

Local authority categorisation 2016-17

1 Rationale

1.1 Staffordshire County Council (the LA) is committed to improving educational outcomes for all pupils here. At present, we retain the duty (under the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998) to ensure that all pupils in our area have the opportunity to attend schools that are good or better, and the LA has powers to intervene where we have concerns about standards in maintained schools (and liaise with the regional schools commissioner (RSC) where we have concerns about an academy school). This categorisation process sets out how, working together with all mainstream schools, we aim to identify, support and challenge schools about which we have concerns.

1.2 The categorisation of schools is a key element of the quality assurance process. The new DfE *schools of concern* guidance [here](#), which includes intervention powers in respect of 'coasting schools' (see the government's illustrative definition [here](#)) and gives new powers to RSCs, requires the LA to consider its process and criteria for categorisation.

1.3 At the same time, we recognise that, with the changes to end of key stage assessments, decisions cannot reliably be made until national comparisons are available. So we will maintain current school categories until the unvalidated RAISEonline reports containing the 2016 ks2 and 4 results have been released. This means that the primary phase categorisation will take place before the secondary phase.

1.4 During the interim period between the start of the new school year and the release of RAISEonline reports, a CMI will make contact with schools where there have been significant changes in performance, as identified in provisional data (which is available to the local authority prior to the publication of the unvalidated RAISEonline reports).

2 Categorisation process 2016-17

2.1 The new process will result in every school being placed in one of three categories:

- no concern;
- concern;
- high concern.

2.2 In making decisions about categorisation of a school, the LA will consider the performance indicators available. **Indicators may include the following, but are not a checklist.**

No concern:

- published achievement information over time is at least in line with national averages;
- the educational performance data of pupils with particular characteristics is at least in line with national averages;
- proven leadership capacity, including of governors, demonstrated by sustained high standards or a trajectory of rapid improvement;
- other data about the school such as changes in pupil cohort size, attendance and mobility of pupils provide no concern; and / or
- effective safeguarding procedures in place.



Concern:

- published achievement information over time is not consistently in line with or above the national average;
- meets the DfE criteria for a coasting school (This will be based on unvalidated data in the first instance but will be confirmed when validated data is published early in 2017);
- the education performance data of pupils with particular characteristics is inconsistent or below national averages;
- no proven leadership capacity, including that of governors, demonstrated by inconsistent outcomes; and
- other data about the school such as changes in pupil cohort size, attendance and mobility of pupils causes concern; and / or
- concerns about safeguarding procedures.

High concern:

- outcomes are below the floor standard (this will be based on unvalidated data in the first instance but will be confirmed when validated data is published early in 2017);
- meets the DfE criteria for a coasting school (this will be based on unvalidated data in the first instance but will be confirmed when validated data is published early in 2017);
- published achievement information over time is significantly below national average in one or more key aspects;
- education performance data of pupils with particular characteristics is below national average;
- lack of leadership capacity, including of governors, has resulted in decline in standards or a lack of improvement;
- other data about the school such as changes in pupil cohort size, attendance and mobility of pupils causes significant concern; and / or
- concerns about safeguarding procedures.

2.3 Categorisation will be reviewed on at least an annual basis, but the LA may review and amend a school's category at any point within the year, should additional information warrant this. The proposed actions for schools in each category are set out in annex 1.

3 Assessment of school safeguarding policies and procedures

3.1 The following intelligence will be used to assess the resilience of each school's policies and procedures:

- the self-evaluation audit (see [here](#) for information and advice about the survey and links to safeguarding advice and guidance documents) – we will use the most recent return, which should be submitted to the LA by 1 July 2016;
- the outcome of any investigation(s) following complaints to Ofsted about safeguarding issues at a school; and
- any concerns raised by Staffordshire CC officers – for example, social workers, education welfare officers and CMIs (which will be fully disclosed and discussed with the school's head teacher and safeguarding lead).

4 Schedule of work, autumn term 2016

4.1 The schedule of work is set out in the table in annex 2. The spring term schedule of work will be prepared and published during the autumn term. A similar pattern will be followed for the summer term.



Annex 1: CMI support for maintained schools - autumn term 2016

Category	LA: proposed action	School: proposed action
No concern	Participate in Ofsted Section 5 and section 8 inspections; Commission monitoring visits in a sample of schools and broker support where appropriate; Make recommendations for re-categorisation where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider entering formal arrangements to support other schools; - Be able to provide rigorous and reliable evidence to support its self-evaluation.
Concern	Participate in Ofsted Section 5 and section 8 inspections. Commission a monitoring visit. Commission and broker support where appropriate. Review outcome of monitoring visit and make recommendations for re-categorisation/ PRG escalation where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respond to any areas of concern identified in a monitoring visit and gather evidence to demonstrate improvement..
High concern	Participate in Ofsted Section 5 and section 8 inspections; Conduct/ commission a joint review ¹ identifying next steps; Commission and broker support where appropriate; Make recommendations for re-categorisation/PRG escalation; Where appropriate issue NoLAC ² or PSSWN ³ ; Where required replace GB with an IEB; Make recommendations to the DfE or RSC where relevant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce, deliver and evaluate rapid recovery plan in a timely manner. Timescales will differ dependent on the identified recommended next steps. - Explore structural options to improve leadership.

¹ CMI/ Entrust and school leaders gathering and analysing evidence together

² Notice of local authority concern (NoLAC) - issued as a pre-warning notice where a LA maintained school is not able to demonstrate progress against improvement priorities

³ Performance and standards safety warning notice (PSSWN) - statutory warning notice issued in accordance with the process described in the DfE *schools of concern* guidance (see para. 2.1)



Annex 2: autumn term, 2016: proposed schedule of work

Date	Activity
August 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collation of early data including SFRs for EYFS, KS1, KS2. - Collation of early KS4 returns from schools - Identification of those schools at risk of being below the KS2 attainment measure of the floor standard. - Begin to commission quality assurance visits to those schools where there has been significant changes in performance/ at risk of being below floor standards, as identified in early data releases
September 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commission and continue review cycle in schools previously categorised as D (high concern), those in an Ofsted inadequate category or where a Warning Notice has been issued. Consider the need for re-categorisation and/or escalation based on the outcome - Identification of those schools at risk of being below the KS4 floor standard - Commission quality assurance visits to those schools where there has been significant changes in performance/ at risk of being below floor standards, as identified in early data releases
October 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Categorisation of schools deemed primary with no end of KS2 outcomes (nursery, Infant and first schools) - Communication of category to nursery, infant and first schools. Commission quality assurance visits in those categorised as concern and commission/undertake a review for those categorised as high concern. - Commission cycle of sample quality assurance visits to those schools categorised as no concern - Identification of those schools at risk of meeting the DfE 'coasting' definition, as identified in provisional KS2 data - Begin to commission quality assurance visits to those schools at risk of meeting the DfE KS2 'coasting' definition - Continuation of commissioned review cycle in schools previously categorised as D (high concern), those in an Ofsted inadequate category or where a warning notice has been issued. Consider the need for re-categorisation and/or escalation based on the outcome
November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Categorisation of all schools deemed primary or secondary with end of KS2 outcomes (primary, junior and middle schools) based on publication of RAISEonline unvalidated data - Communication of category to primary, junior and middle schools. Commission quality assurance visits in those categorised as concern and commission/undertake a review for those categorised as high concern. - Identification of those schools at risk of meeting the DfE 'coasting' definition, as identified in provisional KS4 data - Continue cycle of commissioned sample quality assurance visits to those schools categorised as no concern - Continuation of commissioned review cycle in schools categorised as high concern and consider the need for re-categorisation and/or escalation based on the outcome
December 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Categorisation of all schools deemed secondary with end of KS4 outcomes (secondary & high schools) based on publication of RAISEonline unvalidated data - Prepare the communication of category to Secondary & High Schools. Commission quality assurance visits in those categorised as concern and commission a review for those categorised as high concern. - Prepare to publicise the LA category for each school via the County Council website ready for the Spring term. - Continue commissioned quality assurance visits and reviews and consider the need to re-categorise based on the outcome.

