

Securing School Improvement Protocol

Ambitious for all

September 2021 – July 2022

Detailing the monitoring, support and intervention for school improvement for all maintained schools, academies and free schools in Telford & Wrekin

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1. Introduction

Telford & Wrekin Council is committed to working in partnership with all schools, academies and free schools to ensure that every pupil receives a good quality education and achieves excellent outcomes. Our aim is to facilitate a culture of working together so that we can develop a first class education provision for all children and young people in the borough, and to enable all learners to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be confident and successful members of their community in modern Britain. We will act as system leaders supporting providers to focus on pupil achievement in its broadest sense and transform educational experiences for children and young people so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education and on into the workplace.

Education and Skills has the key responsibility within the Council for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the quality of education and standards of attainment and achievement in all Telford & Wrekin schools, and for identifying where targeted intervention is required for schools where significant improvement is necessary.

This protocol outlines the strategies used by the local authority (LA) to ensure that all schools are monitored effectively, that early identification of emerging issues is noted and acted upon, and intervention, where needed, is timely and well planned.

We remain committed to working in partnership with our schools building upon successful practice, to ensure that all schools are at least good, and that we have the best learning environments delivering high quality teaching and learning, providing a wealth of opportunity that prepares our children and young people for healthy, happy and successful adult lives.

Throughout this document the term ‘school’ refers to all maintained schools, academies and free schools, and includes both special and mainstream provisions. We will work with openness and transparency and keep children and young people at the heart of decisions and actions that we take. We know that we share a collective desire with our schools, which is to foster learning environments that deliver the best outcomes for children. We are highly ambitious for our children in Telford and Wrekin and our work on school improvement, alongside other local system leaders, remains core to delivering our goals.

Simon Wellman

Director Education and Skills

2. Shared Principles

The Telford and Wrekin School Improvement Strategy is underpinned by the following key principles:

- That every child or young person in Telford and Wrekin will reach their full potential and have a happy, positive, and fulfilling school experience.
- That every school will make effective provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities so that they can make good progress in their learning and can move easily on to the next stage of their education and aspire for employment and independent adult life.
- That the outcomes of every child or young person in Telford and Wrekin are a collective responsibility: While responsibility for improvement rests with individual schools as self-managing institutions; Telford and Wrekin has a statutory duty (as outlined in Section 3) to challenge and, where it deems it necessary, to undertake timely interventions in schools to raise standards.
- That transparency, mutual trust and partnership are vital to a self-improving system: Clear and robust criteria for categorising each school, based on their level of effectiveness in providing a good level of education is shared with school leaders (see section 6).
- That strong leadership, management and governance are essential: Headteachers and governors are ultimately responsible for the performance of the schools they lead. Governing bodies, therefore, need to effectively challenge and hold school leadership teams appropriately to account to ensure good outcomes for all pupils. The effectiveness of school governance will therefore be considered as part of the risk assessment for categorisation.
- That an effective self-improving school led system of support is vital: School to school improvement networks that are built on autonomy and effective professional relationships, are vital to ensure effective support is available to all schools. Through

these networks, schools will take ownership and responsibility for their own and support each other's performance and improvement.

- The new local Teaching School Hub will further support schools working in partnership to improve the quality of education provision within the borough.

3. Statutory Responsibilities

Local authorities, must have regard to the statutory guidance in the DfE's '*Schools causing concern Guidance for local authorities and Regional Schools Commissioners on how to work with schools to support improvements to educational performance, and on using their intervention powers*' September 2020. The guidance sets out the factors local authorities and Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) will consider, and the process they will follow in order to decide the right approach to supporting a school to improve. It also sets out how local authorities can use their powers of intervention in their maintained schools.

The document notes that local authorities should:

Understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data as a starting point to identify any that are underperforming, while working with them to explore ways to support progress;

- *Work closely with the relevant RSC, diocese and other local partners to ensure schools receive the support they need to improve;*
- *Where underperformance has been recognised in a maintained school, proactively work with the relevant RSC, combining local and regional expertise to ensure the right approach, including sending warning notices and using intervention powers where this will improve leadership and standards; and*
- *Encourage good and outstanding maintained schools to take responsibility for their own improvement; support other schools; and enable other schools to access the support they need to improve.*

Local authorities should focus their activity on the schools they maintain rather than academies which are accountable to the Secretary of State. However, should a local authority have any concerns about an academy's standards, leadership or governance, they should raise these directly with the relevant RSC.

RSCs will apply the same rigour to the academies and free schools in their regions, as local authorities should apply to maintained schools in their area, and will similarly champion education excellence. Schools causing concern:

Local authorities are also subject to a number of duties relating to children and young people with SEND, Safeguarding, PRUs and Governance.

4. Local Priorities for 2021-2022

The Local Authority has identified a number of key priorities for improvement for the 2021 – 22 academic year and will work with schools, academies and other partners to develop these over the year. These priorities are as follows:

- Improve attainment for children at the end of Key Stage 4
- Improve attainment for disadvantaged children at every Key Stage
- Support the improvement of the emotional and mental health of children
- Improve equality and diversity for children
- Improve belonging and inclusion for children so that the need for exclusion from school is minimal.
- Engage with children and young people to seek their views and aspirations, to inform how our education services are developed in the future.

Details about how these priorities will be addressed will be set out in further strategies and in partnership with the Strategic Education Partnership Board.

5. Stakeholders, Partnerships and local system leaders for School Improvement

We are committed to working with schools, both special and mainstream, and a range of school improvement partners and system leaders to ensure the children and young people in our borough receive a good quality of education.

school will be at the centre and other partners on the jigsaw pieces

School

RSC

Dioceses

Local Authority

STEP Teaching Hub

Regional Maths Hub

Regional English Hub

Pupil Performance Priority partners (RADY)

Multi Academy Trusts

**Support for all Schools**

The School Performance Team will work alongside schools to provide support in the following circumstances:

- To follow up specific serious allegations, issues or incidents which may arise such as child protection, financial audit report or critical incident, and concerns raised by OFSTED;
- Recruitment of a new headteacher in community and voluntary controlled schools (statutory requirement); and in voluntary aided, foundation schools, trust schools or academies, if requested by the governors;
- Visit, as required, to monitor the administration and/or special arrangements for end of phase tests and assessments;
- Visit to meet with members of inspection teams and attend Ofsted's inspection feedback meetings.

Support for School Governing Boards

The Local Authority will support schools governing boards to be effective by:

- Supporting the recruitment of governors, including LA governors;
- Ensuring that governors are equipped to effectively support and challenge senior leaders about the quality of provision in their schools by providing a full range of training opportunities throughout the year;
- Briefing governors about important national education updates to support them in fulfilling their statutory duties;
- Providing an opportunity to subscribe to an SLA for a fully managed governance service;

- Assisting and advising governors in the recruitment process for head teachers and senior leaders;
- Supporting boards that are at risk of not fulfilling their statutory duties;
- Where necessary making recommendations to strengthen the capacity of a board by recommending the appointment of associate governors or by establishing an Interim Executive Board (IEB).

6 Risk Assessment and Classification process

Monitoring

The Local Authority (LA), in discussion with headteachers and governors, will undertake a termly risk assessment of all special and mainstream schools and providers based on the regular and systematic collection and analysis of a wide range of performance data both qualitative and quantitative, including safeguarding information. The LA may review the level of concern with a school, at any point where there is sufficient evidence to do so or where a provider indicates that circumstances have changed.

Challenging

The LA will use the data collected to swiftly identify schools where improvement is needed. Each school will be classified to determine the level of intervention and support which best meets their circumstances. These levels of support and challenge are outlined in Section 7 below.

Intervening

The Local Authority will intervene in maintained schools, including voluntary controlled, voluntary aided and trust schools, in proportion to need, as identified through the classification process to ensure that the school's performance improves. In the case of academies or free schools, where there is inadequate performance, the Local Authority will clarify with trustees or sponsors their position regarding an effective plan for improvement and support.

For maintained special and mainstream schools the local authority will use its powers of intervention, including statutory powers where necessary. This will include notifying the Regional Schools' Commissioner (RSC) of the concerns where appropriate.

The LA may exercise its statutory powers such as:

- require the governing board to enter into arrangements
- appointment of additional governors;

- establishment of an interim executive board (IEB);
- removal of delegated budget;

These schools will receive additional visits, challenge, and advice which will be recorded and shared with the headteacher, the Chair of Governors and the Director of Education and Skills.

The Local Authority will undertake a full assessment of the provision for each setting at the beginning of the academic year using all available data to form an initial judgement about whether a school will need additional support. Where the initial assessment would suggest a level of concern, the school will be invited to discuss this with an LA representative. This will inform the annual classification for support and challenge for the setting.

The discussion will provide the school with an opportunity to present any relevant information which might inform the overall level awarded. The evaluation may be reviewed during the academic year based on any changes in circumstance. All schools will be notified of their classification level during September 2021. The letter will outline the reasons for the level awarded. Any headteacher may at their discretion discuss the level of classification with a senior member of the local authority.

Whilst we recognise that academies are independent of the Local Authority, we have a statutory responsibility for standards in all schools and settings and we will work in partnership with trustees and sponsors to ensure they provide a level of support and challenge which is at least consistent with that provided by the local authority to maintained schools.

7. Criteria for Support and Challenge Classification

The Local Authority has set out four strands of evidence criteria which will be used to identify a special or mainstream school which requires support and, if needed, intervention. The four strands are:

- the quality of education
- behaviour and attitudes
- personal development
- leadership, management and safeguarding

Alongside the above criteria, the LA will also consider the schools most recent OFSTED outcome and any other relevant risk factors when assessing the level of support and challenge needed.

The use of the criteria will allow the Local Authority to identify issues where a school may need temporary support and challenge. Schools will be identified as requiring intervention and support based on consideration of the following:

Strand 1 – the quality of education

Intent

- How well the school has implemented a broad curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and including pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- How effectively the school's curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.

Implementation

- How effectively teachers use good subject knowledge and present subject matter clearly to pupils, check pupils' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback.
- How well teaching helps pupils to remember long term the content they have been taught and use knowledge fluently.
- How well remote education is integrated within course(s) of study, and is well designed to support the wider implementation of the school's curriculum, where appropriate.
- How effectively Reading, including phonics, is taught to develop pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading.

Impact

- How effectively pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well.
- Where available, whether impact is reflected in results from national tests and examinations that meet government expectations, and that pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points.
- Whether attainment gaps are closing for disadvantaged students compared to national averages.

Strand 2 – behaviour and attitudes

- How well the school demonstrates high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct, and that these are commonly understood and applied consistently and fairly across the school.
- How effectively the school creates a positive environment in which bullying, aggression, discrimination and derogatory language are not tolerated, and how well they are dealt with.
- How positive pupils' attitudes are to their education.
- Whether fixed term and internal exclusions are used appropriately, and how well the school reintegrates excluded pupils on their return and manages behaviour effectively.
- Whether permanent exclusions are used appropriately and as a last resort.

- Whether attendance of pupils is high, and they are punctual.

Strand 3 – personal development

- Whether the curriculum extends beyond the academic, technical or vocational, and provides for learners' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents.
- How well the curriculum and the school's wider work support learners to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence and independence – and help them know how to keep physically and mentally healthy.
- How effectively the school prepares learners for life in modern Britain by: equipping them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society; developing their understanding of fundamental British values; developing their understanding and appreciation of diversity; celebrating what we have in common and promoting respect for the different protected characteristics as defined in law.
- Whether equality of opportunity and diversity are promoted effectively.
- How well schools prepare pupils for future success in education, employment or training, including how effectively pupils receive unbiased information about potential next steps and high-quality careers guidance.

Strand 4 – leadership and management and safeguarding

- How effectively school leadership demonstrates a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education to all pupils.
- How well leadership and management at all levels, particularly senior leaders, middle managers and governors consistently demonstrate, effective processes and structures which have a positive impact on pupils achievement and behaviour.
- Whether leaders create an inclusive culture and do not allow gaming or off-rolling.
- How well school leaders engage with pupils and others in their community, including, when relevant, parents, employers and local services.
- Whether those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively, including ensuring the school fulfils its statutory duties and responsibilities.
- How effectively the school promotes a culture of safeguarding that supports effective arrangements to identify pupils at risk, securing the support pupils need, and managing safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to pupils.

From time to time, circumstances may arise which result in a school experiencing difficulties, and which might impair its ability to sustain normal progress and performance. An example, could be where there are significant changes to leadership which might result in a period of instability for the school. In such cases, the school might be offered additional support in this period.

8. Support and Challenge

Our approach is designed to recognise that borough-wide school improvement activity must be consensual, given the greater autonomy that is now granted to schools, but understands that working in partnership is also the most effective form of improvement. The approach ensures that duties and responsibilities are discharged effectively and in a timely way. The Local Authority support and challenge offer is outlined in the classification grid. All maintained schools will receive at least one annual visit.

While the accountability for academies, does not sit with the Local Authority and they are not compelled to engage with the borough wide approach to school improvement, we recognise that the Academy Trusts working in the borough have a key role to play in school improvement. Where a special or mainstream school is part of a formal partnership, for example a Multi-Academy Trust, an initial conversation about how the support and challenge offer will be deployed is likely to take place with the accountable body in the first instance, rather than the individual school. In all cases, the existing arrangements that a school has in place will be considered carefully when determining how the support and challenge offer could be deployed.

The LA will classify all maintained special and mainstream schools using a traffic light approach to identify the degree of challenge and support the school will receive. The level will depend on the seriousness of concerns identified through a range of indicators and the capacity of the school to make rapid and sustained improvements. Green schools are those deemed to be 'self-improving' and having potential to share effective practice with others. Yellow schools are schools where there are a low level of concern and the leadership and management can demonstrate the capacity to swiftly bring about improvement. These will be given a 'light touch' approach to monitoring to ensure that progress is being maintained. Those schools where leadership and management has the capacity to improve but are considered to need additional support to ensure that pupils achieve closer to national averages, will be graded as amber. These schools will receive two visits each term in order to ensure they have the support needed to secure rapid improvement. Red schools are those where there are more significant concerns about the quality of provision for pupils. These schools will receive additional monitoring and support and may be the subject of more formal intervention.

Those schools who on first analysis are considered to be amber or red will have the opportunity to meet with an LA officer to discuss other indicators or evidence which will be helpful to form a more rounded picture of the school, its context and performance.

Classification	Criteria	Level of Support and Challenge
Green	Those schools which have no significant issues raised from the identification criteria (as in section 7), and could have effective practice that can be shared across the borough.	An annual visit informed by desktop monitoring of inspection indicators, including the Inspection Dashboard, attendance and exclusion data, and any other evidence including any relating to safeguarding. This will form the basis for a conversation with the headteacher and the Chair of the Governors to share the lines of enquiry and to inform the note of visit.
Yellow	Those schools where there is a low level of concern identified from the criteria in Section 7 above and it is considered that the school leadership has the capacity to make sustained improvements and ensure that pupil achievement is at least in line with national averages.	<p>Schools will receive 2 visits during the academic year. One in the autumn term and one later in the year in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the school’s improvement plan (Autumn). • Evaluate the impact of the school’s improvement plan. <p>In order to support these visits schools will be asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share their improvement plan including accurate and evaluative impact measures. • Provide a summary of impact in improving teaching and learning and pupil outcomes if requested by the LA Quality Assurance Lead.
Amber	Those schools where there are a number of concerns identified from the criteria (section 7), where leadership has the capacity to bring about improvements, but the LA identifies that the school needs enhanced support to ensure rapid and sustained improvement, and secure	<p>Schools will receive 2 visits per term consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly Monitoring and Support meeting chaired by the LA to support Improvement planning and review progress.

	achievement for pupils which is at least in line with national averages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An interim visit each term to review impact and progress alongside senior leaders and governors where appropriate.
Red	Those schools who are vulnerable or for which there has been a more serious cause for concern identified by either the LA, the Regional Schools' Commissioner or Ofsted. In these schools the LA may judge that the school has not made and sustained progress to secure good or better outcomes despite LA intervention. These schools could be subject to a formal warning notice issued by the LA or be judged by Ofsted to be less than good.	<p>Schools will receive three or more visits per term consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Termly Monitoring and Support meetings chaired by the LA to support and review progress. At least two interim visit per term to support school self-evaluation and improvement between the monitoring and Intervention meetings. These visits might include learning walks, book looks, data reviews conducted alongside senior leaders and governors where appropriate.
Academies	Special or mainstream schools who are accountable to the RSC office and not the Local Authority for their performance, although may have a role to play in borough wide school improvement.	An offer of an initial conversation with the CEO about how the trusts contribution to borough wide schools improvement, and the Local Authority offer could be deployed, followed by a visit to individual schools where appropriate. In all cases, the existing arrangements in place for school improvement will be considered when discussing how the support and challenge offer could be deployed.

Schools graded as Amber or Red may be asked to work with NLE, SLE or other local schools as appropriate and to enable the attendance of the headteacher or other leaders where requested and the chair of governors or their representative, at Monitoring and Support meetings.

Schools graded Amber or Red will also be asked to provide the following in order to support visits schools:

- A relevant Raising Attainment plan including accurate and evaluative impact measures.
- Evidence about progress for all children including vulnerable learners, and evidence of the steps being taken to address any underperformance.
- A robust monitoring cycle that is adhered to.
- A copy of current and relevant reports for monitoring and support meetings.

10. Monitoring and Support meetings

Following the discussion with school leaders about the level of classification, a programme for monitoring and support will be agreed. Meeting dates for the year will be scheduled in order to ensure that all relevant parties can attend, and that regular support and evaluation takes place.

Monitoring and support for Amber and Red Schools

Where the school has been classified as Amber or Red, the local authority will chair meetings that will focus upon the quality of:

- education
- behaviour and attitudes
- personal development
- leadership, management and safeguarding

These will be tailored to meet the circumstances of the school.

The following people should be in attendance for the relevant part of the meeting:

- Headteacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Middle leaders as appropriate, including Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).
- Chair of Governors or an appropriate representative of the Governing Board
- The school's attached Adviser.
- Services such as Human Resources, and Finance may be included as appropriate.

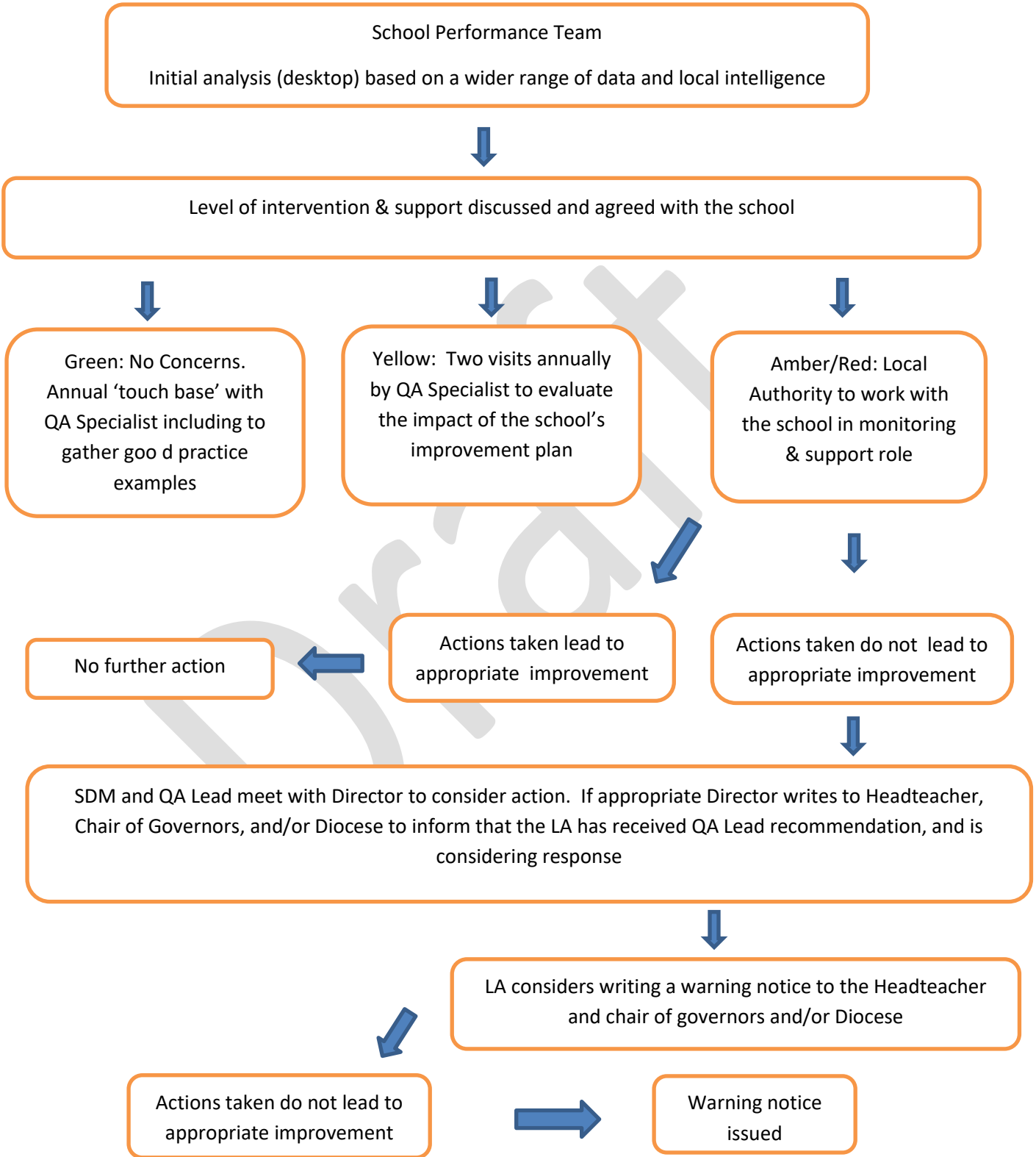
The Local Authority will circulate the agenda for the meeting two weeks prior to the meeting date. It will be helpful if the supporting paperwork is sent to the Local Authority Quality Assurance Lead seven days prior to the meeting taking place.

The minutes from the meeting will be distributed within a maximum of seven days by the Local Authority for the Headteacher to check for factual accuracy.

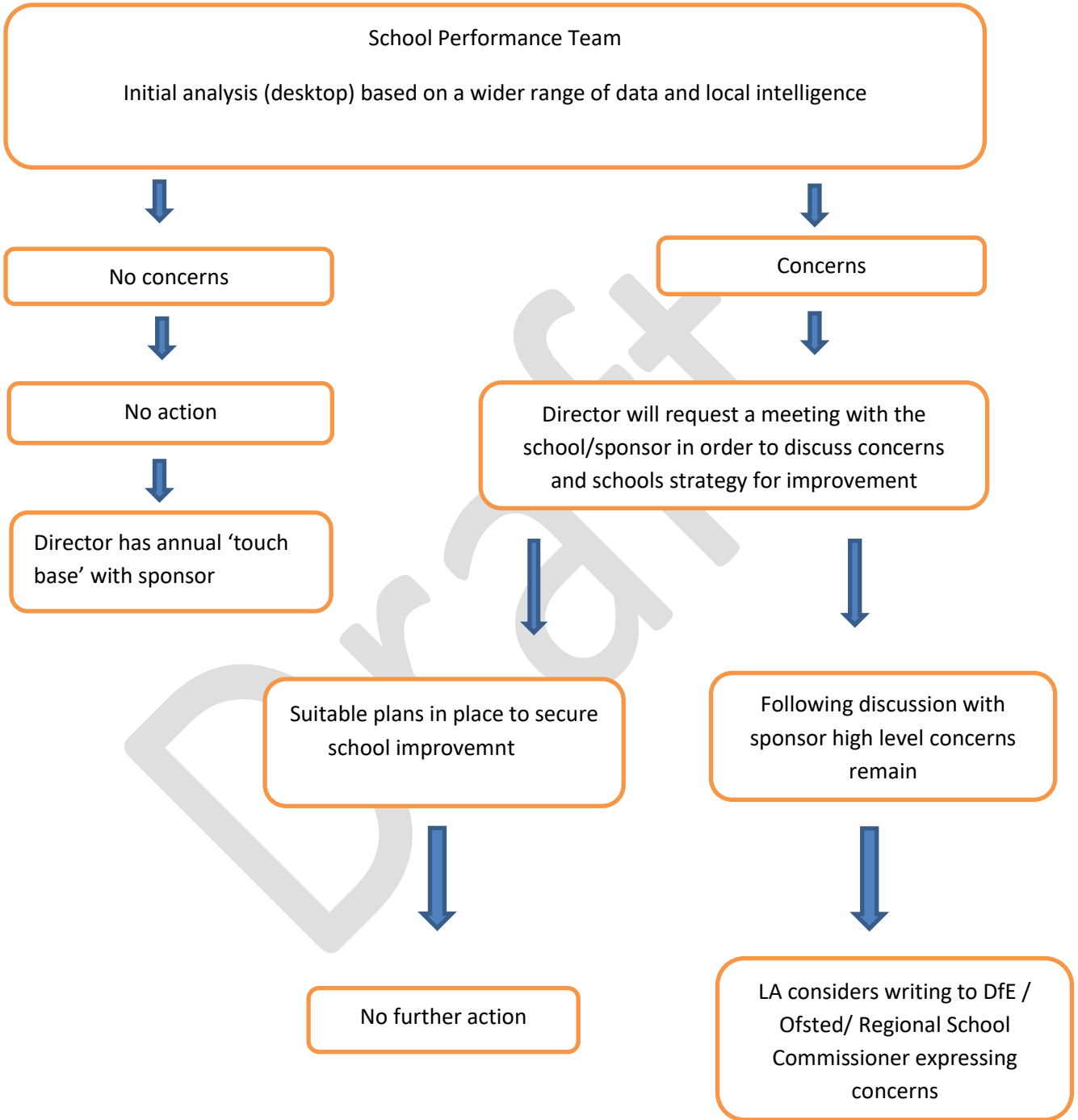
This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with stakeholders.

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Monitoring maintained special and maintained schools



Monitoring Academies and Free Schools, both special and mainstream



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