



Rutland
County Council

Rutland Learning and Skills Strategy
2014-2016

Overview and Priorities

June 2014

Partnership and Collaboration: An Approach for Rutland

The Changing Landscape and the role of the Local Authority

Significant changes are currently taking place within the local and national educational landscape.

Government policy is introducing a range of developments including the delivery and entitlement to education at an increasingly early age, by 2015 extending the compulsory education or training age to 18 through Raising the Participation Age, the development of a wider range of delivery models including free schools, studio schools and academies, the creation of new freedoms and responsibilities for education providers and a significant revision of the curriculum and the examination and assessment model. Both national and local policies also stress the need to focus on vocational and work-related training during a time of economic difficulty and pressure.

It is clear that in Rutland education is in a state of transition. It is likely, for example, that all schools in Rutland will have become academies during the lifetime of this 2014-16 strategy. However, this Learning and Skills Strategy is designed to enable the demands of that transition to be met and to ensure that all partners maintain their focus on the key priorities for education. It is clear that we must work closely together and support one another as we move forward over the coming years.

There is no doubt that the role of the Local Authority has changed and will continue to change over the coming years. However, from the Education Act 1996 onwards the Local Authority has been bound by a wide range of legislation and guidance which clearly outlines its statutory responsibilities including those relating to education, safeguarding and health and well-being.

The Department for Education website currently lists 198 specific statutory duties relating to education involving the Local Authority and schools. In summary these are:

- The requirement to ensure there is sufficient educational provision and to plan for the future;
- The requirement to ensure that educational standards and outcomes are high and are met for all learners;
- The requirement to ensure that children, young people and all other learners are safeguarded and their well-being is promoted.

In May 2013 Ofsted published two further guidance documents which clarify the role of Local Authorities in terms of school improvement.

- The Framework for the Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for Supporting School Improvement (Ofsted 2014)
- Handbook for the Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for Supporting School Improvement (Ofsted 2014)

The Ofsted inspection of local authority arrangements framework states:

In order to make a judgement about the effectiveness of arrangements to support school improvement, Ofsted inspectors must take into account the following aspects:

- the effectiveness of corporate and strategic leadership of school improvement;
- the clarity and transparency of policy and strategy for supporting schools' and other providers' improvement, and how clearly the local authority has defined its monitoring, challenge, support and intervention roles;
- the extent to which the local authority knows schools and other providers, their performance and the standards they achieve and how effectively support is focused on areas of greatest need;
- the effectiveness of the local authority's identification of, and intervention in, underperforming schools, including the use of formal powers available to the local authority;
- the impact of local authority support and challenge over time and the rate at which schools and other providers are improving;
- the extent to which the local authority brokers support for schools and other providers;
- the effectiveness of strategies to support highly effective leadership and management in schools and other providers;
- support and challenge for school governance, where applicable;
- the way the local authority uses any available funding to effect improvement, including how it is focused on areas of greatest need.

Whilst these documents draw distinctions between academies and maintained schools in terms of the Local Authority's statutory powers of intervention, they clearly state the following:

...local authorities retain a legal responsibility for performance in the area as a whole, under the 1996 Education Act.¹ In addition, the Secretary of State has made clear the expectation for local authorities to act as strategic commissioners for all schools. Where the local authority has concerns about the performance of an academy, inspectors should explore whether the local authority has, within the confines of its responsibilities, taken reasonable steps to discuss this with the individual establishment, the executive leadership and governance of the chain, and/or the Department for Education, where appropriate.

It is already the case that Local Authority school improvement services in other parts of England have been inspected under this new framework and have been judged to be 'effective' or 'ineffective'.

Whilst it is essential that the Local Authority meets the requirements of the framework, it will aim to do so through locally developed approaches including partnership, collaboration and workable service level agreements which provide relevant and effective support. Collaboration will be considered in its widest sense and should incorporate, for example, Ofsted, school Trusts, Alliances and Chains, the National College, the Skills Funding Agency, employers and local Diocesan bodies.

Principles

We will work to the following principles which should underpin the Learning and Skills Strategy in Rutland:

- ✓ Everyone who works with children, young people and adults has the responsibility for supporting and ensuring their safety and their well-being;
- ✓ All children and young people in Rutland schools and settings deserve the best educational provision and that settings and schools have the primary responsibility for the performance of all learners in their care;
- ✓ The core purpose of the Learning and Skills Strategy is to establish a framework of support and improvement that maintains a focus on the raising of standards and narrowing of gaps in the attainment and achievement of children, young people and adults in Rutland;
- ✓ Settings, schools and colleges are accountable for their own improvement and should operate robust governance to achieve this accountability;
- ✓ Settings, schools and adult learning provision should be inclusive and collaborative and seek to personalise learning and provide engaging and enriching learning opportunities for all children, young people and adults;
- ✓ All children and young people should be educated within their own communities, unless there are compelling reasons to do otherwise;
- ✓ The Learning and Skills Strategy should effectively monitor all settings, schools, colleges and adult learning provision and offer appropriate challenge and support at all levels in these locations;
- ✓ A key responsibility of the Local Authority is to intervene where there is clear evidence of issues and causes of concern;
- ✓ The focus of intervention will be to assist the education providers own response in order to enable them to become effective again as quickly as possible;
- ✓ The Local Authority will contribute to the brokering of a wide range of support for all settings, schools, colleges and adult learning provision.

Partnership and Collaboration

Rutland County Council is passionate about the importance of learning, skills development and all forms of educational achievement for Rutland people and it will apply energy and commitment to this end working together with our partners to address the challenges ahead.

The Learning and Skills Strategy is designed to support and continuously improve the educational achievement across the County of Rutland whilst also understanding and supporting the strategic intentions of individual schools. The Rutland partnership approach is designed to avoid constraint or control and will seek to enable, facilitate and support different approaches to school leadership and school direction.

The Local Authority believes that all partners have a collective responsibility to meet the learning needs of every child and young person in their community. The Local Authority is committed therefore to the continued support of collaborative practice, working with all types of schools, local bodies and agencies and with school cluster structures that are already in place.

Monitoring and Improving Our Performance

Learning and Skills Performance Board

A key development within this strategy is the **Learning and Skills Performance Board** to be operated with partners to oversee the delivery and monitoring of agreed priorities within the Learning and Skills Strategy and supporting strategic plans.

An important feature of collaboration is sharing and assessing performance planning and outcomes. We need to understand the factors that lead to improvement and those that cause barriers. It is through the exchange of data, evidence, ideas and issues that improvement can be most effectively achieved. The Performance Board will regularly **monitor** the performance of all Settings, Schools and adult learning provision using a risk assessment approach which will be reported through a countywide **Performance Dashboard**. This monitoring process will also feed into the Scrutiny and Cabinet reporting processes within the Council.

The Local Authority, therefore, will expect the participation of all schools in contributing data and reports to the monitoring work of the Performance Board, including self-evaluation processes, collection and analysis of performance data and participation in local improvement projects, change programmes and education planning for the future.

To support these processes an agreed **Data Sharing Protocol** will offer a clear basis for transfer and use of data between the Local Authority, settings, schools and adult learning partners.

The Local Authority looks forward to working with all educational providers, including maintained schools, early years' settings, academies, free schools, colleges and adult learning providers over the coming years to continuously strengthen the educational provision and performance we offer. The Rutland Learning and Skills Strategy, crucially, represents the intention to deliver an overarching, all ages

approach which draws together the aspirations of the entire educational community in delivery of high quality education to Rutland children, young people and adults

Our Immediate Priorities

The **priorities in 2014-15** for the Learning and Skills Strategy are set out below and represent important building blocks for future development and will help to form an important focus and agenda for the Performance Board.

Learning and Skills Strategy Priorities for 2014-15			
Priority	Description	Timeline	Level
Strategy Launch	Launch and establish the Learning and Skills Strategy	July 2014	High
Monitoring Arrangements	The Learning and Skills Service will develop performance monitoring arrangements to oversee the delivery of agreed priorities within the Strategy.	July 2014	High
Communications	Develop effective communications with settings, schools and adult learning about improvement;	July 2014 and regularly thereafter	High
Agreement	To gain agreement from all partners to a collaborative approach and specific priorities.	By end July 2014	High
Self-Evaluation	Establish annual self-evaluation schedule and support arrangements and ensure these are effective for settings, schools and adult learning.	Commence in September 2014.	High
Schools Causing Concern	Implement the new monitoring system and focus on support and challenge to help raise educational achievement and attainment in settings and schools causing concern or in an Ofsted category.	July 2014	High
Adult Learning	Complete current restructure, procurement and service improvement processes.	May 2014 to August 2014. Improvement process is to December 2014.	High
Statutory Duties	Fulfil statutory duties around Assessment, Moderation, NQTs and Governance;	Ongoing	High
Safeguarding	Contribute to the process of achieving effective levels of safeguarding in settings, schools and adult learning provision.	Ongoing	High
Standards and Performance	Monitor pupil performance, progress and related educational standards across Rutland.	Quarterly meetings of Performance Board.	High

Narrow the Gap	Narrow the gap for underachieving and vulnerable groups.	Ongoing	High
Teaching and Learning	Support the continued development of the quality of Learning and Teaching in Rutland.	Ongoing	High
Professional Development	Work with individual schools or groups of schools to facilitate change via the use of relevant and value for money professional services.	Ongoing	High

Strategic Plans

Please refer to the **Strategic Plans** for Early Years, School Improvement and Adult Learning for information on implementation and management of services.