

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**12 November 2013**

**REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNGER  
ADULTS**

**Secondary Associate School Improvement Advisers and Partnership  
Development – (Children and Young People)**

**1. Purpose of Report**

To seek Cabinet approval to increase the Authority's capacity for secondary school improvement by recruiting additional associate school improvement advisers for one year initially and to engage appropriate partners in order to continue our Journey to Excellence.

**2. Information and Analysis**

In Derbyshire, we have long recognised that the primary responsibility for improvement lies with the leaders in school and through the Quality Development Dialogue (QDD) process, we support and challenge schools in inverse proportion to each school's success. Through shared school self-evaluation with link advisers, schools are allocated to three different QDD programmes.

1. School Causing Concern (SCC): Those schools requiring the most leadership support to raise achievement for pupils are identified as schools causing concern. These schools are usually in an Ofsted category or likely to be placed in an Ofsted category at their next inspection.
2. Priority School: Those schools that need to raise achievement but are developing their own capacity for improvement are identified as Priority Schools. However, as explained below, Priority Schools are becoming increasingly vulnerable to an Ofsted category or at least to being identified as Requires Improvement. When a school is identified as Requires Improvement (RI) this initiates a regular monitoring process by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) with the expectation that the school will have improved sufficiently to be judged Good by an Ofsted team within two years.
3. Core Entitlement: Those schools judged good or outstanding in their last Ofsted inspection are in the core programme although this is monitored carefully to avoid any possible declination of Ofsted grades as a result of falling results. In the secondary sector the majority of schools that are good or outstanding have previously converted to academy status. However there

are 11 maintained schools that have been judged good and these are in the Core Entitlement Programme.

In September 2013, Ofsted implemented a revised framework for the inspection of schools. The key shift in focus was to place greater emphasis on the progress students make with increased focus on English and mathematics and students from specific groups e.g. those in receipt of the Pupil Premium. There is also a more intensive focus on the impact of teaching on learning over time which is now based on the triangulation of evidence from lesson observation, data analysis and work scrutiny. These revisions represent a significant raising of the bar in expectation. For each school inspected, the lead inspector will meet with the link adviser, expect the link adviser to attend feedback and make a judgement of local authority support. In the three weeks since the start of this academic year, 6 Secondary schools have had full Section 5 Inspections and a further 4 schools have had monitoring visits. Of the schools who have had full inspections 0 have improved their overall effectiveness, 1 has maintained its overall effectiveness and there has been a decline in the overall effectiveness in 5 schools. In almost all cases the key issues following inspection relate to the issue of Progress in the Core Subjects. This in turn impacts on the Ofsted grades given for Teaching and Learning and Leadership Management. In such cases the Overall Effectiveness will therefore be judged as RI (3), Serious Weakness (Category 4) or Special Measures (Category 4).

In such circumstances there is a clear need - and in the case of Category 4 schools a statutory requirement - for the LA to provide decisive and intensive intervention and support. Schools which are judged as RI are subject to regular monitoring visits by HMI in a similar manner to those in the Ofsted categories of Requiring Special Measures or having Serious Weaknesses.

The current capacity of the Secondary Team, is inhibiting our ability to address these issues effectively. The reasons for this are outlined here.

1. The size of the team, particularly at Senior Adviser for School Improvement (SASI) level, results in the team being too focussed on working reactively rather than proactively. The demands of the Ofsted framework with 2-3 inspections in one week results in the Deputy Assistant Director (DAD), SASI and Link Advisers having to postpone planned intervention and support work in order to attend meetings with inspectors and then undertake the growing number of action plans, monitoring visits etc as more schools are identified as RI/Ofsted category. The additional knock-on effect of being stretched is that the impact of the work is reduced and/or threatened with colleagues covering for vacant posts caused by the on-going difficulty of recruitment. This is having a cumulative and detrimental impact of the outcomes of Ofsted inspections in secondary schools.
2. The increasingly challenging demands of the Ofsted category have resulted in the grade declination of a number of schools previously judged good and placed in the Core Entitlement QDD programme with others at risk over the coming year. The average level of support that these schools now require has therefore increased from that previously provided, adding to the capacity pressures above.

3. The level of headteacher experience within the team is currently limited to the DAD. Our effectiveness is therefore severely limited both in terms of personal experience and the perception of secondary headteachers.
4. The reduced capacity has had, and continues to have, an impact on our own quality assurance and service improvement processes.
5. There is specifically insufficient capacity in the core subject areas of English, mathematics and science. These subject areas are the key drivers within the Ofsted framework and the lack of student progress in these subjects is at the heart of the rising number of schools judged to be RI or Ofsted category.
6. There is insufficient capacity to extend the present work to the Academy Schools and so our ambition to also hold these schools to account is limited.

The use of school-to school support to increase capacity has been relatively limited in Derbyshire to date. Experience to date has been mixed but this work does have the potential to provide additional resource and capacity. At the same time we must recognise that in order for this to be successful there remains an additional role of management and quality assurance for the core team and specifically the DAD and SASI.

The aspiration for the local authority to be judged as outstanding relies on having a school improvement strategy that prevents failure and moves all schools to good and outstanding. A wide-range of school improvement strategies are required for the whole system to improve, however, evidence shows that there is a clear link between the level of support provided by link advisers to schools and their Ofsted outcome.

The Cabinet Member for Education paper dated 08 November 2010 sought approval to re-align the Advisory and Inspection Service by making reductions in establishment and staffing costs. Within the secondary team the agreed structure is:

- 1 x Deputy Assistant Director (DAD)
- 2 x Senior Adviser for School Improvement (SASI)
- 2 x Link Advisers
- 5.5 x Teaching Learning and Assessment Consultants (TLA Consultants)

However, the current position of the secondary team is as follows:

- DAD – seconded (one year) headteacher. The DAD has a whole service role as well as leading support and intervention across the secondary sector and linking to the 14-19 Team.
- SASI/Link Adviser – 2fte Link Advisers are presently undertaking the additional duties of SASI alongside their Link Adviser workload. The SASIs would be expected to maintain a strategic overview of standards of attainment and progress including leading the SCC and Ofsted category work in close liaison with the DAD. Link Advisers are expected to support maintained

schools including QDD and liaison with Ofsted inspections teams and to lead on follow up.

- Teaching Learning and Assessment Consultants – 5.5 FTE consultants are working as generic teaching learning and assessment consultants providing consultancy support at departmental level.

As a result of the continued inability to recruit substantive personnel to the secondary team with the appropriate skills, knowledge, expertise and experience to provide the level of support and intervention demanded by the new Ofsted framework, a new approach to building the capacity of the secondary team is required. This approach would seek to utilise the high level of expertise and experience both in our schools, and with a small number of associates. The use of Associates for School Improvement Partner work for example has been very successful in the past within our secondary schools. The result is that DCC would significantly increase the capacity and effectiveness of the secondary school improvement team in the short term but without a long term financial commitment. The expectation is that this arrangement would operate until August 2014 with support from the Authority reducing over the second year to August 2015. By this time it is envisaged that the workload will have returned to more manageable levels, knowledge will have been transferred to key teachers within secondary schools and that alternative methods of challenge and assistance such as school to school support will have become more embedded.

**Proposal for a new time limited approach to building the capacity and effectiveness of the secondary school improvement team.**

Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) (x1)	Secondment until August 2014
Senior Adviser for School Improvement (SASI) (x2)	The secondment of 2 appropriately experienced senior leaders from secondary schools is undertaken to undertake the role of SASI for all secondary schools, including holding the Academy schools in Derbyshire to account.
Link Advisers (LA) X2	The two substantive Link Advisers return to their appointed roles.
Intervention team (Associate staff)	Provided by contracting with appropriately experienced and effective associates to provide additional support and intervention at headteacher and Chair of Governor level. Contracts will be issued on a school by school basis and the anticipated additional spend is £40k.
Executive, Associate and Mentor Headteachers	Recent experience across the secondary sector has highlighted the importance of the authority being in the position to broker short term placements of

	<p>appropriately qualified headteachers into the role of Executive, Associate or Mentor headteacher in a school facing particularly challenging circumstances. The majority of these costs would be borne by the receiving schools, supported as required from the Authority's Schools Causing Concern budget. However, additional funding may be required to bridge any subsequent gaps in finance in order to secure the planned short term placement. The estimated cost is £20k.</p>
School to School Support	<p>There is no doubt that if the system is to become more self-sustaining then school-to-school support has to become a major mechanism for school improvement. The Authority has a central role to broker this activity in a thorough and structured way. Directly related to this is the development of Teaching Schools currently taking place in Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire. In leading this initiative, the Authority will also be able to utilise the support of the Specialist Leaders that are a feature of this government funded initiative. Estimated contribution from CAYA £10k.</p>
Partnerships	<p>In addition, it is important to explore the development of partnerships with other providers to create longer term sustainability in terms of improving teaching and learning. In a similar fashion to other departments within the Council, we should identify a number of approved providers who we can draw upon for specific work. In effect we change the sole focus of our role from direct provision to include a greater focus on brokerage and identification of relevant support in certain circumstances. Currently the need for support and intervention in English and mathematics is acute and there are providers in the market who we could develop coaching partnerships with. The result is that with a relatively small financial commitment we would adopt a cascade process of developing coaches who, with the appropriate LA license, could then operate across other schools. In practical terms this would mean that the initial training of 6 staff would create the capacity to immediately train up over 50 coaches in six of our most vulnerable schools. Further, this approach is a self-sustaining model with schools providing both the staff and the funding to support the on-going initiative following initial investment by the Authority. Estimated cost is £30k.</p>

### **3. Financial Considerations**

It is proposed that the increased capacity outlined above is agreed until end August 2014. The additional expenditure during this time is estimated at £100k for the academic year 2013/14. This will be funded from CAYA's earmarked reserve for specific Children's Services grants. Any extension to the provision beyond the 13/14 academic year will be the subject of a further report to Members and the indicative cost of a further extension is in the region of an addition £50k to £100k depending on progress in the first year.

Although the department is already facing severe financial challenges with a projected overspend of around £5m that can only be covered by using reserves created from prior year underspends, the above proposals are integral to the secondary schools in Derbyshire being able to provide current and future pupils with the quality of education that this authority aspires to. In view of this it is proposed that this is an appropriate use for CAYA's earmarked reserves for specific children's services grants which have sufficient capacity to cover the costs identified above which comprise maintaining the spend on staffing within the Advisory service to fund the established posts and investing an additional £100k in improving the performance of schools.

### **4. Human Resources Considerations**

Within the existing staffing resource there is insufficient capacity and expertise to undertake the requirements of the service. It is recommended that recruitment strategies including external fixed-term appointments/secondments and use of associates will be necessary to increase capacity. All strategies will be in accordance with DCC policies.

### **5. Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity; and environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

### **6. Background Papers**

None.

### **7. Key Decision**

No.

## **8. Strategic Director's Recommendations**

Cabinet is asked to:

Approve the request for an additional sum of £100k from CAYA earmarked reserves to secure the additional capacity to the secondary school improvement team as highlighted in the strategies outlined above.

**IAN THOMAS**  
**Strategic Director Children and Younger Adults**