

## Local authority categorisation 2016-17

### 1 Rationale

1.1 Staffordshire County Council (the LA) is committed to improving educational outcomes for all pupils here. At present, we retain the duty (under the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998) to ensure that all pupils in our area have the opportunity to attend schools that are good or better, and the LA has powers to intervene where we have concerns about standards in maintained schools (and liaise with the regional schools commissioner (RSC) where we have concerns about an academy school). This categorisation process sets out how, working together with all mainstream schools, we aim to identify, support and challenge schools about which we have concerns.

1.2 A key strand of the quality assurance strategy is the categorisation of schools. The new DfE *schools of concern* guidance [here](#) –which includes intervention powers in respect of ‘coasting schools’ (see the government’s illustrative definition [here](#)) and gives new powers to RSCs, requires the LA to consider its process and criteria for categorisation.

1.3 At the same time, we recognise that, with the changes to end of key stage assessments, decisions cannot reliably be made until national comparisons are available. So we will maintain current school categories until the unvalidated RAISEonline reports containing the 2016 ks2 and 4 results have been released. This means that the primary phase categorisation will take place before the secondary phase.

1.4 During the interim period between the start of the new school year and the release of RAISEonline reports, a CMI will make contact with schools where there have been significant changes in performance, as identified in provisional data (which is available to the local authority prior to the publication of the unvalidated RAISEonline reports).

### 2 Categorisation process 2016-17

2.1 The new process will result in every school being placed in one of three categories:

- Category 1 - No concern;
- Category 2 – Some concern;
- Category 3 - High concern.

2.2 In making decisions about categorisation of a school, the LA will consider the performance indicators available. **Indicators may include the following, but are not a checklist.**

#### Category 1 - No concern:

- published achievement information over time is at least in line with national averages;
- the educational performance data of pupils with particular characteristics is at least in line with national averages;
- proven leadership capacity, including of governors, demonstrated by sustained high standards or a trajectory of rapid improvement;
- other data about the school such as changes in pupil cohort size, attendance and mobility of pupils provide no concern; and / or
- effective safeguarding procedures in place.



### **Category 2 – Some concern:**

- published achievement information over time is not consistently in line with or above the national average;
- meets the DfE criteria for a coasting school (This will be based on unvalidated data in the first instance but will be confirmed when validated data is published early in 2017);
- the education performance data of pupils with particular characteristics is inconsistent or below national averages;
- no proven leadership capacity, including that of governors, demonstrated by inconsistent outcomes; and
- other data about the school such as changes in pupil cohort size, attendance and mobility of pupils causes concern; and / or
- concerns about safeguarding procedures.

### **Category 3 - High concern:**

- outcomes are below the floor standard (this will be based on unvalidated data in the first instance but will be confirmed when validated data is published early in 2017);
- meets the DfE criteria for a coasting school (this will be based on unvalidated data in the first instance but will be confirmed when validated data is published early in 2017);
- published achievement information over time is significantly below national average in one or more key aspects;
- education performance data of pupils with particular characteristics is below national average;
- lack of leadership capacity, including of governors, has resulted in decline in standards or a lack of improvement;
- other data about the school such as changes in pupil cohort size, attendance and mobility of pupils causes significant concern; and / or
- concerns about safeguarding procedures.

2.3 Categorisation will be reviewed on at least an annual basis, but the LA may review and amend a school's category at any point within the year, should additional information warrant this. The proposed actions for schools in each category are set out in annex 1.

## **3 Assessment of school safeguarding policies and procedures**

3.1 The following intelligence will be used to assess the resilience of each school's policies and procedures:

- the self-evaluation audit (see [here](#) for information and advice about the survey and links to safeguarding advice and guidance documents) – we will use the most recent return (July 2016);
- the outcome of any investigation(s) following complaints to Ofsted about safeguarding issues at a school; and
- any concerns raised by Staffordshire CC officers – for example, social workers, education welfare officers and CMIs (which will be fully disclosed and discussed with the school's head teacher and safeguarding lead).

