



Caversham Independent Learning Review Action Plan

SUMMARY

Reading Borough Council
response to the Independent
Learning Review

OWNER

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VERSION or DRAFT

V1.0

DATE

6 June 2024

REVIEW

October 2024

Learning Review action plan

The RAG rating is done considering progress of process and impact.

The plan uses a RAG-rating system

For process

- Blank – not yet started
- **Blue** – completed
- **Green** – on target
- **Amber** – emerging possibility that action will not be completed on time, attention needed
- **Red** – highly likely action will not be completed on time, urgent action needed

For impact – this is considered in relation to children, practice and staffing dependent on the element

- Blank – not yet started
- **Blue** – strong and consistent evidence
- **Green** – good evidence
- **Amber** – limited evidence
- **Red** – no evidence

	Action	Teams/ Services to be involved	Target completion date	RAG rating Process	RAG rating Impact	Additional comments
1	When Brighter Futures for Children carry out the safeguarding review they should evaluate whether safeguarding roles are sufficiently distributed and whether the school would benefit from an additional headteacher or governor from another school to act as a consistent source of peer challenge and support.					
	Questions regarding distribution of safeguarding roles are written into the safeguarding audit form and are part of the standard process from Summer Term.	DoE	June 2024 Completed			Outputs from safeguarding reviews being analysed to consider whether options to create additional capacity in schools are needed to ensure sufficient distribution (particularly smaller schools - may need investment/Schools Forum consideration)
2.	Reading Borough Council, in conjunction with Brighter Futures for Children, should develop a Children's Services Department critical incident policy; to encompass all schools including academies and the independent sector, because when a critical incident occurs it is the local authority that parents and the community look towards. At minimum this should include a scheme of delegation on decision making; provision to support staff during and after the critical incident; provision to support affected parties (e.g. family) outside the line management of the critical incident and a clear debriefing process for all concerned.					
	Children's Services Department critical incident policy developed	AD HR and OD	End June 2024 In progress			
	Children's Services Department critical incident policy presented to Personnel Committee for approval 11 July 2024	AD HR and OD	July 2024 In progress			
	Children's Services Department critical incident policy shared with BfFC children's services and all schools for implementation for academic year 24/25	DoE	September 2024			

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3.	Reading Borough Council and Brighter Futures for Children should work with Schools Forum to ensure that the school effectiveness team has additional capacity to carry out the work that is expected of it.					
	Benchmarking of other LA capacity to inform business case to Schools Forum. Reasonable working hours check used to review capacity and sufficiency of any proposed increase.	DoE	June 30 In Progress			
	Proposal to schools Forum for additional resource	DoE	July 31 In Progress			Proposals for additional resource being developed on the basis of redistributing resources from elsewhere – informed by a line by line DSG review
4.	Reading Borough Council should make strong representations to Ofsted’s Big Listen.					
	Submission made by EDCS on behalf of Reading Borough Council in timeframe and as part of Big Listen	EDCS/DoE	31 May Completed			Submission positively received by school leaders. EDCS has extended an offer to Ofsted to meet to share further detail on ideas for improvements, with local school leaders.
5.	Reading Borough Council should also take the opportunity to make strong representations to the Department for Education on the role of inspection in raising standards.					
	Submission to be made by EDCS end July 2024 to inform new HM Government position	EDCS/DoE	31 July In progress			Proposed submission positively received by school leaders.
6.	Reading Borough Council should also request that the DfE clarifies the role of the local authority as an employer of staff in maintained schools and the relative roles of governors and headteachers in fulfilling their employment duties. The council should also reiterate the need for a national recruitment drive for					

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	governors. That recruitment drive should go hand in hand in hand with a review of the role of governors in schools; the expectations, training, induction, support and responsibilities that they hold.					
	Submission to be made by EDCS end July 2024 to inform new HM Government position	EDCS/DoE	31 July In progress			
7.	Reading Borough Council should revise and republish its HR guidance and its Health and Safety guidance to schools on an annual basis and with explicit reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education. Both sets of guidance should be specifically written for a schools' audience and not generic. This republication should be followed up with an annual engagement between named HR and Health and Safety officers and the school. The documents should be published in a way which is easily accessible to both governors and school staff.					
	Reading Borough Council Schools HR team presenting HR guidance to all schools annually and as and when required eg in response to new requirements/legislation through HT in person briefing; commencing at HT briefing autumn term 2024 Documents to be published on the School Pages of the Intranet, accessible to BMs and HTs	AD HR and OD	October 2024 In progress			
8.	Reading Borough Council should re-publish guidance on overseas checks annually and bring those into the school's annual conversation with the HR link officer as above. There is also an opportunity to bring school business managers together in a similar way to which headteachers have been, in order to help communicate and promote clarity in the council's HR guidance.					
	Overseas checks guidance shared with all schools in summer term 2024	AD HR and OD	July 2024 In progress			
	As part of RBC Schools HR team presenting HR guidance to all schools annually at HT briefing, overseas checks guidance to be shared	AD HR and OD	October 2024 In progress			

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	Annual Business Manager HR session to be hosted by RBC Schools HR team	AD HR and OD	October 2024 In progress			
9.	Brighter Futures for Children should continue to work with headteachers to implement the recently introduced 'real time' feedback loop for schools that are being inspected in order to identify any necessary further issues in inspections as they arise. This should form part of the quarterly conversation between the Local Authority and Ofsted.					
	Real time feedback being reviewed at and after Ofsted inspection from February 2024. Review policy effectiveness with schools as part of the annual review of school effectiveness framework	DoE	July 30 In Progress			Feedback review is informing support for schools and the school effectiveness framework review annually
	Ofsted termly conversations to include a formal feedback update from summer term meeting	DoE	July 30 In Progress			
10.	Brighter Futures for Children should continue, via their safeguarding review, to encourage each school to have the right staff accessing recording systems such as CPOMs. Similarly, in its work preparing schools for inspections it should ensure that schools are clear about the advantages of having more than one senior leader in Ofsted meetings unless specifically directed otherwise by Ofsted.					
	Record system access review is written into safeguarding audit as of 31 May 2024	DoE	May 31 Completed			From September 2024 this will be reviewed with schools annually
11.	The council should commission further training on identifying and constructively responding to stress amongst its senior leaders – specifically including (but not limited to) its school leaders.					

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	Developing options for suicide prevention and stress for leaders in managers in RBC and BfFC for CMT and Board consideration Implement preferred options	AD HR and OD AD HR and OD	End July 2024 October 2025			
12.	Subsequent to that training, the local authority should review its current system for providing mental health support to its employees (including schools). Although its Employee Assistance Programme is entirely in keeping with other local authorities, there is an opportunity to set an example on the quality and range of support available. We cannot determine the content of this at this stage but it should draw upon the experiences of senior leaders, including headteachers, who participate in the above training.					
	Review annual staff survey responses to inform review of options Review current system for providing mental health support	AD HR and OD AD HR and OD	October 2024 January 2025			RBC staff survey closing date end July Review to follow completion of senior leader training and to be informed by results of annual staff survey and school leaders wellbeing survey
13.	Where a Rapid Improvement Group needs to be convened the local authority should provide clarity to participants and give explicit consideration to ensuring a broad membership that might include other senior leaders within the school (or indeed external to the school) to help spread the burden of improvement activity.					
	Written into school effectiveness framework for September 2024 and circulated summer 2024	DoE	June 30 Completed			
14.	Finally, it is clear that several individuals have been and continue to be deeply affected by Ruth's sad death. At some point in the future there may be a potential opportunity for some of those deeply affected individuals to meet to share their feelings and experiences in a restorative manner. Any such meetings should be professionally overseen and facilitated. Nobody should be asked to attend against their will (in accordance with restorative principles). We recommend that					

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	Reading Borough Council should broker and facilitate the process should the affected parties wish to meet and agree to do so. The potential to help people understand and even partially heal their trauma is important. However, we cannot determine that this happens but our recommendation is intended to open the door to the possibility of such a resolution, if not now then at some point in the future.					
	EDCS confirmed as nominated Reading Borough Council lead	EDCS				