

# Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC)

## Strategic Framework for School Effectiveness 2024-2025

### 1. Purpose

The Strategic Framework for School Effectiveness sets out how Brighter Futures for Children, working on behalf of Reading Borough Council and in partnership with local schools, fulfils the local authority statutory duties regarding educational standards, maintaining a full overview of the effectiveness of all schools and local education provisions and acting as a champion for good educational outcomes for all Reading children and young people.

### 2. Statutory framework and context

2.1 National policy for school improvement has continued to change over the past six years. In May 2018, The Department for Education published 'Principles for a clear and simple accountability system'. These principles clarified the lines of accountability for schools as these had become more complicated following the increase in the number of single-academy and multi-academy trusts. The changes were implemented in 2019 and published in 'Schools causing concern - Guidance for local authorities and Regional Schools Commissioners.' The latest update of this guidance was published in January 2024 when new guidance came into force ([Schools causing concern \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)).

The January 2024 guidance introduced two changes:

- The guidance has been updated to reflect changes Ofsted has made to its inspection process in relation to a school judged Inadequate solely due to ineffective safeguarding. The updated text sets out that where a school is judged Inadequate for Leadership and Management, solely because of ineffective safeguarding (but judged Good or Outstanding in all other key areas), Ofsted will carry out a monitoring visit within 3 months of publication of the Inadequate judgement to determine whether improvements have been made. The monitoring visit will either confirm the school remains Inadequate or, if inspectors are satisfied that safeguarding is now effective and there has been no decline in the school's performance in other areas, regrade the school.
- How DfE Regions Group will use data in relation to schools causing concern, setting out what kinds of data Regional Groups take into account when making decisions regarding schools causing concern.

### 3. The principles underpinning this framework

3.1 School improvement is the responsibility of the school's governing / Trust boards and executive officers.

- 3.2 Keeping children and young people safe is the paramount responsibility of schools and settings.
- 3.3 Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council provides assurance to elected members on school effectiveness. It acts as a champion for children and young people and Reading citizens through the exercise of its statutory duties.
- 3.4 All schools have a duty to; assist in the identification of system wide strengths and barriers to improvement, engage in collective endeavours and secure resources to improve the effectiveness of the school system for the benefit of children and young people.
- 3.5 The Education Partnership Board, as representatives of the local education system, provides a mechanism for coordinating this school led improvement system and developing shared ownership for the educational outcomes achieved by the children and young people of Reading, particularly those that are vulnerable and more likely to underachieve.
- 3.6 Individual schools and settings support the Education Partnership Board through their active participation in school-to-school support, local forums, networks, strategy boards and through data sharing agreements that support the identification of system strengths and improvement priorities.
- 3.7 All work with schools and system leaders from Brighter Futures for Children will be provided within the architecture for professional practice which recognises that, everyone in the system wants the best outcomes for children and young people and that when support is necessary to preserve children and young people's interests. Officers should "work with" rather than "do to". This means officers should enable school leaders to make choices, work in collaboration, build trust, feel empowered and feel safe.
- 3.8 Schools facing challenging circumstances are expected to draw on their resources and the wider capacity and expertise of other Reading schools and local partnerships to secure school improvement.
- 3.9 Brighter Futures for Children encourages those responsible for governance and school leaders to declare any risks they identify to standards, operation, and staff wellbeing to the Director of Education at the earliest time to ensure that school leaders are not isolated in decision making and sourcing support and so that formal risk assessments can be undertaken by the LA.
- 3.10 All school effectiveness partners, school leaders and their governing boards are guided by the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

## **4. Local Authority roles and duties**

- 4.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty (Children and young people Act 2004, 2006) to:

- function as the champion for all children and young people and young people in the borough but especially those who are vulnerable, defined as children and young people who:
  - are looked after by the local authority and or have a social worker.
  - are experiencing economic disadvantage and or are entitled to pupil premium grant funding.
  - have additional special educational needs, differences, and disabilities.
  - are from a minority group that experiences institutional and societal discrimination.
  - is a survivor of trauma?
  - have physical or mental health conditions that regularly or severely impact their access to education.
  - are persistently absent from schools or settings, are on a reduced timetable and or do not have a school place.
- be responsible for maintaining an overview of the effectiveness of all schools including academies, free schools, local colleges, registered early years settings and registered training providers.
- exercise its education functions to promote high standards.
- Exercise its powers to intervene in schools causing concern (Schools Causing Concern 2022)
- Be responsible for the health and wellbeing of staff employed by RBC and BFFC. In locally maintained schools this includes school staff

4.2 The school effectiveness team’s role is to gain assurance from school leaders that they are having demonstrable impact in improving outcomes for children and young people against local improvement priorities and national benchmarks. It is for schools and settings to identify and implement the most effective approaches to achieve improvement and to proactively identify contextual barriers to improvement that are impacting school effectiveness.

4.3 Mechanisms for the discharge of these duties on behalf of Reading Borough Council are outlined below.

Statutory duty	How BFFC discharges statutory duties in Locally Maintained Schools	How BFFC discharges statutory duties in other schools
function as champions of high standards of education across schools and settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate the work of the Education Partnership Board</li> <li>• Develop, co-produce, implement and evaluate the educational vision and Strategy for Reading</li> <li>• Signpost advice and CPD opportunities based on research and best practice.</li> <li>• Promote, facilitate, and broker school-to-school support.</li> <li>• Provide and signpost information to support governors.</li> <li>• Identify improvement priorities based on intelligence about local educational performance to inform the work of system leaders.</li> <li>• Advocate for vulnerable children and young people and families in issues of equity and educational access</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate complaints on behalf of Ofsted, The DfE and EFSA as required.</li> <li>• Curate briefings for schools about national and local process and educational issues</li> <li>• Consult with regulatory bodies and the DfE to support local system excellence.</li> <li>• Work with partners to secure policy and resourcing that reduces inequality for children and young people and schools</li> </ul>				
<p><i>Understand the performance of schools and settings 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.</i></p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="579 595 1050 1417"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Desk top risk assessment standards</i></li> <li>• Schools to submit SEF, SDP, Governor vision and strategy by October half term annually.</li> <li>• Annual sample of HT report to governors and FGB minutes</li> <li>• <i>Bi-Annual assurance meeting with the Chair of Governors and Headteacher</i></li> <li>• <i>Curriculum reviews (minimum 1/year) * more assurance may be needed in schools with weaker outcomes or schools requiring support)</i></li> <li>• <i>Annual Safeguarding assurance audit</i></li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1050 595 1394 1417"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk top risk assessment standards</li> <li>• Annual assurance and standards meeting with CEO of MATs or converter Academy Chair of Trustees or Diocese Education Directors</li> <li>• Request for SEF, SDP, and example HT report to trustees</li> <li>• Annual assurance visits to schools with outcomes significantly below national benchmarks or where concerns are identified in respect of vulnerable children and young people or safeguarding.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="579 1417 1394 1525"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation of the Education Partnership Board to identify area strengths and weaknesses and broker school- to school support</li> </ul> </td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Desk top risk assessment standards</i></li> <li>• Schools to submit SEF, SDP, Governor vision and strategy by October half term annually.</li> <li>• Annual sample of HT report to governors and FGB minutes</li> <li>• <i>Bi-Annual assurance meeting with the Chair of Governors and Headteacher</i></li> <li>• <i>Curriculum reviews (minimum 1/year) * more assurance may be needed in schools with weaker outcomes or schools requiring support)</i></li> <li>• <i>Annual Safeguarding assurance audit</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk top risk assessment standards</li> <li>• Annual assurance and standards meeting with CEO of MATs or converter Academy Chair of Trustees or Diocese Education Directors</li> <li>• Request for SEF, SDP, and example HT report to trustees</li> <li>• Annual assurance visits to schools with outcomes significantly below national benchmarks or where concerns are identified in respect of vulnerable children and young people or safeguarding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation of the Education Partnership Board to identify area strengths and weaknesses and broker school- to school support</li> </ul>	
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<p>LAs work closely with the relevant Regional Director, diocese, and other local partners to ensure schools and settings receive the support they need to improve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Director forums with the Regional Director, Regional Ofsted team, DfE</li> <li>• Identification, networking, and signposting of local and national school improvement providers</li> <li>• Headteacher Wellbeing and resilience risk assessment and action plan reviewed annually to ensure identified risks are mitigated.</li> <li>• Offer of brokered support in relation to Headteacher performance management</li> </ul>				
<p>LAs encourage good and outstanding maintained schools to take responsibility for their improvement;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation of the Education Partnership Board to identify area strengths and weaknesses and broker school- to school support</li> </ul>				

<p>support other schools; enable other schools to access the support they need to improve</p>		
<p>Schools causing concern. Where underperformance has been identified in a maintained school, LAs proactively work with school leaders and where necessary the relevant Regional Director, combining local and regional expertise to ensure the right approach, including sending warning notices and using intervention powers where this is necessary to improve leadership and standards.</p> <p>Local authorities may give warning notices to their maintained schools where they have concerns about unacceptable educational performance, a breakdown in leadership and governance, or where the safety of children and young people or staff may be being threatened.</p> <p>Regional Directors may give a warning notice to any maintained school where they have concerns about a breakdown in leadership and governance, or where the safety of children and young people or staff may be being threatened.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Chair of Governors and Headteacher will be alerted at the earliest point where risks are identified.</li> <li>• The following steps will be taken incrementally where risks are identified.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Additional assurance meetings and curriculum reviews will be undertaken.</li> <li>2. Additional Meetings with the Head and Chair of Governors will be held to identify support needed to mitigate risks and identify improvement actions.</li> <li>3. Where improvements are not secured a Rapid Improvement Group meeting (RIG) will be convened to secure additional support and mitigate risks</li> <li>4. Where improvement is not secured within RIG timeframes a Warning Notice will be issued in liaison with the Regional Director</li> <li>5. Where a maintained school does not comply with a warning notice, it will become eligible for formal intervention by the Regional Director</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local authority has a statutory duty for the outcomes of all children and young people and a statutory responsibility to address serious safeguarding concerns directly.</li> <li>• The LA have powers to seek assurance and monitor actions to address concerns in all schools.</li> <li>• LA powers of intervention in respect to standards are restricted to the maintained sector.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. where risks are identified to pupil safety, an academy's standards, leadership or governance, the local authority will raise them directly with the Headteacher in the first instance.</li> <li>2. if assurance is not provided the Director of Education or their senior delegate will contact the CEO and or Chair of trustees and seek further assurance about the actions being taken to mitigate risks and the impact of such actions</li> <li>3. Where the LA have legitimated concerns about safeguarding and or staff/ Pupil safety and wellbeing assurance will include</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

		<p>visiting the school and observing children and staff in typical learning contexts</p> <p>4. Where concerns remain the Education Director will raise these with the Regional Director and or Ofsted</p>
<p>Locally Maintained Schools eligible for intervention</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has failed to comply with a warning notice; and/or</li> <li>2. Is judged inadequate by Ofsted; and/or</li> <li>3. Has met the definition of a school not making necessary improvements and the governing body has been notified by the Secretary of State that it has not</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a maintained school is the subject of an academy order made under section 4(A1) or (1)(b) of the Academies Act 2010, the governing body and the local authority will be under a duty to facilitate the maintained school’s conversion into an academy by taking all reasonable steps towards that end.</li> <li>• Where a locally maintained school is judged inadequate by Ofsted, the LA must produce by law a statement of action that sets out the action they propose to take, the period within which they propose to take it and the arrangements they propose to make for engaging with parents. This must be sent to Ofsted within ten working days of the school receiving the final graded inspection report. The statement will form part of the evidence base that will be considered by inspectors when monitoring, alongside any improvement plan prepared by the school.</li> </ul>	

4.4 it is important that schools are able to raise concerns regarding the delivery of support and challenge as set out in this framework. Any school wishing to complain about the implementation of this framework should do so following the BFFC complaints policy available at [Compliments and Complaints - Brighter Futures For Children](#)

## 5. Assessing School Effectiveness

5.1 School governing boards and their executive leaders are accountable for the standards and achievement in their schools as outlined by The Department for Education (DfE) in the statutory 'Schools causing concern' guidance. The role of local authorities is to seek assurance about school effectiveness on behalf of Reading residents and support and challenge school leaders to enable them to drive school improvement for the benefit of children and young people.

5.2 The overall effectiveness of Reading schools is measured by the extent to which leaders within those schools:

- construct, implement and achieve ambitious strategic school improvement objectives.
- Deliver ambitious academic and personal outcomes for all children and young people in line with or better than national benchmarks.

- Develop, implement, maintain, and evaluate a broad, high-quality curriculum that supports children and young people in their next phase of education or employment.
- secure institutional resilience and professional expertise
- secure inclusive cultures where all stakeholders thrive.
- Safeguard children and young people and staff
- Actively Reduce discrimination and educational inequity
- Manage resources efficiently and effectively for the benefit of children and young people.
- Ensure all statutory and regulatory conditions are met in accordance with DfE guidance and the Education Inspection Framework

## 6. Identifying priorities for improvement across the local system

6.1 Priorities for improvement are identified both at the individual school level and across the local education system through:

- analysis of educational performance, HR, and financial data
- intelligence from assurance visits to school across the academic year
- School self-evaluation
- consultation with partners and stakeholders
- Education research
- National policy changes
- Intelligence from the Regional Directors Office
- Annual wellbeing surveys
- Ofsted outcomes and report findings

6.2 Priorities for Improvement are summarised in the annual School Standards Report.

6.3 Priorities for improvement are agreed at the Education Partnership Board and form the basis of School-to school support activities and resourcing.

6.4 The impact of the Education Partnership Board will be measured by analysis in Trends in Education performance Data each year and reported in the Annual School Standards Report

## 7. Supporting Headteacher wellbeing and resilience

7.1 School leadership can be highly challenging, isolating, and stressful and there are multiple risk factors that impact on school leaders' wellbeing and resilience. This can be particularly true where the school has weaker outcomes, has disadvantaged and complex cohorts and or has specific contextual issues.

7.2 The local Authority has duties regarding health and safety as employer for staff working in locally maintained schools. Reading Borough Council is committed to Headteachers being entitled to good mental health and emotional wellbeing while undertaking their duties.

7.3 As part of the Strategic School Effectiveness Framework, a Borough-wide wellbeing survey and risk assessment will take place annually, in consultation with school leaders, to:

- monitor the wellbeing of school leaders;
- identify wellbeing priorities of school leaders;
- inform regular updates to local education priorities;
- inform the local wellbeing entitlement offer for school leaders.

7.4 Feedback from Head Teacher's performance management reviews and the results of the 2023 wellbeing survey have informed discussions on wellbeing priorities with Education Partnership Board, and school leaders through the Director of Education's termly meeting with Headteachers. Three priorities have been identified for 2024/2025 to improve school leader wellbeing:

- Development of coaching and mentoring support for school leaders;
- Support in addressing community and parental behaviours, and the establishment of Parent Carer and Community Acceptable Behaviour Policy Protection for all staff in educational settings (including social media).
- Support regarding the Ofsted inspection process.

7.5 Inspection can be an additional and acute source of stress and anxiety for school leaders and additional measures have been agreed with school leaders as a robust and proactive approach to identifying and mitigating risks relating to Ofsted inspection. This approach is outlined in the protocol for officers working with schools during inspection, included as an appendix to this policy.

7.6 The principle of the approach set out in the appendix includes a commitment to work with school leaders understand any concerns regarding an inspection and offer to undertake challenge on a school's behalf before, during and after inspection, based on a robust evidence base. This builds on current practice which supports schools to consider challenge themselves but does go further, in taking on responsibility for raising the challenge on behalf of schools

7.7 The wellbeing entitlement offer and support package was endorsed by the Education Partnership Board on 8 December 2023. This offer reconfirms to Reading school leaders the existing staff wellbeing offer which includes access to the Employee Assistance Programme and extends this entitlement offer to include coaching, mentoring or executive support. The wellbeing offer is included as an appendix to this policy.

7.8 Reading Borough Council School leaders at their termly meeting with the Director of Education on 12 January 2024 were consulted on a proposed Reading Borough – wide Parent Carer and Community Acceptable Behaviour approach which has been implemented in practice from 19th February 2024. These expectations are appended to this Framework and will complement a proposed Reading Borough Council Zero tolerance and prevention of abuse to staff policy, being considered for approval in 2024.



7.9 Risks can arise because of the School Effectiveness activities undertaken by officers, particularly where more support is needed and a RIG is established. The following mitigations are in place to reduce risks:

- Named link officer who gets to know the school well.
- Officers trained in Relational practice as outlined in BFFCs framework for professional practice.
- BFFC guidance for officers working with schools.
- Clear complaints and escalation routes shared with schools.
- All support and challenge activities involve school leaders and provide opportunities for them to share their views and comments.
- Notes of visit provide all recommendations in writing.
- Assessment of barriers and wellbeing risks as part of initial RIG meetings

## **8. Assessment and identification of schools requiring additional support**

8.1 The School effectiveness team use a range of evidence and their professional judgement to identify schools that need more support.

8.2 BFFC recognise that where standards need to improve, time may be needed to fully embed change and secure outcomes in-line with or better than national benchmarks. Schools may not be risk assessed as causing concern where outcomes are poor if improvement trends demonstrate a rapid and sustained upward trajectory.

8.3 BFFC recognise that some schools in Reading have significant contextual challenges with mobile populations, high proportions of children with SEND and children new to English language, which are significantly above national averages. We recognise that these contextual factors do impact attainment at the end of each key stage. Schools with significant contextual challenges can also have elevated safeguarding, attendance and SEND workload that places additional challenges on leader's time and school improvement focus. Recruitment and retention can also be more challenging in such schools. In these cases, a RIG may be established to coordinate support around the school, particularly where best practice approaches to curriculum are not yet embedded, however, where research informed approaches are consistently embedded, a RIG may not be the most effective process. Schools will be consulted about the process where this is the case.

8.3 Though not exhaustive or limiting, any of the following indicators could imply that school leaders are challenged in delivering on one or more of their strategic roles and that the school is causing concern. Where risks are identified, the process for schools causing concern in table 4.7 will be followed.

### **8.4 Risk indicators: Safeguarding**

- The schools safeguarding arrangements and culture are not compliant with statutory duties.

- There are concerns from multi-agency partners and or the community and or children and young people about practice in the school and there is sufficient evidence to suggest that these concerns have substance.
- Incidents of bullying and child-on-child abuse are evident and steps to prevent reoccurrence are ineffective.
- Appropriate risk assessments are not in place/ implemented and or risk mitigation is ineffective in preventing further harm.
- Statutory health and safety duties and systems are not compliant and or effective in keeping children and young people and adults safe.
- HR practices are not adequate and risk pupil safeguarding.
- Those responsible for governance do not fulfil their statutory duties in respect of safeguarding or have insufficient oversight.

#### **Mitigating factors when considering support**

- Issues relate to administrative errors/ omissions and can be resolved within a brief time.

#### **8.5 Risk indicators: vulnerable children and young people**

- Outcomes for Children and young people with educational vulnerabilities are weak in relation to the objectives in EHCPS and or in comparison to relevant benchmarks.
- Children and young people do not receive a high-quality education that is adapted to meet their needs, their curriculum is poorly conceived, sequenced and or implemented.
- Children and young people receive a narrowed curriculum and or are excluded from accessing opportunities enjoyed by their peers.
- Systems for identifying and assessing needs are not fit for purpose causing unnecessary delay in children and young people receiving support.
- Children and young people are disproportionately excluded and suspended to the extent that the school is a negative outlier in terms of national and local benchmarks- leadership actions have not reduced elevated levels of suspensions or exclusion for this group overtime.
- There is a lack of evidence about the reasonable adjustments made by the school or setting to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.
- Staff working with children with SEND have not received support, training and appropriate wellbeing to secure confidence and competence.
- School is an outlier for the number of complaints and concerns received about the support for vulnerable children and young people in its care.
- The school does not engage in multi-agency work to support and safeguard learners.
- Designated leads for safeguarding (DSL) and children and young people looked after (DLCLA), do not fulfil their statutory obligations and or do not receive the necessary support and training to conduct their duties effectively.
- Culture is not inclusive and discriminatory and ableist beliefs underpin policy and practice.
- There is sufficient evidence to suggest that parents/carers of children and young people with vulnerabilities are discouraged from applying for a school place and or attending school full time and or there is evidence that statutory admissions processes have not been followed.

- There is sufficient evidence to suggest that off-rolling and or sharp practices are used to discourage attendance and or move children out of a school.
- Significant numbers of children and young people report discriminatory practice that causes distress and or reduces access to learning opportunities enjoyed by peers.

### **Mitigating factors when considering support**

- Leaders can evidence that all national guidance regarding “best practice” is in place and implemented with fidelity.
- Over representation in negative outcomes including attendance, suspension, progress etc are declining rapidly.
- Determined actions to address issues are well planned and leaders can evidence the impact of actions to date in everyday provision.

### **8.6 Risk indicators- Leadership and management**

- Governors do not effectively set the school’s strategic direction and or their oversight of school effectiveness is weak.
- School improvement activities are ineffective in improving or securing strong outcomes for children and young people over time.
- Executive leaders are not supported, challenged, or held to account for school performance.
- Staffing structures, roles and responsibilities and schemes of delegation are poorly understood and are failing to deliver against strategic priorities.
- Senior leaders are unable to focus their attention on the education provided by the school due to excessive operational involvement and weak delegation.
- continuing professional development is not achieving a workforce that can deliver high-quality and effective teaching, as a result, coherence and consistency across the school are weak. Children and young people do not benefit from effective teaching and consistent expectations.
- A supportive working environment is not sustained because leaders do not take effective action to manage workload, wellbeing and provide support to all staff. As a result, the school is a significant outlier in data relating to staff absences, retention, grievances, complaints and or tribunals.
- leaders are unable to engage parents and their community thoughtfully and positively in a way that supports children and young peoples’ education. leaders are unable to draw boundaries and resist inappropriate attempts to influence what is taught and the day-to-day life of the school.
- leaders’ and managers’ ambitions do not include those who are harder to reach. This includes ensuring that practices such as ‘off-rolling’ do not take place and that the way the school uses the pupil premium is not founded on good evidence.
- There is poor fiscal management and oversight, which results in consistent over or underspending of the school's budget beyond or below agreed thresholds.
- There is evidence of serious and or repeated non-compliance with statutory requirements.
- There is high governor turnover or unexplained changes to the FGB constitution and or there is poor attendance, a lack of training and succession planning within the governing body.

- the governing body have an excessive involvement in the day-to-day running of the school.
- relationships between governors and the Headteacher/ leadership team are not effective and or appropriate and as a result, fail to secure school effectiveness and community confidence.
- Governors are unable to gain assurance from executive leaders and hold them to account because there are issues in the transparency, clarity, timeliness, and appropriateness of executive reporting.
- Governors are not sufficiently managing risks associated with headteacher performance, stakeholder relationships, strategic priorities, and school improvement plans.
- Leaders have not created an environment and or culture that focuses on children and young people and their best interests.
- People management systems and practices present a significant risk to the school's finances, function and or reputation.
- Leaders' behaviour does not reflect professional standards and or the Nolan Principles of Public Life
- There is evidence that leaders' actions negatively impact other schools and settings and or the local community and that they are unprepared to work towards mutually agreeable outcomes.
- The school or setting has been judged as less than good by Ofsted.

#### **Mitigating factors when considering support**

- Lack of impact is related to capacity in the senior team because of recruitment issues and all reasonable actions to recruit are in place.
- Behaviour and or performance of leaders is out of character, linked to unexpected life events and likely to improve where the right support is in place.
- Financial difficulties are a result of unforeseen events and are not related to mismanagement.
- Leaders have self-declared as needing support and are engaging with help.
- Ofsted outcomes are unfair / do not match LA evidence.

#### **8.7 Risk indicators: Quality of education**

- children and young people do not remember the content they have been taught and as a result, outcomes are below national averages as reflected in results from national tests and examinations and or qualifications obtained.
- Weak outcomes show little improvement overtime.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people are weak.
- Equalities objectives are not met over time.
- The school's curriculum is not coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge.
- The curriculum has been narrowed.

- The curriculum does not sufficiently meet the needs of children and young people with SEND or those in minority groups. Policy and curriculum may be discriminatory in that children and young people do not have equity in their educational access.
- Planning is weak because of teachers' knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach.
- Instruction is not consistently effective and ineffective in a significant minority of classrooms or in a way that presents additional barriers to learning for vulnerable children and young people including those with SEND.
- Teachers and leaders do not use assessment well. Leaders do not understand the limitations of assessment and or use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens on staff or children and young people and young people.
- Reading is not prioritised to allow children and young people to access the full curriculum offer.
- In Primary Schools and settings, younger children, and those at the initial stages of reading fail to gain the phonics knowledge and language comprehension necessary to read, and the skills to communicate, that gives them the foundations for future learning.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is inaccurate because of weak monitoring practices.
- Children and young people are not ready for the next stage of education, employment, or training because of curriculum planning.
- The personal development curriculum is under-developed and does not reflect national guidance or the specific contextual issues of the school. As a result, children and young people are intolerant, have a weak understanding of British Values and receive insufficient support to develop positive relationships with peers and staff.

#### **Mitigating factors when considering support**

- School has cohort complexity in more than one of the following areas, (population more than 6% above national averages)
  - SEND
  - Mobile pupils
  - children new to English language
  - Disadvantage
- Progress scores are broadly in line with national averages.
- School is implementing research informed approaches to curriculum quality.
- Behaviour and attendance are a strength.
- There is good evidence that intent and implementation are strong in practice.
- Staff instability is significant and disruptive despite leader's best efforts to support recruitment and retention.
- Community and parental confidence are strong.

#### **8.8 Risk Indicators: Behaviour and attendance**

- Behaviour and relationships policy, practice and culture fail to secure good order and discipline.
- The behaviour curriculum does not teach children the knowledge and skills they need to behave pro-socially and in line with community values and leaders' expectations.

- Children and young people struggle to actively participate and progress in learning because their experiences negatively impact their feelings of safety, confidence, self-regulation, trust in adults and relationships.
- Children and young people are exposed to discriminatory and or Sexually Harmful behaviours that are not appropriately addressed.
- There is evidence of off-rolling and or inadequate monitoring of alternative provision/part-time timetables.
- Rates of absence and persistent absence are significant outliers against national and local benchmarks and policy and practice do not reflect national and or local guidance.
- Children and young people are subject to elevated levels of physical interventions that are disproportionate, used to gain compliance and do not diminish in frequency over time.
- Accident and injuries relating to behaviour do not reduce over time.
- The school is a negative outlier in terms of exclusions and suspension data, and this does not reduce overtime.

#### **Mitigating factors when considering support**

- Best practice approaches are well implemented.
- The school is a specialist provider and or serves a community with high proportions of children with complex SEND. Though behaviour incidents occur they are very professionally managed.
- Weak attendance reflects that of all neighbouring schools and best practice guidance is well implemented and evidenced.

## **9 Rapid Improvement Group Meetings**

9.1 Rapid Improvement Group Meetings (RIG) aim to enable rapid improvement in locally maintained schools that have been identified to need more support. A RIG provides targeted challenge and support to remove any barriers to swift improvement, and support good outcomes for children. Meetings are not punitive; the intention will be to "do with" school leaders rather than to "do to " school leaders.

9.2 Risks, barriers and Improvement criteria will be identified and negotiated and agreed with the school's governors and Headteacher at an initial RIG meeting. A well-being risk assessment will also be discussed. Once improvement criteria are achieved and any risks mitigated, the RIG group will be disbanded.

9.3 At any stage, intervention may escalate to a warning notice if progress is not sufficient in securing improvement or because school effectiveness has declined.

9.4 A RIG should not be in place for more than three academic terms.

9.5 Headteachers and chairs of Governors are expected to.

- Engage with the process and attend all meetings.
- Prepare and send assurance documents as requested by agreed dates and times.

- Address actions arising as priorities.
- Inform the governing body about progress towards meeting agreed improvement criteria.
- Communicate any barriers to progressing actions and any wellbeing concerns at the earliest time to the Director of Education
- Work in good faith with local and regional partners to bring about school improvement.
- Engage with additional assurance and monitoring activities prescribed by the BfC school effectiveness team to evaluate progress against RIG objectives.

## 10 Warning notices

10.1 As set out in the statutory guidance regarding schools causing concern, Brighter Futures for Children is responsible for issuing warning notices to schools when concerns are judged as evidencing a severe enough concern. Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council are committed to doing everything we can to avoid needing to go down this route. When necessary, and after all alternative avenues have been explored, we will undertake action as set out in the Schools Causing Concern statutory guidance. These exceptional; circumstances will as set out in the national guidance be regarding:

- The standards of performance of children and young people and young people at the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so
- Or there has been a serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed which is prejudicing, or likely to prejudice, such standards of performance.
- Or The safety of children and young people and young people or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise)

## Appendices

### Appendix A: 2024-2025 wellbeing support offer for community school leaders

**Coaching and mentoring:** To enable Reading school leaders to be and feel effective and to enhance wellbeing, all Reading school leaders are entitled to a coaching and mentoring offer. Support is in the first instance agreed between the Governing Board and school leader. Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council will broker this support where requested on behalf of Governing Boards.

- Group Intentional Wellbeing Package
- Group Resilient Leadership Package
- 1:1 Coaching Package
- 1:1 Drop in Coaching

**Employee Assistance Programme** – round-the-clock access to free, impartial and completely confidential support and advice from trained therapists and legal experts. Includes independent advice, information and support through: 24hr/365 day phone service; 6 telephone counselling sessions for each issue each year; coverage for staff and their dependents (including up to 3 months after leaving the organisation); live chat; telephone debt counselling; monthly webinars; online wellbeing portal and mobile app and wellbeing tools

Reading community school leaders can also access the following entitlements:

- Season Ticket Loan – a loan to help with the cost of rail or bus journeys, to and from work
- Cycle salary sacrifice scheme
- Lease car salary sacrifice scheme allowing the lease of a brand new, greener car for three years. The monthly fee includes insurance, servicing and road tax
- Salary sacrifice scheme for Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) to help save for retirement
- Shopping vouchers and money off deals e.g. offers and discounts on days out, health clubs, holidays and breakdown cover
- Eye care – help towards an eye test and glasses
- Life Assurance – three times annual salary (for members of the LGPS)



## Appendix B: Parent Carer and Community Acceptable Behaviour – statement of expectations

Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council strongly believe that our community schools in Reading should be a welcoming and safe place for our children, staff, parents and visitors alike.

Schools have legal responsibilities for the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and staff, and a duty of care to all people who visit a school.

All adults who enter a school site at any time set examples of behaviour and conduct which influence children and young people, and we believe that they should therefore demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our pupils to do the same. Parents, carers and visitors must show respect to all other parents, carers, children, staff and visitors.

All members of staff have the right to work without fear of intimidation, violence and abuse and we expect parents, carers and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way at all times.

Adults who do not behave in an acceptable manner may be asked to leave the site and the Headteacher has the right to further restrict their access. The expectations of Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council in respect of the conduct of parents, carers and visitors to our school are set out below statement of expectations, which also outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable.

Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council will support schools in the consistent application of these expectations, including providing practical, legal or other support to schools as is necessary. Any Reading community school leader or Chair of Governors who requires support regarding these expectations should contact their School Effectiveness lead professional.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are as follows:

- Shouting at members of staff, either in person or over the telephone;
- Use of offensive language towards other adults, staff or children;
- Physically intimidating members of staff and/or other parents or pupils;
- Approaching someone else's child in order to question or chastise them;
- Physical abuse, threatening, oppressive or aggressive behaviour;
- Using aggressive hand gestures;
- Swearing;
- Pushing;
- Hitting, eg slapping, punching, kicking or poking;
- Breaching the school's security procedures;
- Refusal to leave the school site when asked to;
- Attempting to gain entry to any part of the school in disregard of procedure or without permission;
- Entering the school site under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Smoking/vaping/using drugs whilst on school property;

- Bringing alcohol onto school premises or excessive consumption of alcohol at school events;
- Bringing dogs, with the exception of Assistance Dogs, on to the school site without the explicit permission of the Headteacher;
- Damaging or destroying school property;
- Displaying any signs and/or handing out notices or messages which could cause unreasonable upset and/or harm to any member of staff, governor, parent or child.

The above list shows examples of unacceptable behaviour, however, this is not exhaustive. Should any of the above occur on school premises, or any other behaviour which is considered unacceptable, including inappropriate behaviour online (see below under Social Media), the school may feel it is necessary to take action by contacting Brighter Futures for Children or the appropriate authorities or considering restricting the offending adult from entering the school premises.

School-related issues which parents or carers may have concerning the school, pupils or their families must be brought to the attention of a member of staff. Parents or carers must not try to resolve any issues themselves by direct action. If issues cannot be successfully resolved by speaking to a staff member, the correct course of action is for parents and carers to use the school's Complaints Procedure.

We expect all communication between parents and the school to be conducted in a polite and respectful manner. Communication may be similarly restricted if it becomes unacceptable, for example, abusive, persistent or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication.

## **Social Media**

On occasions some parents are tempted to make comments about the school, school staff, other parents and/or pupils on social media. Social media is not the forum for raising concerns or complaints about the school. If parents have a concern about the school, they can raise their concern directly with the Headteacher and complaints can be raised through the school's Complaints Procedure.

Parents and carers should take care when posting messages on social media. Parents are expected to treat everyone with respect and professionalism – even on social media - and adults should set a good example to their children and other pupils, and not use social media to criticise the school or its staff or pupils or make inappropriate comments.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a pupil is found to be posting inappropriate comments on social media, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the social media site and consideration will be given to taking further action. Making potentially defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about others on social media could have legal implications. In addition, threats of violence can lead to a criminal action. The school will also expect any pupil or parent/carer to remove such inappropriate comments immediately.

## Legal framework

Under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 it is an offence for any person to be on school premises to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance. It provides the right to remove and prosecute any person who is believed to have committed an offence.

Whilst a parent or carer of a child attending the school normally has implied permission to be on the school premises at certain times and for certain purposes, this permission may be withdrawn if the parent or carer exhibits behaviour which the Headteacher believes is unreasonable. This also applies to all other individuals invited into the school for other reasons.

In the event of any parent/carer/visitor breaching this Policy then proportionate action will be taken, for example:

- Parents, carers or other visitors exhibiting unacceptable behaviour could have their access restricted which prevents access to the school premises.
- Anyone who has had their access restricted and then ignores the restriction and enters the school site may be removed from the school site and prosecuted, if it is believed they have committed an offence.

The Governing Body, in conjunction with the Headteacher and Brighter Futures for Children will take the lead in authorising the removal of a person believed to be causing a nuisance or disturbance, and, if necessary, will bring legal proceedings against them.

In cases where the unacceptable behaviour is considered to be a serious and potentially criminal matter, the concerns will in the first instance be referred to the Police. This will include any or all cases of threats of violence, and actual violence, to any child, staff, visitor, contractor or Governor of the school. This will include anything which could be seen as a sign of harassment of any member of the school community, such as any form of insulting social media post or any form of social media cyberbullying

## Appendix C: Operational procedure for Inspections for Headteachers

### Prior to Inspection notification

Brighter Futures for Children on behalf of Reading Borough Council undertake a dynamic risk assessment with school leaders to identify risks and mitigation to support school leaders prepare for inspection

### Inspection notification

- ✓ Headteacher contacts Officer to advise of the inspection.
- ✓ **ACTION:** Contact the Director of Education BfC to ensure they are aware.
- ✓ **ACTION:** Ask Headteacher to contact at their convenience to discuss plans for the inspection.
- ✓ **KEY QUESTION:** Is there any reason you feel a deferral should be considered?
- ✓ **KEY QUESTION:** What is the best time to contact you to check on your welfare on day one of the inspection?
- ✓ **ACTION:** make Headteacher aware that the Director of Education BfC is responsible for Headteacher wellbeing in locally maintained schools.
- ✓ **ACTION:** Update the Director of Education BfC via email if any reason for deferral has been shared and to report that no reason has been shared.
- ✓ **ACTION:** Identify senior officer to accompany you to meeting with inspector. This could include ELT officer outside the School Effectiveness team where effectiveness officers are not available.
- ✓ **ACTION:** if the school is small (less than 150 pupils) inspection processes such as deep dives can be difficult to manage as teaching staff and leaders may have multiple roles and large teaching commitments. Discuss with leaders any practical on-site support that is needed during the inspection to enable the inspection to run smoothly.

This could include support from collaborator schools (for example where a subject leader in a partner school has led development of curriculum planning and frequently supports implementation and review alongside leaders in the school being inspected or officer support with administration, scheduling, providing cover for leaders to leave class where supply is not available or other reasonable activities. Officers must be clear on the justification for on-site support and must not hinder inspection activities.

### First day of Inspection

- ✓ **ACTION:** send “good wishes” message with reminder to call at any time if more help is needed- include contact number if not already shared with Headteacher.
  - ✓ **ACTION:** contact Headteacher at agreed time to check on leadership wellbeing through the questions below.
  - ✓ **KEY QUESTION:**
1. Have you or your team manifested any physical signs of distress during this inspection, for example nausea, crying, elevated heart rate, confusion, panic etc.

2. Have you or your team experienced behaviours from inspectors that have caused you concern?
  3. What has the impact of these behaviours been on you or staff?
  4. Do you feel you have the capacity and resources to support your/ staff emotional regulation currently?
  5. Is there anything else you need the LA to know in terms of risk assessment?
  6. In your view is more support needed at this point to ensure this inspection continues safely and fairly?
- ✓ **ACTION:** officers should record all answers and send to the Director of Education BFFC via email – they will advise on next steps which may include further risk assessment.
  - ✓ **ACTION:** Check in at end of day via text/ email to ask if there is anything you need to know before meeting with inspectors on the following day.
  - ✓ **ACTION:** Officers should prepare notes in advance of the day two discussion with inspectors regarding strengths and areas for development – these should be in line with previous NOV's and discussions with school leaders.

## Second day of inspection

- ✓ **ACTION:** Where possible, officers should check in with senior staff, if they are available prior to meeting with Inspectors, to check if anything has changed since day one. If any signs of distress are observed Officers should ask questions 1-6 and contact the Director of Education BFFC for further advice.
- ✓ **ACTION:** Officers should attend all meetings with inspectors in person wherever possible and in pairs. Where inspectors indicate concerns, these should be recorded, and responses recorded. Officers should state clearly if their evidence about the school is at odds with inspection findings.
- ✓ **ACTION:** officers will not share notes of visit with Inspectors unless the inspector explicitly requests these. (BFFC are obliged to share information in line with Ofsted's code of conduct for partners)
- ✓ **ACTION:** Officers should raise with Ofsted any behaviours that have been raised by staff or that they have observed, that cause them concern, including behaviours toward officers. These should be recorded and communicated to The Director of Education BFFC without delay.
- ✓ **KEY QUESTION:** Are you aware of any staff that have shown signs of distress during this inspection?
- ✓ **ACTION:** any issues raised by Ofsted should be recorded, read back to inspectors, and sent to The Director of Education BFFC without delay.

## Final feedback

- ✓ **ACTION:** Officers should arrive in good time for meetings and where possible check in with School leaders and other staff to check for signs of distress. Officers should make every attempt to speak privately with school leaders before the formal feedback meeting.
- ✓ **KEY QUESTION:**
  1. Have you or your team experienced behaviours from inspectors that have caused you concern?
  2. Do you believe the inspection has been conducted fairly with professionalism, courtesy, empathy, and respect?
- ✓ **ACTION** Officers should keep notes during the feedback meeting, noting the key messages, any points of challenge or disagreement and any conduct issues raised.
- ✓ **ACTION** Officers should raise at the end of feedback any issues that have been reported, observed, or noted and follow up with school leaders the next day to support them to submit concerns in writing to Ofsted via the complaints process.

## Discussions with inspectors

- Officers must behave in accordance with BFFC company values, guidance for Officers providing advice to schools/settings and the Nolan Principles of Public life.
- Officers should be aware of the Ofsted code of conduct including sections on expectations of partners. [Ofsted code of conduct - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- Officers must approach discussions with integrity and with the best interests of children and young people first in their mind.
- They should be, transparent and honest about the questions they are asked. This includes providing access to evidence in documentation that will enable the inspector to report honestly, fairly, and reliably about the setting.
- It means not withholding or concealing evidence, or providing false, misleading, inaccurate, or incomplete information.
- Officers should always communicate school strengths to inspectors.
- Officers may communicate the next steps they have discussed with the school, if asked to do so directly by inspectors.
- Officer views regarding school strengths and next steps should reflect the views shared in written communications with school leaders.
- Officers may confirm or counter, issues raised directly by inspectors, in line with evidence outlined in notes of visit and desk top analysis of school effectiveness.
- Officers should not use judgement language such as “good” or “requires improvement” in discussions with inspectors.
- Officers should not comment on local policy, procedure, or events in other schools- this is a matter for the Director of Education.
- Officers should not agree to, or instigate, “off record” comments or conversations with inspectors. Requests for such conversations must be reported to the Director of Education BFFC and reported to Ofsted as a complaint.
- If inspectors indicate they have serious concerns, officers should ask if the school have been made aware. They should confirm if the school have been asked to provide additional evidence for inspectors. Wherever possible, officers should offer support to leaders in producing additional evidence.

- If officers are uncomfortable with the behaviour of Inspectors, they should respectfully raise their concern and report this to the Director of Education at BfC without delay. This includes instances where officers feel the behaviour of inspectors towards them has fallen short of Ofsted's code of conduct.

## Following inspection

- Brighter Futures for Children, on behalf of Reading Borough Council, will offer to challenge an Ofsted inspection during, and after an inspection, where there is an evidence base that the judgement or process of inspection is not fair and balanced, rather than solely on the published Education Inspection Framework criteria.
- Brighter Futures for Children will engage with the school leadership team and Governing Board, offering professional and legal advice as to the options regarding any challenge process the school may wish to make themselves.
- Brighter Futures for Children, on behalf of Reading Borough Council, will offer to collate feedback from school staff on inspection conduct to evaluate with Ofsted Code of Conduct on a school's behalf, and will provide tools and resources for schools to collate feedback for themselves.
- Following an inspection, dynamic risk assessment will continue in line with Reading Borough Council HR policy.