



Hampshire
County Council

Improvement and
Advisory Service

SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

The Annual Visit:

School Improvement Partner Review process

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Purpose of this guidance

This guidance provides the aims and outcomes of the Annual Review in secondary schools and an outline of the process for schools, School Improvement Partners (SIPs) and governors. It describes the core element of the review, and the potential for further focused activities that may be agreed with individual schools, or in pairs or groups of schools, in order to extend and enrich the process.

The Annual Review process - principles

Introduction and context – a strong relationship with schools

1. The Local Authority is in a partnership with all schools to secure the very best education for every child and young person. This relationship is based on a shared vision of excellence in which we work together to help every school become highly effective, so that all of our young people get the opportunities, provision, and outcomes they need to flourish, achieve, and succeed – now, and in the future. We strive to develop and maintain this relationship based on a number of key characteristics:
 - 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 falling below expected standards
 - 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 on the thinking and progress of the children and young people that they work with, and that this is the way in which new and innovative ways of working emerge
 - a **pledge** that we will act as champions of pupils, parents/carers and will pursue excellence
 - an **unwavering focus** on the most vulnerable children and young people in our society, including children in care and others in receipt of pupil premium, who are always of the highest priority
 - the **harnessing** of leadership capacity for the improvement of the whole system.
2. The characteristics set-out above align strongly with the current national educational climate – but they have not arisen from an external or central agenda. Rather, they are based on the rich and successful track record of the partnership that has grown in Hampshire over many years, and the reviewed Annual Review for maintained schools is one such process, and a central one.

3. The Local Authority and schools have said that they value the annual maintained School Improvement Partner visit in a range of ways, including, reaching an agreed view about the school's effectiveness within the prevailing criteria set by Ofsted; the value that the external support and challenge brings to school improvement; and the connections that are possible within the wider context of school improvement for example, other schools, examples of good practice, projects, and services. Hampshire has a significant and successful school improvement service; this is hugely strengthened by the large number of lead practitioners and professionals who have a commitment to school improvement, beyond the schools and establishments within which they work through their work in schools across a number of local authorities, membership of the Association of Education Advisers, and roles as Ofsted inspectors.

The aims and outcomes of the School Improvement Partner Annual Review

4. The Annual Review process has been developed over many years following the engagement of and feedback from headteachers as well as a range of other school improvement professionals.
5. The process aims to support all maintained schools in their ongoing improvements through external challenge. This will include an evaluation of the challenges that the school faces and its response, the school's capacity and the approach to improvement/development and the areas of strength, with reference to the impact of its work. It has the following main elements:
 - A School Improvement Partner for every school – that will be a suitably qualified and experienced school improvement professional
 - **'core'** elements that will enable support and challenge for all schools every year, and may respond to emerging local and national needs
 - **'bespoke'** elements for all schools that is negotiated between the SIP and the headteacher and focuses on the most significant areas that underpin the school's current improvement journey
 - the opportunity for strong schools to negotiate the structure of the process beyond the core element, to suit their needs, including collaborating with other schools.
6. This will result in a priority evaluation which enables:
 - **greater support and intervention** for those schools that need it most, fulfilling the Local Authority's statutory obligation.
7. This process sits within a cohesive and meaningful school improvement framework in partnership with the Local Authority. This approach allows the Local Authority to discharge its statutory functions around school improvement, pupils' performance, children in care and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), meet the individual needs of schools, and also make the best use of the expertise that lies within the Local Authority and schools. It is a partnership, building on previous best practices.
8. In schools that have recently been inspected by Ofsted and have a number of needs attention (NA) standards, or where outcomes for vulnerable pupils are a significant concern, the Annual Visit will be part of an overall Local Authority strategy to ensure rapid improvement.

9. The outcome of the process will be captured in a short summative, annual report, and record the school's priority level – high, medium, or low, for the Local Authority, depending on the balance between the capacity and the challenges. This will provide clarity about the level of resource required to support all schools in securing the required improvement, and the Local Authority's offer of support and intervention.
10. This process informs a wider Local Authority discussion about the appropriate package of support that might be developed and from where this support could be secured.
11. Part-funded Local Authority support will generally be provided for schools which are facing the most significant challenges in securing provision which is less than at an expected standard for all pupils, in light of their capacity. In broad terms, these will be situations in which:
 - the progress and attainment of pupils is too low
 - outcomes for, and/or progress of, vulnerable pupils are too low
 - there are significant concerns about the safety of children
 - the school has received a number of needs attention standards by Ofsted
12. The SIP Annual Review process is resourced by the Local Authority.

The Annual Review process can be commissioned by those schools outside of Hampshire or those schools that are academies, to supplement their self-evaluation processes and to verify their commitment to securing an external perspective on the areas of strength and those to be further developed.

The outline of the secondary Annual Review process

13. There are three main elements to the process:

- i. an **annual desk top** review conducted for all schools across a number of aspects, including a review of end of key stage attainment data, attendance, and exclusion data
- ii. the visit/s including the **core and bespoke elements** of the programme delivered through the annual SIP visits through the year leading to a report
- iii. the **summative report** capturing the agreed outcomes and school priorities.

14. All Local Authority maintained schools have a School Improvement Partner assigned to them, however, there may be some scope to review part of this deployment if there is some negotiation by schools to work collaboratively. In these cases, negotiation will be with the School Improvement Manager (SIM) and will be subject to available resources. SIPs are drawn from our experienced school improvement team.

Annual desk top review

15. The SIMs will review the performance of secondary schools across Hampshire during the autumn term. This review will use attainment and progress data from the end of each key stage, considering vulnerable groups in addition to all pupils, for all schools, including academies. It will also include the ongoing evaluation of attendance and exclusion data, and wider information from other sources. The analysis will be used to identify specific strengths and weaknesses across secondary education in Hampshire. It will be shared with the County Education Manager (CEM).

16. The review of schools' performance will be used to identify schools 'of concern' usually where if one or more of the following is in evidence:

- there is an indication of significant underperformance in relation to current or predicted end of key stage outcomes
- current data, in conjunction with historic patterns, show that the school's performance has remained low over time
- there is significant underperformance in vulnerable pupil groups, including children in care and those with SEND
- the underperformance of pupils with SEND raises concerns about their provision
- there is perceived to be a risk of an adverse Ofsted outcome within the current academic year
- there is evidence of a risk to pupils' safety or well-being
- the school's curriculum is considered not to be broad and balanced, including Personal Development
- there are significant issues affecting the leadership and management capacity of the school, which may have been impacted by the change of headteacher or other senior leaders.

17. The vast majority of schools will not be 'of concern'. However, where concerns are identified, the SIM will contact the school to discuss the situation. This may lead to follow up action such as a visit to the school, and/or an early visit by the SIP or other relevant professional/s. The purpose of the Local Authority contact is to ensure that there is an appropriate bespoke package of support in place that will secure rapid improvement. In these cases, a Local Authority visit to the full governing body may also be arranged to ensure that the school's context is understood fully, and any urgent action is taken collectively.
18. Where there are concerns about the performance of academies, the Local Authority will contact the school to discuss them. We may also contact academy Trusts, sponsors, a senior His Majesty's Inspector (HMI), and the Regional Director for Schools.
19. The review will also be used to identify potential areas of emerging or sustained strength. These might include:
- overall strength in quality of education
 - strengths in curriculum subject areas
 - strengths in the performance of disadvantaged pupils
 - strengths in the performance of pupils with SEND.
20. The results of this will be shared with the CEM so that a picture of strengths can be drawn up across the Local Authority. They will also be shared with the relevant SIP to inform their discussions with the school.

The Annual Review visits

21. The overwhelming majority of Hampshire secondary schools are at least at the nationally agreed Expected Standard. Therefore, the Annual Review visits should help the school to continue to maintain this strong quality of education and help support further improvement. Some schools might face risks in maintaining this status which if not addressed will cause the school to further decline over time. Engaging with schools about these will help them to address them in a timely manner. In a small number of schools, the quality might have already slipped or be weak. This needs to be addressed with them through this process and appropriate support identified to secure rapid improvement.
22. The component parts of the Annual Review visits consist of the school and the SIP:
- reviewing the school's development and strength in the curriculum and the delivery of strong teaching and learning, alongside future development priorities
 - reviewing the school's provision for pupils with additional needs, vulnerabilities and disadvantage, and the impact
 - reviewing the school's capacity against these areas, the leadership in place to support improvement, taking into account the need for sufficient ambition, focus and timeliness
 - carrying out a set of bespoke, jointly planned activities to triangulate or examine any of the above in more detail

- having a short discussion about the culture of safeguarding, the areas of focus and impact
- discussing the school's self-evaluation
- discussing the anticipated outcomes for the current Year 11
- agreeing the school's priority level for the Local Authority, and associated areas of development to support continued improvements.

23. For medium and high priority schools the process is less open for negotiation and will generally fit within the already planned programme of support. Where the SIM and the school feel that a more collaborative or bespoke approach would be most helpful to support the school on its trajectory of improvement this will be discussed with the school and the SIP.

For these priority schools the Annual Review will be arranged as one core visit and report and be balanced against the annual monitoring and evaluation visit to ensure the school has a well-spaced continuous support that provides an ongoing improvement discussion.

24. For low priority schools, the Annual Review process will be covered by three visits across the year, with short summaries and captured in one annual report.

Medium and high priority schools

25. The core element of the Annual Review will be arranged in two parts, including a short meeting – probably online, at which the school leaders share the current position, discuss some aspects of the data, and shape the programme for the day, and the full day visit. This is likely to take place in later autumn or early spring, by agreement.

26. Individual schools and/or the Local Authority may wish to extend the range of activities that contribute to or arise out of the Annual Review day by commissioning additional Local Authority time to support further evaluation and review.

Low priority schools

27. The Annual Review process will be arranged over three termly visits with a termly focus; typically, this will be considered as follows, but may have a focused piece which is threaded through each visit, following discussion with the headteacher.

Summer	Autumn	Spring
Review of strengths, developments, and aspects for further consideration		
• Quality of Education • Curriculum organisation - purpose? considerations? Impact? Development needs? • monitoring and evaluation summary? Strength of processes for evaluation in place? • Enrichment curriculum • Inclusion: Disadvantaged pupils - provision and impact • Behaviour and attitudes, and personal development– Strength of processes for evaluation in place? • Safeguarding – evaluation, development, and next steps	• Quality of Education • Attainment and progress – past and projected – validated evaluation and impact across all. First analysis of outcomes • Pupil progress review/ monitoring structures • Inclusion: SEND provision and strategies Local Offer – engagement and support for schools and families • Behaviour and attitudes, and personal development Attendance Exclusions • Safeguarding	• Leadership and Governance approaches and strategies - all layers. • School development planning • Monitoring and evaluation schedules, and resultant focus • Governance discretely • Safeguarding
Brief termly summative statements and agreed actions		For the LA and school leaders- summative and formative report recording the school's priority.
Inclusion of Challenge Partner (CP) as standard		

28. With agreement of the SIM, the SIP and headteacher may agree to maintain a single Annual Review visit in place of the sequenced visits, for low priority schools.
29. It is expected that the chair of governors or an experienced member of the governing body is in attendance in at least one of the three planned Annual Review sessions, and preferably in the spring term where there is a specific focus on leadership. In this visit there will be discussion about the skills, practice and impact of governance on the school's improvements, and the governing body's role in meeting the school's aims, realising its vision and in respect of wider accountability. The final report must be shared with the whole governing body as a tabled item as soon as possible after publication.

Criteria for evaluation

30. This following section sets out the criteria to be used in making judgements about strengths, areas for development, capacity and if the school is a high or medium priority for Local Authority support. This section also sets out thinking on improvement processes and how they relate to the school's capacity.

Schools will show many areas of strength over time and across the wide range of activity that takes place in them. One of the elements of the Annual Review process lies with identifying strengths that are such that they could be used to support development in other contexts, and in engaging the school in conversations about building further such strengths across its practice.

Areas for development

31. These are the areas on which the school is, or should be working, to improve the quality of education for pupils. They will be of different scale and significance depending on the point that the school has reached in its continued development. Performance data may provide an indicator; however, the identified development areas must reflect the areas requiring improvement rather than the outcome.

Capacity

32. Capacity is about securing and effecting change. A school with strong capacity can address short-term issues but also embed deeper change; being able to deliver both short and long-term change denotes capacity.
33. Schools with good capacity can point to a successful track record of embedding change over time. In some cases, though, impact may not yet be measurable as the school's leadership team has been established relatively recently. If this is the case, we would expect to see significant action underway. People will clearly understand the changes that need to be made and the reasons for them. There will be signs of changes to practice as a result.

School priority for support

34. The priority level is **not** a quasi-Ofsted judgement about a school. It is decoupled from the Ofsted process. Agreeing a priority level for support is intended to balance the size of the risks or challenges facing the school and its capacity, as shown below. A school may require considerable support that may diminish over a short period or may increase. The report will outline the reason for the support required.

35. In general, a **high priority** school will be facing a number of significant areas for development, or potentially a major issue in one area. The capacity to address the situation in a timely manner is limited and may well be insufficient. Examples of such issues are given below:

- either attainment and/or progress has been significantly low over time as judged by the end of key stage outcomes and current accurate in-year teacher assessment
- the past performance of disadvantaged pupils and/or those with SEND is well below that of their peers nationally and there is insufficient impact of any work that the school has done to address this
- the school has been in receipt of Local Authority support and has shown little sustained improvement
- the school has shown insufficient impact against priorities identified by Ofsted, the Local Authority or the school's self-evaluation in the timeframe
- there are issues relating to the safety and well-being of pupils and/or significant breakdown in relationships between teachers and pupils. This might be evidenced through levels of exclusion and/or attendance and/or a significant level of formal complaints to external bodies
- there is insufficient capacity within the school to drive other improvements needed in the appropriate timescale
- the school curriculum is not planned sufficiently well to meet the needs of the pupils in the school; aims or progression might be weak, insufficient clarity about expectations, and key elements of subject teaching are not explicit and are underdeveloped
- a reduction in the leadership capacity of the school, or weak leadership impact, due to a range of factors
- issues in the school's self-evaluation processes and/or improvement planning are such that there are significant risks that the school could have an inaccurate view of its performance, or elements of it and therefore fail to act in an appropriate and timely manner.

36. Schools that are considered to be a **medium priority** for support will be facing challenges, but these are at a lower level than those exemplified above. There will be capacity in the schools to address them but would benefit from additional outside support. Examples of the challenges facing such schools could include the following:

- there have been previous concerns about the underperformance of pupils with SEND or who are disadvantaged, and the impact of the school's actions has been variable

- there have been previous concerns about underperformance and whilst there is some capacity in the school there are still significant risks to securing the required improvement
- whilst the school has clear knowledge about its performance data, evaluation does not look sufficiently carefully at curricular provision and/or expectations within the school, and therefore is not helping the school understand the nature of the challenges it faces
- whilst the school is clear on what it needs to achieve for pupils, middle leaders - or too few of them - are not sufficiently clear on how the day-to-day work of the teams they lead and/or the curriculum that they oversee will achieve this.

37. The SIP will also make recommendations for subsequent actions, with agreed time specific deadlines wherever possible, to support the school's improvement. This may include working with other schools, accessing external support, commissioning HIAS services, or other local solutions.

38. The SIM will discuss with schools the extent of additional, allocated Local Authority funded time from the SIP to which schools may add from their resources in order to co-construct a programme for the year.

The inclusion of a Challenge Partner

39. The Annual Review process has been enhanced further by including school leaders with strength and experience in Hampshire secondary schools, to support the Annual Review as a Challenge Partner (CP). CPs are drawn from serving senior leaders in Hampshire secondary schools. Their purpose is to add another perspective to the discussions in the initial visit and share good practice when it is appropriate to do so.
40. The CP will work alongside the SIP during the visit/s. Their professional contribution is supportive and included by agreement with the headteacher.

Planning the Annual Review process - guidance

For low priority school, the secondary SIP visits will take place throughout the year with termly half-day visits, culminating in the final Annual Review report in spring.

For priority schools as far as possible the secondary SIP visit will place between October half term and February half term, requiring a full day to be planned in school with the planning time beforehand with the SIP and CP, and with the school.

The visits will be framed as appropriate by the SIP in conjunction with the headteacher and include the CP where appointed, cognisant of the pressures on schools and the knowledge already held about a school.

Ahead of the visit

41. Prior to any discussions with the school, the SIP should be aware of the findings in the previous Ofsted report, findings raised in reports of visit by HIAS inspectors, the school's overall performance and areas of significant strength and/or weakness, the performance of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEN over time, any information relating to exclusions and any concerns raised by the SIM through the desk top review.
42. Once the SIM has discussed the annual risk assessment with the SIP, the SIP will discuss the Annual Review date/s with the school, and the CP, where relevant.
43. Prior to the visit it may be helpful for the school to supply the SIP with its self-evaluation judgements against the prevailing Ofsted criteria, an overview of the evidence that has been used to reach those judgements, the school's predictions of future outcomes for all pupils, including the vulnerable pupil groups such as children in care, for the next two years, and the school improvement priorities; this will be a dynamic evaluative piece to reflect the school's ongoing work.
44. Not less 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/s.
 - For a half day visit, it is anticipated that the on-site visit be completed by 1pm, allowing time for the brief summative statement to be written. If more time is requested by the school to extend the focus, these activities should be commissioned, and dates planned so that they feed into the Annual Review process and the overall report.
 - For a full day visit, is anticipated that the Annual Review e be completed by 3.30pm. If more time is requested by the school to extend the focus, these activities should be commissioned, and dates planned so that they feed into the Annual Review process and the overall report.

The report

45. The Annual Review report will evaluate and record the school's provision across a number of areas; the impact of the school's leadership responsibilities is considered throughout, and it concludes with a judgement about the priority level the school is for the Local Authority and why, reporting a number of priorities for the school. Whilst the report is confidential to the school it is expected that it is shared with the full governing body and staff as the headteacher considers appropriate. The report is available on Perspective Lite; the school has the opportunity to review the draft report for factual accuracy ahead of final publication.

Support for the process

46. Further ongoing support for the process can be sought from the linked School Improvement Manager (SIM):

District	Name	Email
Basingstoke, Deane, Hart, Rushmoor and East Hants	Tania Harding	tania.harding@hants.gov.uk
Test Valley and New Forest and Eastleigh	Kate Broadribb	kate.broadribb@hants.gov.uk
Winchester, Havant, Fareham and Gosport	Helen Dear	helen.dear@hants.gov.uk