



Hampshire
County Council

Improvement and
Advisory Service

SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

School Improvement Partner Annual Visit

2026 - 2027

Primary

School Improvement Partner Annual Visit 2026-2027

1. Introduction: Context and Purpose

The Local Authority (LA) is in partnership with **all** schools to secure the very best education for every child. We have a shared vision for education in Hampshire:

- being committed to providing a broad, relevant, and exciting curriculum
- focusing on performance in core subjects as enabling knowledge and understanding, and as a passport to children's future lives
- fostering social skills
- building a fully inclusive culture in which all our children thrive
- playing our part in making sure that children have an enjoyable and memorable childhood.

2. The School Improvement Partner (SIP) programme

The SIP programme places at its core the lived experiences of all children in their educational setting. It seeks to inquire into the school's impact on the education of all children, including the more vulnerable.

Underpinning the SIP programme are the following agreed principles of inclusion:

- the entitlement of every child and young person to receive a good education that enables them to maximise opportunity and success in life, irrespective of need, prior attainment, background or circumstance
- strong pathways for every child and young person into further education, training, employment and independent living
- successful and fulfilling participation in society, economic prosperity, good physical and mental health
- access for every child and young person to suitable, high-quality provision, which meets diverse needs and diminishes barriers to learning
- equity of access and onward life chances;
- a rounded education for every child and young person; each having access to and benefiting from a breadth of experience and cultural capital
- a strong commitment to early intervention to tackle potential barriers to success
- a strong commitment to partnership working which actively seeks and values the contributions of parents/carers and children and young people
- a happy and memorable childhood for all.

3. The relationship with schools

The relationship with schools is based on a shared vision of excellence in which we work together to help every school become highly effective, so that all pupils thrive. Our LA school improvement service is well regarded and accessed by

schools in Hampshire and beyond. We strive to develop and maintain this relationship based on a number of key characteristics detailed below.

A **strong respect** for and belief in schools' self-determination and autonomy.

A **commitment** to support and challenge all schools to help them achieve their ambitions for the young people and communities that they serve.

A **duty** to prevent schools from failing and to intervene effectively to this end.

Prioritising our work so that schools rapidly secure improvements where they are in danger of low standards or not yet securely good in all areas.

A **promise** of appropriate support if schools find themselves in difficulties.

An **understanding** of the power and importance of schools helping to improve other schools.

A **belief** that jointly developing good practice across the system can bring benefit to all, coupled with the knowledge that in our schools we have some of the very best leaders, teachers, practitioners and governors in the country.

A **conviction** that developing the thinking of leaders, teachers and practitioners can have a direct impact the progress of the children.

A **pledge** that we will act as champions of pupils, parents and the pursuit of excellence in all its forms.

An **unwavering focus** on the most vulnerable children in our society.

The **harnessing** of leadership capacity for the improvement of the whole system.

4. Purpose of the SIP programme

The SIP programme is vital to the relationship with schools. Its key purposes can be summarised as:

- a) to promote a culture that challenges and inspires thinking, recognises successes and encourages focused improvements
- b) to ensure the LA and all schools are effective in meeting the changing needs of pupils in our society
- c) to create strong and effective working partnerships that ensure the right action is taken at the right time for all our children
- d) to identify schools that might be in need of extra support to secure standards or the quality of provision so that LA support is allocated effectively
- e) to hold up a mirror to the school to encourage reflection and support robust school self-evaluation.

5. The focus of the 2026-2027 SIP programme

The 2026-2027 SIP programme for primary schools builds on previous iterations. This year, it remains focused on **teaching and its impact on learning and standards, including those of vulnerable groups**.

Key features and outcomes of the SIP Programme

- a) a SIP for every school – a suitably qualified and experienced school improvement professional
- b) an annual visit; may also include additional programme of SIP activities
- c) a key area for enquiry based on teaching and learning and where appropriate standards capturing aspects that may be examples of strong practice or where there is potential risk to the school's success
- d) a succinct and accessible SIP report that clearly identifies whether the school needs further LA support and includes agreed priorities for action
- e) an agreed evaluation of capacity - this will be considered in relation to the circumstances and challenges that the school faces
- f) support and intervention for those schools that need it most, fulfilling the LA's statutory obligation.

6. Differentiation of SIP programme

The annual programme of SIP visits will reflect the differing school improvement contexts of schools. In broad terms, there are four main contexts that will shape the visit:

- in schools where there is a likely need for significant LA support, the SIP annual visit will be part of an overall LA strategy to support rapid improvement
- in schools where there has been a successful programme of LA support, and the school ceases to be supported, the school will be allocated two visits to embed school improvement - one of these days will be the SIP annual visit
- in all other schools, not currently or recently supported, the SIP carries out a single focused visit
- in unsupported schools with concerning pupil outcomes there may be an additional half day visit in the autumn term to focus on standards.

7. Outcomes of the SIP process

- a) an evaluative visit that adds value to school leaders' thinking and provides clarity of purpose and action
- b) a view of the school's capacity for sustainable improvement, set in the context of the particular circumstances and challenges it faces, for school leaders, the school's governors, and the LA
- c) a summative, evaluative, clear, concise and accessible report that evaluates the school's current position and points to further actions required
- d) identification of the level of resource to be deployed by the LA, complemented by the school's own resources, and differentiated according to the school's challenges in relation to the prevailing Ofsted judgement, the performance of current pupils, the school's capacity to address its most important priorities and the current trajectory of improvement
- e) a celebration of good practice.

Annual SIP process

There are three main elements to the process:

- a) an annual **risk analysis** conducted for all schools within a district by the School Improvement Manager (SIM), including a review of end of key stage attainment data and other sources of specific school or district level information available to the SIM
- b) the **core element** of the programme delivered through the SIP annual visit, leading to a concise report
- c) **reference to additional activities or support** to be commissioned by schools and/or the LA.

8. Annual Risk Analysis

Each SIM will review the overall performance of the district and the performance of individual schools. Whilst the vast majority of schools will not be *at risk*, it is important that the LA resources are prioritised to support the schools whose needs are greatest.

9. District Performance Review

The **review of overall district performance** uses the most recent available data, for all schools (including academies), particularly focusing on reading, writing and mathematics (RWM) combined at Key Stage 2 (KS2), phonics at Key Stage 1 (KS1), Good Level of Development (GLD) in the Foundation Stage and considering vulnerable groups. This includes attendance, suspension /exclusion data and reduced hours provision. The analysis will be used to identify specific strengths and improvement priorities across the district. It will be shared with the County Education Manager (CEM) Early Years and Primary and will be used to inform wider county or district strategies when appropriate.

10. The district review of performance will be used to identify schools where there appears to be a need for accelerated improvement. The results of this review will be communicated to the CEM (Early Years and Primary) and the relevant SIP. In some cases, there may be an urgent need for improvement in order to arrest decline or tackle concerns regarding children's wellbeing, inclusion or outcomes or where there is the threat of an adverse Ofsted evaluation at the next inspection.

A school will be identified *at risk* if one or more of the following is in evidence:

- a) there is significant underperformance in pupil outcomes either currently or over time using the key measure of RWM combined at KS2, phonics and GLD in the Foundation Stage
- b) there is significant underperformance for vulnerable pupil groups that raises concerns about the quality or consistency of provision in the school
- c) there are concerns about inclusion as evidenced by high levels of suspension or exclusion, low attendance, high absence or persistent absence and high numbers of pupils receiving reduced hours provision for long periods
- d) there is a risk of an adverse Ofsted outcome, or the school is showing insufficient impact against priorities identified by Ofsted or the LA

- e) there are indications of a culture or that may adversely affect pupils' inclusion, safety or wellbeing
- f) there is evidence of significant issues affecting the leadership and management capacity of the school
- g) the school has been in receipt of LA support and has shown little sustained improvement
- h) the curriculum is not embedded or consistently applied, and children's knowledge is therefore weak in some areas
- i) there are issues in the school's self-evaluation or school improvement processes that could lead to an inaccurate view of the school's position
- j) the school is judged by Ofsted to 'need attention' in more than one area
- k) the school's professional development programme is insufficiently targeted and failing to impact on practice.

11. As a result of the LA risk assessment, which is both an annual and an ongoing process, the SIM or SIP may contact a number of specific schools to discuss any issues that have been highlighted. The purpose of the discussion is to agree what actions might be taken to address any unresolved issues or where the school's current capacity for improvement may need further support from the LA.

This may include:

- a) a visit to the school by the SIM or SIP
- b) an extra half day data visit by the SIP to explore pupil outcomes
- c) an early SIP annual visit
- d) an appropriate bespoke package of support
- e) a visit to the full governing body to ensure that the school's context is understood fully, and any urgent action is taken collectively

Where there are concerns about the performance of academies, the LA will contact the school to discuss them and also contact academy trusts, sponsors and the Regional Director.

12. Core elements of the SIP programme

The SIP programme will take the form of at least one visit per year. This SIP programme will be funded for schools maintained by the LA, although schools may wish to commission time for further activities. For other schools (such as academies and schools in other LAs) this can be purchased.

13. Prior to any discussions with the school, the SIP should be well-informed about the school's previous performance and context. This includes the previous Ofsted report, findings raised in reports of visit by LA personnel, the school's overall performance and areas of significant strength and/or weakness, the performance of vulnerable pupils over time, attendance, any information relating to suspension or exclusion, and any concerns raised by the SIM through their risk assessment process.

14. The overwhelming majority of Hampshire schools have positive Ofsted outcomes. The SIP annual visit should help the school, at the very least,

maintain this strong performance and secure planned improvements. Some schools might face risks which, if not addressed, could lead to a decline in the quality of provision. Engaging with schools about these risks will support timely action and enable leavers to respond effectively.

15. Data will be used as a starting point for discussions with schools, particularly the key measure of RWM combined at KS2, phonics at Year 1 and GLD at the end of the Foundation Stage. Headteachers will be evaluating their performance and the implications going forward for 2027. The SIP will engage in this discussion and explore lessons learnt and next steps. SIPs will work with the school to understand the expectations for performance in statutory assessments in 2027.
16. When evaluating standards, it is important to link them to classroom processes, the curriculum and their oversight. This should form a key part of the SIP annual visit as it is in these areas that the developments likely to lead to improvement are most typically found. In some cases, helping schools to read any early warning signs will be an important component of the process. By balancing risks, capacity and the school's current performance it will be possible to identify whether the school is a priority for LA support.
17. Currently, too few children in vulnerable groups are achieving their potential across Hampshire. As this is an LA-wide issue, this area needs to be a central thread in the SIP annual visit for all schools. The aim is to ensure a system that is good for all children.
18. Pupil attendance is not as high as before the pandemic, if children are not attending this obviously impacts their attainment and life chances. The SIP annual visit will include a discussion about the attendance of all pupils and vulnerable groups.
19. In large schools, it may well be beneficial for the SIP to work with another inspector in undertaking the visit. This will enable a wider evidence base to support school improvement. It also provides the opportunity to use an inspector with specialist knowledge that links to a school improvement priority. Any such arrangements will be agreed between the SIM and the headteacher well in advance of the visit.
20. To further inform the visit it is helpful if the school shares with the SIP any self-evaluation and the school improvement plan, any analysis of current outcomes and the school's predictions of future outcomes for all pupils, including the vulnerable pupil groups.
21. **Focused enquiries are key to the SIP annual visit.** These are often posed as questions. This will create a bespoke visit that reflects the teaching and learning and standards enquiry focus through a lens that is agreed with the school in advance of the visit. **In 2026/27 the LA focus remains:**

How strong is teaching, as evidenced by its impact on the learning and standards, including for vulnerable groups?

22. The following areas will be woven throughout the process:

- a) consistency of curriculum impact (as experienced by all children) as evidenced through the quality of teaching
- b) consistency of standards of attainment (previous and expected trajectory) for all children
- c) robust and evidence-based assessment processes that impact on practice
- d) inclusion - prevailing culture, attendance and the specific impact of inclusion on the most vulnerable children
- e) leadership of improvement priorities and maintaining/developing sustainable capacity
- f) self-evaluation and strategy including governance.

23. Each SIP visit will include a brief *look* at safeguarding. This is not intended to be a safeguarding review or exhaustive evaluation, more a dip into an element of safeguarding. This will help shape a discussion with the leadership about safeguarding in the school in general.

SIP annual visit – planning for the day

24. Not less than a week before the visit, the headteacher and the SIP should negotiate and agree the format, timings and the nature and order of activities planned for the visit. It may be necessary to be flexible depending on what is seen on the day. **It is anticipated that the SIP will be on site for no fewer than five hours, and possibly more, depending on the size of the school and the agreed areas to be covered.**

Activity 1: Discussion with the leadership of the school about standards, teaching and learning and the curriculum

25. The starting point for this conversation is: how well do the leaders know the school? This should include a discussion about teaching and learning, standards and the curriculum. This will include areas for development and the plans in place to address these improvement areas.

The purpose of this discussion is to:

- gain an understanding of the headteacher's views about the strengths and areas for development in teaching and learning
- discuss the school strategy for improving teaching and learning
- explore pupil outcomes particularly RWM combined, and GLD, the headteacher's analysis and planned future actions including vulnerable groups
- explore expected outcomes in 2027, particularly at KS2 in RWM, in phonics and for vulnerable groups
- discuss inclusion indicators including attendance, suspensions and reduced hours provision
- discuss the school's curriculum, how it has been developed and any particular areas of strength or areas for further development

- identify any risks to continued improvement
- discuss progress against the actions of the previous year and Ofsted areas for improvement if the inspection was in the last three years
- explore the school's professional development programme and the impact of this programme on practice.

This conversation should be held with the headteacher and any members of the senior team who might provide helpful information.

Activity 2: Practical evaluation of teaching and learning

- 26.** The learning walk is at the heart of the process. Activities must include visits to classrooms and may also include discussions with children, adults and/or reviews of work samples. The focus is on the learning of all pupils. The learning walk may home in on a particular year group or a cross-section or may be across the whole school. The learning of vulnerable groups will always be part of this process. The delivered curriculum will be explored as part of the learning walk.

The negotiated school focus comes into play as part of the learning walk. An effective learning walk will provide evidence to deepen and enhance the discussions held in Activity 1. It may also be helpful to hold discussions with teachers as part of this activity, depending on the agreed focus and the school's ability to release staff.

Activity 3: Governance

- 27. Governors are a key part of the SIP annual visit.** They are the key body challenging and holding the school to account, and it is essential that they have an accurate and informed view of the school. This activity should involve a discussion with at least one - preferably several - governors. If governors are unable to attend, this area will be evaluated through a review of governing body minutes and headteacher reports to governors.

To support this evaluation, consider the following questions:

- **How well do governors know the school?** Can they articulate its strengths and weaknesses? How are they involved in setting the strategic direction?
- **What evidence do they use to ensure they know the school?** How do they ensure the headteacher's report is relevant? Is it reviewed regularly?
- **How do governors offer challenge in general and specifically around pupil outcomes?** Do they think their minutes reflect this?
- **How do the governors know safeguarding is effective?** What information do they request to assure themselves of this? Are they confident that policies are actively implemented in the school and accurately reflected on the website?
- **What inclusion indicators do governors monitor?** Are they satisfied with the attendance levels, suspensions and reduced hours provision?
- **How does the governing body overview the schools' finances?** Is this scrutiny reflected in the minutes?

Activity 4: Safeguarding

28. It is schools' statutory responsibility to manage safeguarding effectively. The SIP visit will include a brief look at an agreed element of safeguarding to dip into the school's practices that inform a wider discussion with the leadership about safeguarding.

Activity 5: Summary Discussion

29. This should summarise the findings of the visit, explore any risks to continued progress, agree key actions for improvement and determine if the school is a priority for LA support in the next year. The summary discussion should include at least one representative of the governing body. As part of this discussion, it is important to link each activity to provide an overall evaluation of the school's position.

The discussion should explore how the findings from the morning fit with the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan priorities. The findings must include the school's strengths and areas for further development. If there is a risk to the school maintaining a positive judgement at their next inspection this should be made clear.

Priority for support

The list in paragraph 10 can be used as a guide alongside evidence from the visit to determine if the school will require additional LA support. If this is the case, it needs to be made clear in the report and the reasons why the school needs LA support should also be detailed. In making this decision the capacity in the school should be weighed against the risks and challenges facing the school.

30. Reporting and identification of additional/follow-up actions

Shortly after the SIP visit, the SIP will draft a report that will include reference to:

- **Context:** activities that were undertaken during the visit and any relevant contextual information
- **Commentary:** the main body of the report will be in succinct prose with clear **summative, evaluative** statements, **selectively** referencing the evidence that exemplifies the impact of education on all children and any particular strengths or risks.
 - i. Specifically highlight any areas of provision that represent significant risks (including to maintaining a positive Ofsted outcome).
 - ii. Aspects of the school's provision that are particular and evidenced strengths.
 - iii. The quality of teaching and learning and the impact of this on all learners and standards.

- iv. Consistency of standards of attainment including groups and any risk this presents, capture expected outcomes for 2027 in RWM at KS2 and in phonics and be clear if standards need to improve including at GLD.
 - v. The prevailing culture of inclusion should be considered, including attendance data where improvements may be needed.
 - vi. The impact of leadership (including governance) and the capacity for future improvement including the robustness of plans and the quality of self-evaluation.
- **Outcomes (Summary of main findings):** This paragraph should briefly summarise any particular strengths or risks and include a clear statement about whether or not the school is a priority for LA support. The priority judgement weighs the capacity against the risks. If the school is a priority for LA support the areas of concern need to be laid out clearly in this section.
 - **Actions:** These will be drawn from the commentary and will identify the key areas of children's educational experience and achievements that are priorities for improvement, the degree of urgency and the most important steps that the school plans/needs to take first.

31. Report distribution and use

The report will be made available to the headteacher, governing body, SIM and other HIAS staff supporting schools and is intended to provide a prompt for appropriately focused further evaluations, actions and improvements to benefit the children of the school.

It is expected that governing bodies will arrange for the SIP annual report to be shared and discussed at a full governing body meeting as soon as practical after the visit, and at least annually thereafter.

Created by	Eric Halton		
Updated by	Ann Truman	Date updated	June 2026
Revision due	June 2027		