li> <li>Independent Schools</li> </ul>	-- -- --	-- -- --	-- -- --

Support and monitoring will be drawn from across the full range of LA services where appropriate or brokered in to the school to meet the identified needs, and will be focused on those key areas for improvement identified in the school's priorities or action plan. The nature of the support will depend upon the identified key areas for improvement but creative ways of supporting school improvement will be encouraged. The LA will make effective use of existing LA and national initiatives and programmes to support schools. Where appropriate, consultants from outside the LA may be used to provide support. Full use will be made of National Leaders of Education, Local Leaders of Education, Leading Edge schools and other schools, both within and outside the LA, where this is appropriate. The LA may provide finance to enable schools to organise their own training or release for members of staff as necessary within budgetary constraints.

## 8. Process for Designation as a Category 3 School

Prior to a school being designated Category 3, there will be a dialogue about the categorisation process with the Headteacher and senior LA staff. The formal categorisation process will take place as follows:

- concerns will be raised and discussed with the Headteacher;
- a Senior or Principal Inspector will meet with the Headteacher to explore further any concerns raised.

Following this process, schools will be formally designated as Category 3 with the agreement of the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. Whilst the LA wishes to work in close partnership with all schools, in exceptional circumstances the LA may decide upon a category using the above criteria, without agreement of the school.

Schools designated as Category 3B and 3C:

- a meeting will be arranged with either a Principal or Senior Inspector, the Headteacher, and Chair of Governors. At this meeting the school will formally be designated as Category 3B or 3C and a plan of support will be agreed. The monitoring and evaluation process will be explained. A discrete Action Plan will be agreed and reviewed on a termly basis with a Principal or Senior Inspector;
- a letter and Statement of Action will be sent to the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and Head of Learning and Achievement outlining the categorisation and the support agreed, and a discrete Action Plan will be included.

The above process may be undertaken for any Category 3A school that has been identified by the LA as a School Causing Concern.

## **9. The Monitoring and Evaluation Process for Schools Causing Concern**

Hsis inspectors will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the agreed school plan in a meeting at least once each term to ensure that the school is making progress to remove the causes of concern. This will be with a senior member of Hsis staff, Chair of Governors and Headteacher.

In order to assist the LA in evaluating its own performance, Schools Causing Concern will be asked to evaluate and report annually on the quality of the support they are receiving from the LA. Copies of all monitoring reports will be forwarded to the Head of Learning and Achievement.

The Lead Member will be informed of the progress of Schools Causing Concern in terms of number of schools and progress through termly reports.

The Director of Social Care and Learning will also receive termly summary reports on the progress of Schools Causing Concern via the Head of Learning and Achievement.

## **10. Statutory Powers of Intervention**

Schools designated as Category 3C, 3B and those at 3A that have been identified as 'Schools Causing Concern', are those in which the LA has statutory powers of intervention. DfE 'Statutory Guidance on SCC' September 2008, sets out significant reserve powers of intervention for exceptional circumstances. Some examples of these powers are named below:

- the appointment of additional, experienced governors where the school requires special measures or significant improvement in discussion with LA and Governing Body;
- the appointment of an Interim Executive Board where the school requires special measures or significant improvement in discussion with LA and Governing Body;
- direction for closure of a school or to convert to an 'Academy' in Special Measures where there is no prospect of the school making sufficient improvements in discussion with LA and Governing Body;
- a requirement on LA to reconsider radical action when the case becomes urgent;
- financial notice of concern which could lead to suspension of delegated budget;
- placing a school into formal arrangements with another school (e.g. federations, partnerships).

The decision to invoke the LA statutory powers of intervention will be taken by the Group Director, Social Care and Learning, following a full assessment of the school's position by Hsis Principal Inspectors, Strategic Finance Lead and the Head of Learning and Achievement.

<b>IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS</b>
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**Financial Implications and risks:**

*The processes and procedures as outlined within this report are carried out from within existing Learning & Achievement resources. Therefore there are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report. Should there be subsequent changes to the strategy any resource implications will be addressed as necessary, in line with the appropriate decision hierarchy.*  
*Caroline May, Finance*

**Legal Implications and risks:**

*There are no apparent implications or risks in noting this report. Stephen Doye*

**Human Resources Implications and risks:**

*Assuming that the levels of staff will be maintained to support this process, there are no HR implications. Louise Howard, Schools' HR*

**Equalities Implications and risks:**

*The policy is designed to encourage and facilitate equality across the borough in terms of educational provision.*

**ICT Implications:**

*There are no ICT implications. Penny Patterson, Senior Inspector (ICT Futures)*

**CHERYL COPPELL**  
Chief Executive

**Background Papers List**

- Education Bill, 2011