

Good to Great Schools Policy

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Section 1: Our approach to school evaluation and improvement

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 Hackney Learning Trust (HLT) is committed to lifelong learning and to supporting schools in establishing and sustaining high-quality inclusive education and good achievement for all.
- 1.1.2 We believe that both HLT and school staff should share a commitment to seeking continuous improvement. We have very high expectations that all members of this community will contribute to the shared vision that all children can achieve to a very high standard regardless of background or circumstance. Underpinning this is our refusal to accept that children should receive anything less than excellent provision.
- 1.1.3 We recognise that the responsibility for school improvement rests with schools themselves. HLT's role is to provide support and challenge for schools, operating on the general principle of "intervention in inverse proportion to success". Rigorous self-evaluation at all levels ensures that any weaknesses are rapidly identified and proactive systems and procedures to ensure that outcomes in achievement and well-being rapidly improve.
- 1.1.4 HLT supports the Government's vision of creating a world-class school system in which every parent has access to a good school and all pupils receive consistently good or better educational provision. The central aims are to raise standards for all children, while narrowing the gap between the attainment of the most and least advantaged.
- 1.1.5 The key elements of this policy are:
- the active promotion of regular, rigorous school self-evaluation that is accurate in its conclusions and which leads to clear and cohesive improvement planning;
 - evaluation and review that draw on shared criteria, based on the current Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and by which schools could be externally evaluated;
 - an open reporting framework and procedures that support dialogue and inform a shared agenda concerning educational provision that is constantly good or better;
 - effective use of performance data and early intervention with appropriate planning, prioritisation and identification of actions; and
 - celebrating and sharing good practice.
- 1.1.6 HLT's view of school self-evaluation is that it:
- is not a single or 'snap-shot' event, but a continuous and informed process;
 - should always be focussed on the impact of actions on pupil achievement and well-being
 - should be comparative, self-challenging and based on agreed criteria;
 - should be honest and acknowledge where provision is not of the highest quality; and
 - be firmly embedded in improvement planning, always leading to concerted and well-timed action.

1.2 Context

1.2.1 There has been significant investment with regard to school improvement services and intervention strategies. We believe strongly that schools should be autonomous and self-improving and hold full ownership of their own development strategies. The policy is intended to provide transparency around allocation of support, the principles and expectations.

1.3 School Improvement Partners (SIPs), Leadership, and Management Advisers (LaMAs) and the School Improvement Team

1.3.1 Every school will have an allocated School Improvement Partner, SIP, working to a programme of two core visits that facilitate professional dialogue based on self-evaluation, priorities for development and support.

1.3.2 The SIP will provide professional advice, support and challenge. Where necessary, he or she will broker additional help.

1.3.3 In schools requiring intensive or enhanced additional support the SIP will also act as the Leadership and Management Advisor (LaMA), and will coordinate and deliver support and assist senior managers and governors in ensuring that the school to improves.

1.3.4 The Assistant Director for School Standards and Improvement will co-ordinate the work of other services where the enhanced (focussed) support is focused on an area which sits in other services (e.g. premises, finance, governance).

Fig.1: key functions of SIP (see 2.3.3)

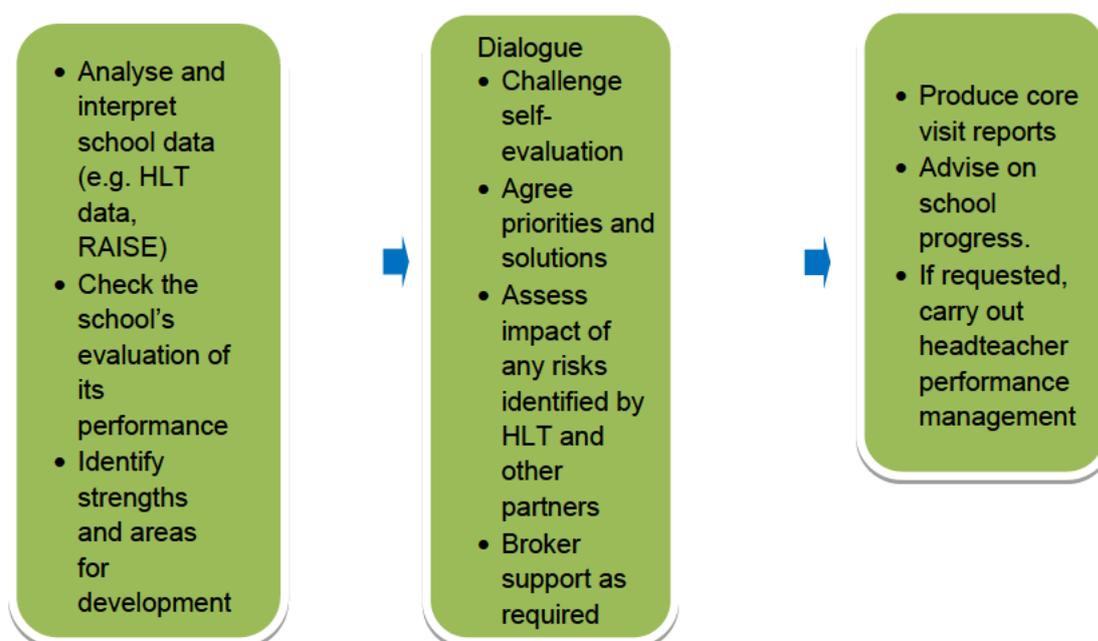
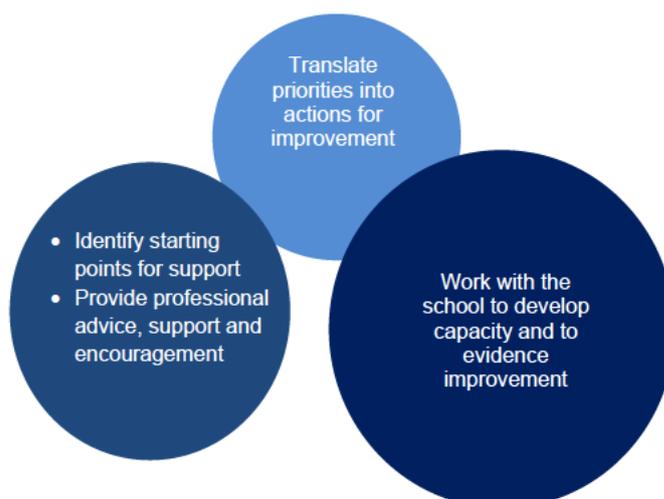


Fig.2: key functions of LaMA (see 2.3.4)



1.4 Data analysis, performance review and target setting

1.4.1 HLT is committed to support schools with a thorough analysis of national and local data, using, for example, the performance booklet produced by our Management Information Systems and Analysis team, Analyse School Performance System, Inspection Dashboard Summary Report and Fischer Family Trust (FFT). HLT will avoid duplicating material and seek to provide timely local information that will give schools the benchmarking and comparative indicators needed to have a detailed understanding of their performance and progress.

1.4.2 HLT will encourage schools to set challenging targets that are supported by explicit strategies to secure improvement and the continued maintenance of good or better educational provision.

1.4.3 HLT representatives will work with the school, and particularly with the headteacher/principal, deputy headteacher(s) and chair of governors, to support the school's awareness of:

- all available data sources and their application in school self-evaluation;
- progress towards meeting current school targets;
- significant barriers to improvement; and,
- any issues governors and managers should consider before signing off targets.

1.5 The HLT officer relationship with schools

1.5.1 Our schools have benefited from high-quality challenge and support which has been provided in inverse proportion to success and in proportion to need. This has been particularly effective in helping schools facing immense challenge and those categorised by Ofsted to make quick progress and to provide an improved quality of learning for their pupils.

1.5.2 Some schools may be a concern to HLT. For example, if they are below floor standards, have low progress rates for significant groups of pupils or show little or inconsistent improvements in securing good or better teaching.

1.5.3 It is important therefore that HLT is proactive in monitoring progress, commissioning support and, if necessary, intervening in the leadership, management and governance of schools where the outcomes for children and young people are below expectations.

1.5.4 HLT will maintain a relationship with all Academies, Free Schools, through a designated officer, who will act as a strategic link. HLT will engage with the schools through a programme of Keeping in Touch (KIT) visits.

1.5.5 We will ensure governing bodies have a link to HLT and that governors are supported in their understanding of the national and local educational landscape. Governing bodies are increasingly accountable and we will strengthen the relationship between governing bodies and HLT to ensure they are fully involved and understand their accountability in school improvement.

1.6 Schools recently inspected by Ofsted (Section 8 + section 5 inspections)

1.6.1 Inspection judgements feed into HLT's decisions regarding the deployment of resources concerning school improvement. Schools are able to broker additional support from HLT in preparation for Ofsted inspections. These may be through Ofsted Readiness Checks, Supported Peer Reviews or other bespoke support.

1.6.2 Schools may receive subject or aspect inspections. The judgements from these will contribute to the professional dialogue between the SIP and school. It is expected that these inspections will also be used by schools to inform their self-evaluation, and they may well identify areas of good practice that other schools may wish to draw upon.

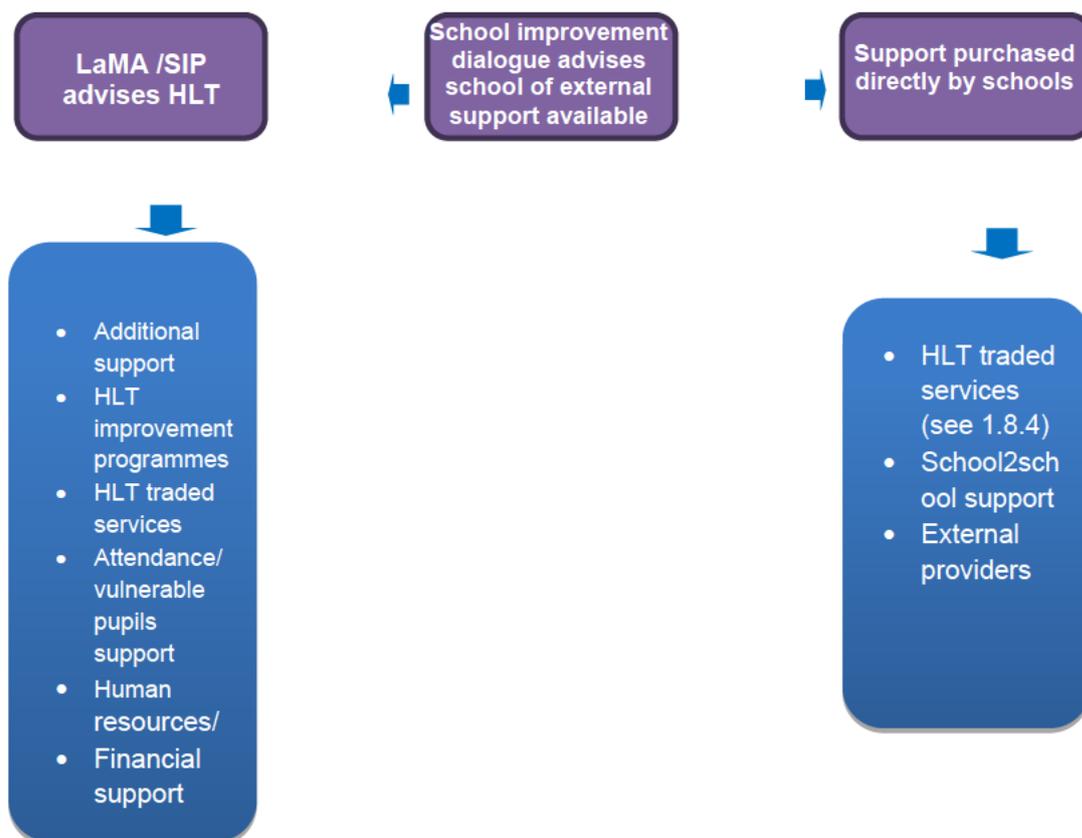
1.7 Moving forward

1.7.1 Early intervention is extremely beneficial to improving children's achievements and to preventing school failure. This is an increasingly important strategic role for local authorities.

1.7.2 HLT will work in partnership with schools to increase their self-knowledge and capacity to improve through brokering a range of training and support strategies. A wide range of support is provided which includes:

- school-based self-evaluation, drawing on nationally recognised criteria;
- collation and analysis of a range of quantitative data, with feedback;
- coaching and mentoring;
- working with schools to identify underperformance in groups of subjects or particular categories of pupil;
- supported development of the curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning, and management;
- training for middle leaders and managers, emphasising their role in school self-evaluation;
- the coordination and delivery of professional development courses for teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff;
- the identification, assessment and teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), and those who speak English as an additional language;
- health and safety;
- community and adult education;
- governor support and training;
- school budgets and financial planning;
- property;
- personnel and staffing issues; and,
- attendance and exclusions.

Fig.3: Brokering support



1.8 Academies/Free Schools

1.8.1 Academies, being publicly funded independent schools, Free Schools and University Technical Colleges (UTCs), are free from local authority control. However, we regard any child learning within our boundaries as a Hackney learner whether they are attending a maintained school or not.

1.8.2 Whilst HLT does not have responsibility for how well Academies, Free Schools and UTCs perform, we recognise that we can play an important role in supporting partnership, developing respect and promoting cooperation between all schools in our borough.

1.8.3 All Academies, Free Schools and the Hackney University Technical College are able to buy services from HLT, should they wish. It might be the case that a school is itself commissioned to provide some services in which case it may receive money from the Local Authority.

1.8.4 Examples of traded services academies may buy from Hackney Learning Trust.

- School Improvement Services including additional school-based support and visits from the School Improvement Team.
- Special educational needs (SEN) support
- Behaviour support services
- Administration of school meals
- Assessment of free school meals eligibility
- Music services
- Professional Development

1.8.5 Keeping in Touch visits

Schools will be encouraged to engage in an annual Keeping in Touch programme undertaken by a SIP.

Section 2: Schools requiring additional support

2.1 *Good to Great Schools* evaluation framework

2.1.1 HLT's programme of core visits and the Good to Great Policy draw on Ofsted and other published self-evaluation criteria to ensure that the performance of schools is monitored and reviewed using nationally recognised frameworks.

2.1.2 HLT supports and recommends the use of a summative document to show the school's self-evaluation. This enables the review of all key aspects of school provision and effectiveness.

2.1.3 **A range of evidence, including data analysis, the outcomes of HLT monitoring and Ofsted inspection reports, will inform the allocation of schools to one of five categories of additional support.** This will usually happen at the end of each academic year or sooner depending on when information about performance becomes available. The major factors determining allocation to a category will be the outcomes of the school's provision (i.e. the achievement and attainment of the pupils), its capacity to improve and the evidence demonstrating clear progress to becoming a good or better school.

2.1.4 HLT will also be involved where schools are experiencing acute or long term stresses which can affect the learners, e.g. significant and disruptive building work, or governance, or financial management, which is risk assessed as hindering school improvement.

2.1.5 HLT will be proactive in monitoring, evaluating, supporting and challenging for improvement.

2.1.6 Teams, such as human resources, finances, the attendance service, to give three examples, will monitor particular aspects of school performance and assess the risk of slippage.

2.1.7 SIP and the HLT teams above will risk assess each term.

2.2 Principles

2.2.1 The main principles behind HLT's targeted support to schools are that:

- the responsibility for the management of the solution of educational and human resource problems in a school rests with the headteacher and governing body, unless they are unable to fulfil this function;
- an unresolved problem which puts at risk the education and/or personal well-being of pupils indicates that the school needs additional support;
- there must be a common understanding of the issues giving cause for concern and a shared agreement that intervention is required. Where a school does not engage with discussing the issues or the necessary improvement strategies proposed through targeted support, HLT will use its formal warning powers;
- there should be a shared commitment to making effective use of additional resources to address the key issues, with the school's headteacher and governing body leading the planning and implementation of improvement strategies;
- where leadership and management do not have this capacity, a key focus of the targeted support will be in developing it, including within the governing body; and,

- information which indicates that there may be a problem will be shared with the headteacher and the chair of governors at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

2.3 Monitoring and challenge

2.3.1 The main evaluation role will be carried out by a School Improvement Partner. Each school's self-evaluation is the starting point. Our expectation is that schools will update their self evaluation reporting on a regular basis and that a copy will be provided. We advise that schools keep a live version of this document, and that the updating of different sections is paced across the year.

2.3.2 Challenge is a necessary feature of the improvement process. Schools have a right and duty to challenge HLT when the provision of services does not meet their needs. Equally, it is the duty of HLT to challenge schools to secure high outcomes for all learners. Challenge is, therefore, integral and should be carried out in the true spirit of partnership.

2.3.3 The School Improvement Partner will:

- provide professional advice, support and challenge, including supporting schools in setting ambitious school performance targets;
- use data and other evidence to evaluate progress and highlight areas of underperformance for discussion;
- validate, moderate and test the school's self-evaluation;
- identify priorities for improvement;
- report regularly to HLT, the headteacher and the chair of governors, usually through the programme of core visits.

2.3.4 The Leadership and Management Adviser will:

- provide professional advice, support and challenge geared to making improvement;
- use data and other evidence to highlight areas of performance for discussion;
- support the school to translate priorities for improvement into discernible actions;
- work with the school to develop its capacity to manage improvement with requiring additional support; and
- lead the One Day Review for schools categorised as needing intensive support.

2.3.5 Headteachers and governors are expected to:

- work in partnership with the SIP/LaMA to raise standards of attainment and achievement, and to improve outcomes for all pupils;
- Show ambition for all groups of learners
- share data and evaluation outcomes with the SIP/LaMA;
- ensure performance management of the headteacher and other staff is appropriately rigorous;
- provide feedback to HLT on the effectiveness of its advice and support; and,

- include classroom observation and active roles for senior managers in the leadership of teaching and learning.

2.3.6 The responsibilities of HLT in relation to this process are to:

- deploy SIPs and, where required, LaMAs;
- deploy support from wider HLT and council services (e.g. property, finance)
- co-ordinate the work of officers engaged with Enhanced (focussed) support where the support sits outside the SIP/LAMA team (for example finance, premises, Governance);
- provide briefings, training, information and school data for SIPs/LaMAs;
- Performance manage the SIPs/LaMAs.

2.4 HLT school evaluation process

2.4.1 School progress will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated throughout the school year. This will be carried out through the programme of core visits. It is anticipated that this will be a shared process with the school, although the HLT reserves the right to make judgements that may not match the school's own analysis or self-evaluation. **Schools will be assigned, on the basis of this accumulated evidence, to one of five categories of requiring additional support** (see section 2.5).

2.4.2 The school's SIP or LAMA will attend the first Governors' meeting of the year to provide Governors with an overview of the outcomes from the SIP programme.

2.5 HLT categorisation of schools

2.5.1 The process of annual review and development is underpinned by the quality of the school's self-evaluation, the quality of its performance data, and its ability to apply this at classroom level to impact on pupil experience.

2.5.2 The *Good to Great Schools Policy* is underpinned by the entitlement to a good education for all pupils. The allocation of a school to a particular category will determine the level and nature of HLT involvement.

2.5.3 **HLT retains the principle of supporting schools in inverse proportion to success**, whilst also considering proportionate support from local resources funding.

Core

2.5.4 This category applies to all schools that have been identified by Ofsted as outstanding or good, and where there has been no significant decline in standards, changes in leadership or other major aspect of the school since the last inspection. These schools will be considered self-sustaining, able to maintain their own improvement and to only require a 'core' level of support.

2.5.5

From September 2019 all **primary** and **nursery** schools which are judged as outstanding or good will be risk assessed. All outstanding or good schools as indicated by the criteria above will have two school improvement partner visits each year. **Secondary** and **special** schools will receive three visits a year.

Enhanced (focused)

- 2.5.6 Where it is identified that a school has good capacity to improve, but has one aspect of its work which necessitates support, the school will be identified for enhanced (focused) support. The school will receive an additional two half day visits during the year to support the school in evaluating progress. The school can also broker from the School Improvement team support for the aspect which requires improvement. An action plan will be drafted detailing the end of year outcomes for that aspect. The result of this evaluation will be reported to the next SRAS meeting.
- 2.5.7 Where it is identified that a school has good capacity to improve, but has one aspect of its work not linked to teaching and learning which necessitates support, the school will also be identified for enhanced (focused) support. The Assistant Director will broker from the wider HLT team support for the aspect which requires improvement. The relevant service area will support the school to develop an action plan detailing the end of year outcomes for that aspect.
- 2.5.8 Schools receiving Enhanced (focussed) support will be monitored by a TAG (Trust Action Group) see appendix 4.

Enhanced

- 2.5.9 Schools placed at Enhanced Support can demonstrate sufficient capacity to manage improvement alone. However, with some additional support, targeted to specific aspects, subject or key stages, progress could be accelerated.
- 2.5.10 Any school graded 3 or at the risk of being judged as Requires Improvement from an Ofsted inspection, will be automatically categorised for additional enhanced support. These schools may also receive HMI monitoring visits and will have a full inspection within two years.
- 2.5.11 This category will include schools where there is in-school variation in standards or progress and no consistent trend over time of improving teaching.
- 2.5.12 Schools in the enhanced category will be supported by a LaMA who will also complete the SIP visits for the school. In addition, the LaMA will provide 2 additional half day visits per term. Schools can broker additional support from HLT if required.
- 2.5.13 An action plan will be drafted detailing the end of year outcomes for that aspect. The result of this evaluation will be reported to the next SRAS meeting.
- 2.5.14 Schools receiving Enhanced support will be monitored by a TAG (Trust Action Group) see appendix 4.

Intensive A and B

- 2.5.15 This category is focused on schools where the need for support is more urgent and intense.

Intensive A - schools judged by HLT to require improvement because they were graded 3 in previous inspections and there is a high risk of being graded the same in the next inspection, schools that have had a significant decline in performance or schools that cannot demonstrate sufficient capacity to improve.

Intensive B: those judged by Ofsted as having serious weaknesses or requiring special measures or schools where HLT has significant concerns about the standards of performance and an Ofsted judgment of good could be at risk.

2.5.16 Schools receiving Intensive support will be supported by the LaMA to write a Single Action Plan and will be monitored by a TAG (Trust Action Group) see appendix 4.

2.6 Identifying schools requiring additional support

2.6.1 HLT will hold discussions with the school and governors, following which the school may be designated as a school requiring additional support. Schools in this position will attract additional support from HLT and/or a partner school.

2.6.2 It is possible that schools may be in this category but on an improving trend. Challenge and support from HLT will be adjusted. In some instances, intervention by HLT may be considered in order to move intensive schools to at least the enhanced category within a one-year timescale.

2.6.3 This policy reflects the revised arrangements for schools causing concern outlined in the Education and Inspections Act. HLT accepts the principle of early intervention and sees the Good to Great Schools Policy as an instrument to secure effective early improvement and eliminate the need for Ofsted designation.

2.6.4 HLT has a system of risk management which involves SIPs and discrete teams assessing fragility on a termly basis. This wider intelligence is shared and actions identified to ensure early prevention of possible school failure.

2.6.6 There may be occasions when sudden major difficulties in a school would lead to immediate designation as enhanced or intensive. Causes for concern that manifest as critical and deteriorating features of school provision, include:

- a serious staffing concern in the context of staff recruitment and/or retention;
- the temporary or permanent loss of effective senior management;
- acute difficulties relating to a feature of school provision (e.g. building, finances); and/or,
- serious concerns raised by a significant number of parents.

2.7 Procedures for working with HLT intensive schools

2.7.1 HLT's concerns will be shared prior to designation, through discussion with the headteacher and chair of governors. The role of the governing body is essential in ensuring clear accountability procedures are in place.

2.7.2 Experience indicates that concerns are addressed effectively when they are mutually shared with the school, the governing body and HLT. Designation should be seen as supportive and not punitive with both parties holding a commitment to rapidly securing a good standard of education for pupils.

2.7.3 Following designation, intensive schools will normally be the subject of an initial HLT review, undertaken by a small team of officers with school senior managers in order to clarify the key priorities and determine the most useful support and intervention strategies. This review is unlikely to be necessary if the school has had a recent Ofsted inspection (within the last year), although a review will always remain as an option for HLT.

2.7.4 HLT will always be concerned to target effectively its resources to schools in order to support and effect rapid improvement. Where progress is stubbornly slow HLT will consider issuing a **pre-formal warning notice**. This will be served on the governing body.

2.8 The formal warning process

2.8.1 The definition of the circumstances which may trigger a warning notice is given in the Education and Inspection Act, namely:

- when standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low, and are likely to remain so unless the authority exercises their statutory intervention powers;
- when there has been a serious breakdown in management or governance which is prejudicing, or is likely to prejudice, standards of performance; and/or,
- when the safety of pupils or staff of the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).

2.8.2 The definition of when 'standards of performance are unacceptably low' is extended from current provision. A school where the absolute level of attainment is apparently satisfactory may nonetheless be caught by the definition if pupil performance is persistently below levels expected when pupils' prior attainment and the school's context is taken into account. This provision is specifically designed so authorities can tackle under-performing schools, as well as those with outright low standards.

2.8.3 The formal warning notice will be formally issued to the chair of governors, as it is ultimately the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that the school is not underperforming.

2.8.4 A range of possible interventions are available following the issuing of a formal warning notice, including:

- withdrawal of the delegated budget;
- additional governors being appointed to the governing body;
- partnership with another school;
- removal of the governing body to be replaced by an interim executive board; and
- school becomes an academy.

2.9 Action planning and monitoring for schools requiring intensive support

2.9.1 A HLT single plan for the school will be drawn up by the headteacher and LaMA, in consultation with the governing body. It will include specific improvement objectives, strategies, success criteria, resource allocations and timescales.

2.9.2 There will be a target date for overall improvement and removal from intensive category, usually within four terms. The date of removal from Ofsted categories is always subject to Ofsted's own procedures and timescales.

2.9.3 HLT will provide specific advice and help for leadership, management, and the school's own improvement strategies and capacity to ensure key weakness are eliminated and raise outcomes for pupils. Further support will be made available through the provision of school-based projects. Help may be given specifically to governing bodies to improve governance. Where necessary, other departments and external agencies will be called upon to provide support.

2.9.4 HLT will carry out one-day reviews each term for schools requiring intensive levels of additional support to ensure the pace and impact of improvement is appropriate i.e. progress and capacity are sustained and secure. The aim is for the school to achieve 'core' designation as soon as possible. This will be led by the school's LaMA.

Insufficient progress whilst in special measures

- 2.9.6 Schools that are in special measures are expected to demonstrate progress and a better capacity to improve by the end of the second Ofsted monitoring visit. Failure to do so will lead to HLT reconsidering the effectiveness of its action plan for the school. If progress is not evident then the Education and Inspections Act sets out the formal powers and the actions that are available to HLT and the Secretary of State.
- 2.9.7 In these circumstances, HLT will have recourse to its powers to intervene. The school will remain in the intensive category and HLT will issue informal and/or formal warnings in writing to the governing body. HLT's warning will indicate to the governing body the nature of its concerns and their implications.

Removal from the 'intensive' category

- 2.9.8 A school can be in an 'intensive' category designation due to an Ofsted inspection outcome or as a result of HLT concerns. The procedures for re-designation can happen at any point in a review or inspection cycle.
- 2.9.9 Following the removal of a formal Ofsted designation, the school and HLT will decide together what category will be more appropriate for the school. Where progress made by a school at the end of a HLT review is judged to have been sustained and at least good, after a period of support, a re-categorisation into the enhanced category will be considered by senior officers. If approved, an exit strategy will be developed which will include a planned reduction in support.