PEOPLE (CHILDREN) SCRUTINY PANEL

16 August 2012

SUMMARY OUTCOMES FROM THE CORE GROUP

Report of the Strategic Director for People

STRATEGIC AIM:	Creating a Brighter Future for All

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides information on the Local Authority process for the monitoring of maintained schools in Rutland and provides a summary of the outcomes from the Core Group meetings held in July 2012.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Scrutiny Panel discusses and notes the content of this report.

3. THE ROLE OF CORE GROUP

3.1 Core Group is the Local Authority process which monitors and challenges Rutland maintained schools and this is integral to the LA's monitoring of school effectiveness and plays a key role in the implementation of the School Improvement Strategy.

3.2 The School Improvement Strategy aims to

    a)   provide a strategic direction to address underperformance in schools and to ensure the LA meets its statutory duties;

    b)   build on a shared approach to school improvement already in place;

    c)   provide clarification on the nature of support, monitoring, support and challenge provided by the Local Authority.

3.3 The Core Group process provides the Local Authority with the opportunity to challenge schools causing concern to make rapid improvement through a programme of intervention. In addition, any maintained school deemed to be unsatisfactory or issued with a notice to improve will be required to agree to and work to an LA Statement of Action.

The Local Authority meets in term 3 (January) and term 6 (July) of each academic year to discuss:

    a) The current performance of the School.

    b) Consider and support the future direction of the School.

c) The overall grading agreed prior to the meeting is used as a baseline for future support needs; this is aligned to Ofsted gradings. This covers Overall Effectiveness and Capacity to Improve. Both of these headings are aligned to Ofsted inspection criteria.

Overall Effectiveness – judgement on overall School effectiveness and includes effectiveness of provision and the School's main strengths and weaknesses.

Capacity to Improve – identifies the significant improvements that the School will need to make to increase its effectiveness. Using available evidence this grading will include evidence related to the following questions.

1) Has the School identified other and specific actions to address areas of concern?

2) Are those responsible for ensuring the actions clearly identified?

3) Does planning reflect timescales for improvements including key milestones?

4) Identification of resources to implement improvements?

5) Success criteria to be judged effectively and monitoring and evaluation are identified?

d) Consider the brokerage of support from within schools, clusters of schools and the Local Authority. The nature and level of support is differentiated in line with the "levels of support guidelines" (Appendix A).

3.4 Resources available include a full time primary schools officer post, school improvement adviser (part-time). Accurate data and analysis is available to provide good intelligence on progress of schools and effective processes are in place for the cycle of monitoring, evaluation support, challenge and intervention.

3.5 Membership of the Core group includes Strategic Director for People, Assistant Director, Head of Lifelong Learning, Team Manager Lifelong Learning, Primary Schools Officer, School Improvement Adviser, Headteacher and Chairs of Governors for individual schools.

3.6 An agenda (Appendix B) is sent out prior to the meeting alongside the final draft of the School Improvement Adviser report. Notes of the meeting are taken and a final report agreed by the School and the Local Authority.

4. CORE GROUP MEETING JULY 2012

4.1 16 maintained schools attended the meetings (15 maintained primary schools and 1 special school). Each school was graded and discussions took place which covered the following areas:
- Achievement and attainment
- Ofsted inspection outcomes

- Finances
- Federation development
- Move towards academy status
- Progress regarding vulnerable groups of children, e.g. looked after children
- Partnership working
- Pupil Place Planning
- School development and intervention
- Programme of LA support (if appropriate)

4.2 Outcomes
As a result of the Core Group meetings:

- 4 schools have in place joint LA/School strategy meetings requiring LA intervention.
- 2 schools identified requiring financial advice and support
- A number of schools demonstrating significant improvement from previous Core Group meeting and 1 school identified as not making sufficient progress.

4.3 As a result of the Core Group process the LA has instigated the following:
- Improving Schools Programme for identified schools.
- Leading teacher programme for identified schools development relating to achieving teaching schools status.
- Facilitated improved partnership working.
- Referrals to other RCC departments e.g. SEN, Property Services etc.
- Acknowledgement and collaborations related to individual schools.
- Additional information regarding school planning in terms of academy conversion, federation arrangements and succession planning.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	IMPACT	COMMENTS
Time	Medium	Current and future monitoring need to be sustained for maintained schools in Rutland in order for RCC to meet its statutory obligations
Viability	Medium	The Local Infrastructure for supporting, monitoring and challenging schools must be maintained and developed to ensure continued improvement in the maintained schools
Finance	Medium/ high	Sustained support is required which is budgeted for in this financial year. Changes to the school funding arrangements will impact on the sustainability of the LA school improvement service. Any withdrawal of funding is likely to affect the longer term outcomes of children and young people. Further information on this area is documented in the School Funding Reform Scrutiny paper dated 16 August 2012.
Profile	High	High achievement by learners is critical to their future. Maintaining and developing effective

		relationships with schools and colleges is essential and is high priority. In addition the government's drive to encourage schools to academy status is likely to of interest to the local community
Equality and Diversity	High	An EIA screening has been completed. The Local Authority will continue to work with all schools to promote a successful, inclusive, relevant and extended provision.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The revised core group process has been evaluated and feedback from all partners is that the process has been a positive experience. With the changing roles of schools and the Local authority, the opportunity to meet and discuss school development as identified in the report is of benefit to all parties. Whilst schools remain under Local Authority control the aim is to continue with the core group meeting process.

Background Papers
Education Act 2011

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A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.

Rutland County Council – Levels of Support Guidelines
It is intended that this is a flexible model which will mean that the level of support is genuinely negotiated at the Core Group meeting

Level of support	Key Triggers	Entitlement
Intensive support	A judgement that a school is in, or in danger of being placed in a Category by any of the following: • OfSTED • SIA report • L.A. Review	Bespoke, by agreement with individual schools.

High level support	• Participation in the Improving Schools' Programme (ISP)
	• Concerns over attainment and/or progress i.e.
	  ○ Below 65% in L4+ English <u>and</u> Maths
	  ○ More than one pupil below the national average of 2 levels' progress KS1 to KS2 in English <u>and</u> Maths
	  ○ More than one pupil below the national average in 2 levels' progress KS1 to KS2 in either English or Maths for more than one consecutive year
	• Other significant triggers (See below*)
	• A school may be in a 'Satisfactory' or 'Good' LA/OfSTED category to trigger this level of support, depending upon circumstance.
		Equivalent to 3 – 6 days, by agreement

Moderate level support	• Transition from ISP to lower level of LA support
	• Some concerns over attainment and/or progress, e.g.
	  ○ Below national average at end of KS1 or KS2 in reading, writing or maths at any level
	  ○ More than one pupil below national average in 2 levels' progress KS1 to KS2 in either English or Maths for that year
	• Other significant triggers (See below*)
	• A school may be in a 'Satisfactory' or 'Good' LA/OfSTED category to trigger this level of support, depending upon circumstance.
		Equivalent to 1– 2 days, by agreement

Light touch	• Outstanding OfSTED or SIA report or good with outstanding features. • No concerns over attainment and/or progress	No targeted support. Telephone support Access to LA training at same cost as for all LA schools.

*Other triggers which may cause concern:

1. Concerns over school leadership in any of the following:
   • OfSTED
   • SIA report
   • L.A. Review
2. Federation

3. Changes in Leadership
4. Falling roll
5. Uncertainty over the future of a school
6. Results of the 'School financial Value Standard' audit

Maintained Primary Schools Core Group Meeting
Wednesday 11th July 2012
and
Friday 13th July 2012

AGENDA

1. Welcome and introduction   CC

2. Brief description of core group process and expectations   SB

3. Acceptance of School Improvement Adviser report by the   All

    School and Local Authority

4. Overview of future development of school to include: Individual School

- Summary of progress   & LA Officers

- Key priorities for next Academic Year

5. School Improvement needs   SB/JH

    LA/School support (level of support guidelines)

6. Individual school additional items for discussion   School

7. Feedback following LA briefing (11th June '12)   All