Staffordshire County Council

Local authority mainstream school categorisation 2018 - 19

In 2018 -19 the local authority will continue to undertake the school categorisation process. The information below provides the rationale and process along with the support that will be provided for a maintained school.

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 process is the categorisation of schools. The latest DfE *schools causing concern* guidance which is available using the following link, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/510080/schools-causing-concern-guidance.pdf , includes intervention powers in respect of 'coasting schools' giving powers to RSCs, and requires the LA to consider its process and criteria for categorisation.

1.3   At the same time, we recognise that decisions cannot reliably be made until national comparisons are available. So we will maintain current school categories until the unvalidated Analyse School Performance (ASP) containing the 2018 KS2 and KS4 results have been released. It is expected that schools will receive a letter indicating the 2018-19 category in the second half of the 2018 autumn term.

1.5   As in previous years, during the interim period between the start of the new school year and the release of ASP 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 ASP reports).

2.   Categorisation process 2018-19

2.1   The 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.

the knot unites

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 disadvantaged pupils over time 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 2019);
- the education performance data of disadvantaged pupils over time 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 2019);
- 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 2019);
- published achievement information over time is significantly below national average in one or more key aspects;
- education performance data of disadvantaged pupils over time 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 – we will use the most recent return, which should be submitted to the LA in September 2018;
- 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).

4. Support for maintained schools

4.1 Where a maintained school receives notification of a section 5 or section 8 inspection, the school should contact the school improvement administration on 01785 276208 or school.improvement@staffordshire.gov.uk who will arrange for a member of the team to contact the Headteacher to make arrangements for the local authority discussion with the lead inspector.

4.2 **Category 1 schools** will not routinely be visited, however a sample of schools will be randomly selected to quality assure the 2018-19 local authority categorisation process.

4.3 **Category 2 schools** will typically receive two review visits from Entrust, the focus of which will be to evaluate the impact of leadership on improving the quality of teaching and learning and therefore pupil outcomes. Review visits will include discussion with senior leaders and paired monitoring activities with leaders to validate their judgements and evaluate the progress that is being made against the key priorities for the school and identify any further actions needed.

4.3 **Category 3 schools** will typically receive review visits each half-term from Entrust, the focus of which will be to evaluate the impact of leadership on improving the quality of teaching and learning and therefore pupil outcomes. Review visits will include discussion with senior leaders and paired monitoring activities with leaders to validate their judgements and evaluate the progress that is being made against the key priorities for the school and identify any further actions needed.