



Report to Schools Forum

Date: 23rd November 2023

Contact: Gareth Drawmer, Head of Achievement and Learning

Proposed De-delegation for School Improvement Academic Year 2023/24

Recommendation:

To agree the proposed de-delegation for School Improvement activity at a rate of £4.00 per pupil in 2023/24.

1. Background

The Local Authority School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering grant was allocated to local authorities to support in fulfilling their statutory school improvement functions and their school improvement expectations as set out in the Schools Causing Concern (SCC) guidance which require councils to monitor performance of maintained schools, broker school improvement provision, and intervene as appropriate. This grant was used to fund the Side by Side Offer to Buckinghamshire schools. This grant has now been stopped, with the last payment made to local authorities in October 2022.

Since 2017 councils have also been permitted, with the agreement of their local schools forum, to de-delegate funding from their schools' budget shares to fund the provision of additional school improvement services. These are activities that go above and beyond their core school improvement activities, and may include, for example, providing or funding access to school improvement support. To fund all school improvement activities, both core and additional, the government included provision in Part 7 of Schedule 2 to the [School and Early Years Finance \(England\) Regulations for FY 2022-23](#) which allows councils to de-delegate for all improvement expenditure.

Buckinghamshire Council have built up a reserve of the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage grant over FY2020/21 and FY 2021/22 where Side by Side support for schools was restricted due to the pandemic. A schools forum decision in December 2022 agreed to a phased introduction of de-delegation for maintained schools, introduced over the course of six years, using the grant reserves to support the school improvement work through Side by Side for maintained schools.

In line with the Schools Forum paper 'Proposed De-Delegation for School Improvement' dated 6th December 2022, it is forecast that the reserves will be £1,005,355 at the end of this financial year, and that schools forum contribute £4.00 per pupil for FY2024/25.

2. School Improvement Support for maintained (mainstream) schools

1. Core School Improvement Support:

a. This is delivered through Side by Side and for 2024/25 will include:

- Up to 9 days of funded SSPC/ABLE support and up to 9 days of funded SSLC support for Prevention schools (inclusive of 3 HLVs),
- Up to 15 days of funded SSPC/ABLE support and up to 15 days of funded SSLC support for Intervention schools (inclusive of 5 HLVs),
- A Headline Visit to every maintained enhancement school every year.

2. Additional School Improvement Support:

a. **The Buckinghamshire Challenge Programme.** In partnership with the Education Endowment Foundation's Unity Research School, the Buckinghamshire Challenge Board deliver an exciting and innovative programme of support to enable schools across Buckinghamshire to raise the achievement and attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

The aim of the Buckinghamshire Challenge is for all participating schools to have robust strategies for addressing disadvantage, specifically:

- to understand the impact of educational disadvantage on their own pupils,
- to understand how to best address long term disadvantage and the challenge of the pandemic on pupil attainment in their own schools,
- to build a long term, sustainable, schools-led source of knowledge, experience and application in raising attainment for disadvantaged pupils in Buckinghamshire.

b. **Liaison Group Projects** - Funding for liaison groups to research and develop robust strategic for addressing disadvantage in their own local areas and support the development of the Buckinghamshire Challenge

c. **Side by Side Conference Programme** - The School Improvement Team will develop and administer a comprehensive annual conference programme. The programme will be tailored to the needs of maintained Headteachers and senior leaders in Buckinghamshire and cover the most pressing strategic issues.

d. **STEPs Champion Network for primary schools** - STEP is a training programme to support schools in developing whole school positive behaviour

strategies and practices for early intervention, and to safely manage complex or challenging behaviour within their own setting.

- For School Improvement activities for maintained schools that will continue to be funded from base budget and traded income, please see **Appendix 2**.
- For an evaluation of the impact of Side by Side, please see **Appendix 3**.

3. Cost of Core Side by Side Support per year for Maintained (mainstream) Schools

a. SSLC, SSPC and Headline Visit costs for intervention and prevention schools

	Intervention	Prevention	TOTAL
Cost per School	£12,750	£7,650	
Estimated Number of Prevention and Intervention Maintained Schools 2024/25	24	8	
Side by Side Cost for Maintained Schools	£306,000	£61,200	£367,200
Enhancement Visit Costs (based on 105 visits) 2024/25			£ 52,500
TOTAL COST FOR CORE SUPPORT FOR MAINTAINED SCHOOLS 2024/25			£419,700

b. Additional Side by Side projects costs per year

Project	Annual Cost
The Buckinghamshire Challenge Project	£22,500
Liaison Group Projects	£70,000
Side by Side Conference Programme	£ 5,000
STEPs Behaviour Management Training	£25,000
TOTAL	£122,500

c. Total core and additional Side by Side school improvement costs

Support for maintained schools	Annual Cost
Side by Side brokerage costs for intervention and prevention schools	£419,700
Additional projects	£122,500
TOTAL	£542,200
Per pupil cost	£16.01 per annum

4. Phased Introduction of de-delegation for Maintained (mainstream) Schools

- Buckinghamshire Council appreciate the high additional cost to maintained schools of this service that has previously been funded through government grants. As agreed with schools forum in December 2023, de-delegation is therefore being introduced gradually over the course of 6 years, using the grant reserves to support the school improvement work for maintained schools.
- 2023/24 is the second year of the phased introduction.

	% cont.	£ contribution	£ reserves	Per pupil costs
FY 2023/24	15%	£ 81,300	£460,700	£2.40
FY 2024/25	25%	£135,500	£406,500	£4.00
FY 2025/26	45%	£243,900	£298,100	£7.20
FY 2026/27	65%	£352,300	£189,700	£10.41
FY 2027/28	80%	£433,600	£108,400	£12.81
FY 2028/29	100%	£542,000		£16.01

5. Assumptions

- Forecast spend on Side by Side costs vary each year based on a number of different factors including number of schools requiring support as determined by risk assessment and the number of support days used by each supported school etc.
- The numbers will need to be recalculated each year to take into account:
 - the actual spend in the previous year,
 - the number of academisations per year, and therefore the number of remaining maintained schools in Buckinghamshire,
 - the School Improvement costs associated with the number of remaining maintained schools.
- Should the spend in any one year be below forecast, Buckinghamshire Council propose to adjust the de-delegation amount in the following year. If there is an overspend, due to an increased number of schools requiring support, then the overspend will be funded from the reserves, which will therefore be spent faster.
- This proposal is based on the current School Improvement Strategy and Side by Side Offer to schools for academic year 2023/24. Changes to the School Improvement model may need to be made to take into account evolving strategic direction, the national landscape and changing local needs.
- De-delegation cannot be made for maintained special schools or nurseries.

Appendix 1

1. Current Number of Intervention and Prevention Schools – Academy v Maintained (mainstream) schools academic year 2023/24 (to date):

	Intervention	Prevention	TOTAL
Maintained	24 (65%)	9 (35%)	33
Academy*	13 (35%)	17 (65%)	30
TOTAL	37	26	63

- Academies may choose to purchase School Improvement support through BESST traded services.

2. Number of maintained (mainstream) schools:

Primary	132
Secondary	4
TOTAL	136

- For forward planning, the number of maintained (mainstream) schools has been set at **136**.
- In pupil numbers this is **33,856 maintained, mainstream pupils**.

Appendix 2

School Improvement programme of support for maintained schools to be funding from base budget and traded income:

- 1. Additional 'New to Headship' Headline Visit** - Recognising the challenges for new Headteachers and the importance of enhanced support during a Headteacher's first year in post, a New to Headship Headline Visit will also be offered to all maintained schools with either:
 - A 'new to post Headteacher' for academic year 2023/24 (including those headteachers moving from an interim position to a permanent post);
 - A 'new to Buckinghamshire Headteacher' for academic year 2023/24.
- 2. An 'Early Career Headship' programme** for the cohort of new Headteachers.
- 3. Team Around the School Support** - In order to support schools during a challenging period, Team Around the School support is offered to all maintained schools facing a significant need. Team Around the School meetings are convened by the School Improvement Team, who build a strong team from within the local authority to support a school undergoing a particularly difficult set of circumstances. Formal meetings are held at regular intervals (monthly or half termly) and all are held to account for the quality and pace of the improvements by the Chair, who will normally be a senior member of the Education Team.
- 4. Rapid Improvement Group meetings** - These can be convened by the School Improvement Team with the purpose to regularly monitor impact of intervention support with the supported school's Headteacher, Chair of Governors, the SSLC. This will be chaired by the School Improvement Advisor.
- 5. Support during Ofsted Inspections** - All maintained schools also benefit from support during Ofsted inspections, and attendance from a member of the School Improvement Team at Ofsted inspection feedback sessions. The School Improvement Advisor will support the process through a pre-inspection discussion with the Headteacher, availability for telephone support throughout the inspection period and a discussion with the Lead Inspector on day two, regarding supported development work.
- 6. Attendance at one day of interviews for Headteacher Interview** - School Improvement Advisors will support the recruitment process for a new Headteacher in maintained schools by attending the final interviews and representing the local authority as part of the interview panel.

Appendix 3 – Impact of Side by Side

Number of schools supported – Ac. Year 2023/24 to date (and anticipated upcoming support)

	Primary	Secondary
Intervention	24 (3)	1
Prevention	5 (6)	2

Impact of Side by Side on Ofsted Judgements – Ac. Year 2023/24 to date

- During academic year 2023/24 to date – 10 inspection reports (for maintained mainstream schools) have so far been published:

Number of inspection reports published	10
Number of schools graded good or better	10 (100%)
Number of schools with an increased judgement	3 (30%)
Number of schools with a retained judgement	7 (70%)
Number of schools with a decline in judgement	0 (0%)

- Of the above ten schools, six were classified as either significantly or moderately 'at risk' of a requires improvement or inadequate judgement at their next inspection and were therefore supported as either a prevention or intervention school.

	Intervention	Prevention
Number of inspections	5	1
Number of schools graded good or better	5 (100%)	1 (100%)
Change in judgement	1 increased judgement 4 retained judgements	1 retained judgement

Headline Visits Undertaken:

	Primary Maintained	Secondary Maintained

2023/2024 to date (per term)	46 (46) – another 26 scheduled for the remainder of the Autumn term	1 (1) - 2 scheduled for the remainder of the Autumn term
2022/2023	129 (43)	10 (3)
2021/2022	71 (24)	2 (0.7)

Side by Side Capacity Trained, Active and Available

	Trained and Available	Active
SSPCs		
Primary	63	22
Secondary	40	0
SSLCs		
Primary	21	11
Secondary	5	0

- **Feedback from Ofsted reports/monitoring visit reports of intervention and prevention schools – areas where Side by Side has supported leaders:**
 - *‘Leaders have set out clear and ambitious expectations for pupils in the school’ ‘The curriculum is well planned and sequenced’.*
 - *‘During the changes in leadership over the last few years, the acting headteacher and her team have worked hard to ensure stability and consistency for the school’.*
 - *‘The school is flourishing. As soon as the headteacher joined, she put in place a programme of rapid improvements. This included an overhaul of the curriculum, a new approach to behaviour and attendance, and a review of many policies and procedures. These have all had a strong impact on pupils’ achievement. Staff are enthusiastic and determined to provide a good quality of education for pupils’.*
 - *‘Leaders aim to be a community of learning by raising expectations and achieving high standards. Curriculum plans clearly identify the most important knowledge that staff want pupils to learn and the order in which it should be taught. This has the positive impact of enabling pupils to build their knowledge and understanding systematically as they move through the school’.*
 - *‘Leaders value the level of challenge and expertise they receive from the local authority and the diocese. For example, leaders have benefitted from support to improve the quality of teaching, develop the roles of subject leaders, make improvements to the curriculum and strengthen provision for pupils with SEND’.*

- *'Leaders and staff are continually looking for ways to improve, as they want nothing but the best for the pupils. Governors know the school's strengths and priorities for development'*.
 - *'The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils'*.
 - *'Governors know the strengths and areas to develop for the school. They are determined, focused and committed. Governors support and challenge the school to maintain a focus on achieving the best outcomes for all pupils'*.
 - *'The school has worked tirelessly to develop an ambitious curriculum'*.
 - *'The school has a clearly defined, shared vision for its pupils. Leaders carry out their statutory duties effectively. They listen to staff and make sure their views are included in any changes to practice. They are knowledgeable about the school, and ensure training is focused on areas that benefit pupils most'*.
 - *'Ambitious leaders set a curriculum where pupils experience a broad offer of academic subjects and enrichment. The school's vision is ambitious. New leaders and governors have utilised training opportunities well to strengthen their knowledge of how to improve the education provision. This professional development includes supporting leaders at all levels to develop their expertise in helping pupils to achieve'*.
 - *'The school is ambitious and unwavering in seeking the best education for the pupils who pass through its doors during an academic year..... Staff look out for each other and agree that leaders are always there to help and listen'*.
- **Perception of Impact of Side by Side – Supported School Leadership**
 - The perceived impact of Side by Side from Supported School Leaders is assessed termly, and feedback remains extremely positive. The last feedback obtained was during 2022/23:
 - Supported Leader Feedback:
 - Supported leaders rated impact of the support given as **8/10**
 - Supported leaders rated the extent to which the deployed Champions understood the needs of their school at **9/10**
 - Supported leaders rated the extent to which they believed that the support given had the capacity to deliver lasting improvements to their school as **8.5/10** *(a low score given by one leader whose support had only just started and did not feel that they could accurately assess the long-term capacity for improvement reduced the overall impact score from 9/10)*
 - Comments from supported leaders include:
 - *'Very helpful to see the school through another lens'*.
 - *'Good clear advice, very supportive and useful'*.

- *'High quality support ensures we are making the best progress we can'.*
- *'There has definitely been a significant impact already'.*
- *'My SSLC has been so useful and will have a clear impact on the school'.*

- **Side by Side Case Studies**

Side by Side Case Study – Secondary

School Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance changes; deficit in challenge • High staff turnover in leadership of core subjects/SEND • Leadership deficit in deputising capacity • Deficit in leadership of disadvantaged pupil experience • Self-evaluation over generous <p>Section 8 Ofsted inspection May 2020, Inspectors <i>had concerns that one or more areas were declining:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Implementation of the curriculum not yet well developed in all subjects,</i> • <i>Leaders need to ensure planning consistency across all subjects,</i> • <i>Pupil progress and assessment not consistent in all subjects,</i> • <i>progress in a number of important subjects has been poor for the past three years,</i> • <i>Leaders should ensure that teachers' expectations are high enough in all lessons to enable all pupils to achieve well,</i> • <i>Leaders should ensure that disadvantaged pupils' gap in attainment continues towards being eradicated.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding concerns identified December 2022
Areas for Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding • Leadership - SLT structure, quality assurance accountability mechanisms • Governance – robust challenge and support; accountability • Middle Leadership - retention and accountability • QA and evidence of progress against Ofsted recommendations around Quality of Education
Side by Side Support Delivered	<p>Side by Side Focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding



<p>(September 2022- July 2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Education • Leadership and Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding – related decision-fast tracked school into Intervention category • 5 headline visits • Safeguarding review – 2-day Review Autumn Term 2022 • Safeguarding update visits to ensure progress against actions – December 22 – March 23 • RIG – Rapid Improvement Group – to address Safeguarding actions, including governance of Safeguarding • RIG – Rapid Improvement Group – to also address progress against Ofsted recommendations • Review of strategic leadership of Quality of Education • Review of attainment data and assessment strategies • Deep dive review of English • Review of Literacy and reading • Deep dive review of Maths • Middle leadership support – learning walks, book scrutiny, strategic planning, data analysis
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>Ofsted inspection 2023 – Section 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Education secured Good judgement, • Safeguarding deemed effective, • Leadership and Management secured Good judgement. <p>From the Ofsted Report 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Since the school was last inspected, leaders have developed a suitably broad curriculum.</i> • <i>Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and deliver the curriculum well.</i> • <i>Assessment is used effectively at the end of topics or terms to help teachers identify the areas pupils are struggling with.</i> • <i>Leaders ensure that pupils who struggle with reading are identified. They make effective use of detailed assessments to understand the barriers for each pupil so that they can provide the right kind of help and support.</i> • <i>Governors know the school well and have a realistic understanding of the key areas for development. By challenging and supporting leaders, they make sure that</i>

	<p><i>these things are prioritised. The impact of this work is clear to see in improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.</i> • <i>Leaders make safeguarding a priority at this school.</i> • <i>Staff are well trained and have a good understanding of the school’s safeguarding context.</i> • <i>They report any concerns they have about pupils’ welfare using the school’s safeguarding system.</i> • <i>Leaders act on these concerns promptly and effectively to help keep pupils safe.</i> • <i>This includes coordinated support in school as well as working with outside agencies where required.</i> • <i>Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, both through the planned PSHE curriculum and targeted input in response to gaps in knowledge or common concerns.</i>
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Side by Side Case Study – Primary

School Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger than the average-sized primary school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New headteacher and change of leadership team. • Challenging and varied intake of pupils. • High numbers of vulnerable pupils and families. • School judged as Good in 2018. • Significant challenges and changes around leadership and staffing. • Leaders are focused on core subject leadership and not aware of progress in foundation subjects. • Quality of teaching, learning and assessment was variable. • Weaknesses in history and geography identified.
Areas for Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of leadership and management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve engagement with the headteacher. • Quality of teaching so that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make at least good progress.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality first teaching in foundation subjects, specifically History and Geography.
Side by Side Support Delivered (September 2019- July 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Support – 3 headline visits and 2 additional leadership visits. Support focused on supporting the headteacher with developing middle leaders, curriculum review, deep dives into safeguarding and PSHE. • SSPC – 9 days with a focus on teaching and learning and curriculum leadership in history and geography. The support also included training for staff. • Meetings with Headteacher, Chair of Governors and SSPC with School Improvement Advisor.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted inspection 2023 judged the school to be good in all areas.

