



Framework for Learning and Achievement

A unified framework for improving outcomes for the children and young people of the Isle of Wight

1: Values and Context

Directorate for Children & Young
People
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Framework for Learning and Achievement in the Isle of Wight

1: Values and Context

1. Rationale: a Unified System of School Improvement

The Isle of Wight Framework for Learning and Achievement is the product of a partnership of headteachers and central LA officers. It sets out shared commitments and expectations for values, actions, roles and procedures to ensure the best possible outcomes for IoW children and young people. The particular outcome focus here is ECM “Enjoy and Achieve”, but the interdependence of all 5 outcomes is recognised.

This first document establishes the value-set informing professional processes. It includes:

- Commitment to the centrality of the child as a learner
- Purpose/audience
- Legislative background
- Vision
- Accountabilities
- Support, monitoring and intervention

2. Our shared commitment to place the child/young person at the centre of all we do.

Whether we work directly with learners, teachers or managers in schools and other settings we will ask this question to check if we are doing well:

Can we link all yesterday's actions and tomorrow's plans to their impact for children and young people?

All activities of the Isle of Wight learning community will have the child or the young person at the centre; the success of children and young people as learners must be the ultimate measure of all our work. High expectations and successful outcomes in all areas of well-being, as measured by national assessment procedures appropriate to age and ability, are essential for successful learners.

Leaders at all levels share a key responsibility for ensuring all children and young people are provided with the best possible access to learning development and personal growth reflecting Every Child Matters aspirations. Leaders must ensure that the relevance of this vision is understood by all appropriate stakeholders in the learning community so our systems and procedures are followed through with purpose and commitment.

3. Purpose and audience

This framework for learning and achievement defines the relationships and processes that the local authority, schools and other settings need to deliver to ensure the learning and achievement of all children and young people on the Isle of Wight so their experiences and outcomes are the best possible.

We are all committed to and work to secure and maintain our individual, team and collective efficiency and effectiveness. This Framework's protocols and procedures, collectively devised and agreed within our moral purpose, statutory duties and local context, aim further to build trust, confidence and common purpose. This reflects where we are in 2008: a learning community that 'meets minimum requirements' but which is committed to becoming one that is "good and improving" and working towards becoming "outstanding".

Children and Young People on the Isle of Wight deserve the very best start in life and working collectively through the Framework to become an "outstanding" learning community will have a material and measurable impact on Children and Young People's well-being.

Our Audience is as wide as our accountabilities. At the end of April 2008 a group of headteachers, officers and external consultants worked together to develop the broad headings and key features of a framework document. We will work closely with this group to refine the current draft, and hope that the same group (in consultation with others) will steer its implementation.

This framework is also a central strand of the working of the Council¹ and especially this Directorate, schools and settings and their staff, as well as partners providing services around the Child or Young Person. The full engagement of officers, leadership teams, governors, staff and learners with the actions, plans and programmes of the framework will positively impact on children's well-being by improving teaching, learning and their management. The Isle of Wight Directorate for Children and Young People is committed to building an active partnership with schools, settings and other partners so that children and young people and all in the community can benefit.

4. The Isle of Wight vision for children and young people

The Children and Young People Plan 2006-2009² articulates the promise of the LA with its partners to champion the presence, involvement and success of children and young people living on the Isle of Wight. As a champion for all learners the authority will monitor and celebrate achievement of children and young people everywhere.

We understand that particular groups of children and young people experience higher levels of disadvantage than others and are consequently less likely to achieve the good outcomes articulated in Every Child Matters. The local authority will ensure that its own practice and that of schools and settings contributes to reducing inequality wherever it exists. We will endeavour to narrow the gaps in the attainment of children and young people and improve the life chances of vulnerable groups such as Looked after Children, those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those facing particular pressures such as young carers or young parents.

To narrow the gap between those in relative privilege and those in disadvantaged circumstances the Directorate for Children and Young People is organised to provide services and support around the child through integrated working and locality planning. Within the Learning and Achievement Division SIPs and others' focus will include Narrowing the Gap, equity and access issues as well as overall data and targets.

¹ Hyperlink to Councils priorities

² Hyperlink to doc

5. The core values and principles on which the strategy is based:

Core Values

As members of one community of learning in an interdependent world we all commit to the following core values, and will ensure that they underpin our work and professional relationships:

Genuine trust, mutual respect and engagement, partnership, integrity, honesty, loyalty, excellence

The following Core Principles will inform all that we do collectively and individually:

- *All children will achieve their potential* to maximise their life chances. *Narrowing the gaps* between the most advantaged and the most vulnerable groups will be a priority for all.
- *Learning will be personalised* to every child and young person and will be underpinned by phase specific learner entitlements
- We will *nurture and support* all children and young people to be ready to learn with the ability to reflect on their learning and their personal and social development
- We will actively involve and *listen to the voice of all participants* in the learning community
- We will be *one learning community*. We believe that at all levels *collaborative learning* is essential
- We will be *learning organisations* which will explore, develop and continually improve our learning environments
- We will celebrate our own and each others' successes and *use success to support others*.
- We believe in *equal access* to education, care, guidance and support and equity in outcomes
- Practice and *outcomes judged to be 'satisfactory'* are *not sufficient* for learners on the Isle of Wight.
- We *aspire to excellence and plan to achieve it by comparing* ourselves to and drawing upon local, national and global outstanding practice
- The *5 ECM outcomes* of learners' well-being will underpin the planning delivery and evaluation of all learning
- We recognise and build upon prior learning as a basis for current and future learning and will take *collective responsibility for pupil progress* within and across phases.

6. Responsibilities and Accountability for achieving the aims of the Framework.

The Framework cycle is set out in Framework Document 2. This section describes the background of collective accountabilities which make it work. Professionals' accountabilities reflect the multi-dimensional nature of their work and are more complex than reporting relationships. They have direct line management or reporting *responsibilities*, they *engage* with and respond to partners, and have *accountability* as professionals for work they undertake to professional standards.

Headteachers

National standards for Headteachers include:

- Shaping the future;
- Leading learning and teaching;
- Developing self and working with others
- Managing the organisation
- Securing accountability
- Strengthening community

Whilst all contribute to the role, *Leading learning and teaching* is the key focus area for school improvement. This involves for example:

- Taking collective responsibility to deliver the Island's agreed core principles and commitment to the child
- Strategically leading the organisation to ensure core values are embedded
- Providing the strategic leadership for quality assurance, school self-evaluation, resource management, health and safety, implementing statutory orders and policy implementation
- Ensuring the well-being of children and young people through their quality of teaching and learning, targets set, active tracking processes and effective partnerships
- Ensuring the success and enjoyment of staff through staff development and performance management, well-being including health and safety, positive links with both national and local professional associations
- Enabling Governors and external agencies to engage in a challenging dialogue through sharing information relating to performance, planning for further school improvement, and the way resources are used to achieve value for money

Headteachers are *responsible* to their governors for the delivery of the school's improvement and self evaluation, including proposing and meeting statutory targets, school improvement priorities and ensuring effective relationships and performance management.

In order for the LA to deliver its responsibilities for the Framework, head teachers *engage* with LA officers including SIPs, in their accounts of data analysis, school self evaluation, development planning, target setting, monitoring and review processes.

Governors:

Governors' accountabilities generally include:

- appointment of staff and establishing personnel and other policies.

- management of the budget.
- determining broad aims, policies and priorities of the school.
- monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
- setting statutory and non statutory targets.
- securing high levels of attendance and good standards of pupil behaviour.
- ensuring that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum suitable to age, aptitude and ability, which prepares them for adult life.
- ensuring the health and safety of pupils and staff.

For this framework, monitoring and evaluating and target setting are key. Governors are *accountable* to their communities, pupils and staff, and *engage* with the LA in strategic directions, training, governance, target setting and performance management.

Local Authority

Directorate

The Directorate for Children and young People is *responsible* through the Director of Children's Services to the Chief Executive, through the Lead Member to the Council, and through both to the community of the Isle of Wight, with whom they also *engage* directly. *Accountabilities* for Learning and Achievement also go through the Children's Trust and to the Local Community Partnership within the contexts of the Children and Young People's Strategic Plan and the Local Area Agreement. The 2004 Act Duty to Co-operate between Trust partners is intended to address the inter-dependence of the 5 ECM outcomes, and thus recognise the multi-dimensional nature of *mutual accountabilities* of Children's Services agencies which is implicit in the Act.

The directorate also recognises its *accountability* to the DCSF through GOSE and National Strategies as appropriate, and *engages* with their representatives to deliver targets which represent the conditions attached to targeted funding. Insofar as DCSF allocates targeted funding for improvement work on the Island, there may be an additional dimension, such as that recently delivered by Mouchel Consulting. Such consultants are *responsible* through their contracts to their client, *engage* with schools, and are *accountable* professionally for the quality of their work. The pattern of engagement is thus expanded, and ultimately co-ordination is assured through the Improvement Board or other DCSF arrangements.

A full account of LA responsibilities would include the very rare occasions when they are required to assume accountability for a school by invoking Code of Practice intervention procedures. In these extra-ordinary circumstances responsibilities assume a different shape, with extra powers assumed by the LA subject to evidential and procedural justification.

School Improvement

The Head of Learning and Achievement is *responsible* to the Director of Children's Services for learning and achievement outcomes, and thus for the Framework for Learning and Achievement. The Principal Advisers 0-13 & 13-19, and Commissioners for Alternative Provision and School Standards are the senior managers *responsible* under the Head of Learning and Achievement for leading the Learning and Achievement teams and engaging with head teachers and governors as set out in the Framework.

Senior LA Officers

Responsible under LA reporting mechanisms, these officers (including SIPs) are *accountable* to head teachers and governors for the quality of support in their teams and thus for:

- The LA's good knowledge of its schools informing effective targeted support for them through professional interventions and SIPs' work
- The professional relationships between the LA and schools
- The quality and credibility of monitoring and review
- The focus, rigour and challenge of visits so that purposeful, objective and evaluative conversations are reflected in reports
- The ability to work with the schools' agenda building rapport, trust and empathy with head teachers
- Links with professional associations and professional representative groups ensuring the transparency of systems and decisions
- The ability to anticipate and respond to schools' needs

School Improvement Partners

The School Improvement Partner (SIP), works within the LA Learning and Achievement Division and is the main but not the only channel for local authority communication about the effectiveness of the school (according to the case other senior officers may also be involved). Thus the SIP embodies the LA/school relationship: in management terms they are explicitly *responsible* for professional advice to the Learning and Achievement Division reflecting

- A focus on pupil needs and progress and attainment across the ability range, and the many factors which influence it, including pupil well-being, extended services and parental involvement;
- Empathy, and respect for their schools' autonomy to plan their development, starting from the school's validated self-evaluation and the needs of the pupils and of other members of the school community;
- Informed professional challenge and support, so that the school's practice and performance are improved through skilled questioning and analysis;
- An evidence-based assessment of the school's performance and its strategies for improving learning, teaching and the curriculum and
- Examining school performance in delivering the outcomes of the ECM agenda

SIPS are also professionally *accountable* to headteachers and governors, with whom they engage to ensure

- Effective performance management of headteachers
- Support, challenge and communications consistent with their *responsibilities* to the Learning and Achievement Division

7. Legislative Framework

The professional context underpinned by education law is the relative autonomy and responsibility of headteachers for their school improvement, acting with governors and the local authority. The legal context includes the School Standards and Framework Act (1998)³ which placed a statutory duty on local authorities to provide high standards of education for children. The Children Act 2004⁴ emphasises the key leadership roles of the Director and Lead Member of Children’s Services and the duty of all partners to cooperate in the well-being of children as defined under the five outcomes:

- Be healthy;
- Stay safe;
- Enjoy and achieve;
- Make a positive contribution and
- Achieve economic well-being

The Government has devolved power to local authorities and their partners through Children’s Trusts to develop their own local change programme for improving outcomes for children. The Education Act 2005⁵ emphasised schools’ self evaluation in the context of a new inspection framework and a “single conversation” for schools on their improvement route, which is the origin of our aspiration for a unified system for the Island. It also required ‘that early and decisive action should be taken to ensure that children in schools causing concern are disadvantaged for the shortest time possible’. New statutory arrangements were introduced in the Education and Inspection Act 2006⁶; these provide: enhanced local authority powers to intervene; a need for schools placed in Ofsted categories to “make sufficient progress in reasonable time”; identified actions to enhance leadership in schools causing concern.

The statutory duty to raise standards is reflected in this framework and the roles and responsibilities shared with schools, settings and other partners. The Isle of Wight LA will work with partners to establish an enabling environment which balances the autonomy schools and settings have to innovate and succeed, with robust challenge and early support when schools or settings are underperforming relative to trajectories, benchmarks or potential.

8. Unified Cycle of Support, Monitoring, Challenge and Intervention

Commitment and Approach

The Learning and Achievement Division (LAD) is committed to ensuring that standards in all schools and settings are improving and that full attention is given to children’s well-being. Our ambition is to raise attainment at the end of all key stages, to that achieved by the top 25% of authorities nationally, and to ensure improvements in the 5 outcomes of the well-being agenda. Currently our standards against the measures in Enjoy and Achieve require the greatest improvement.

Key principles of our approach are

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- the belief that schools, settings and the Directorate will improve most effectively where there is a *will and drive from within the whole partnership*
- secure procedures for *self evaluation* that involve a wide range of stakeholders.
- LA *intervention will be in inverse proportion to success* and will relate directly to the solidity of the school's self evaluation.
- The extent of intervention will be triggered by robust *monitoring and evaluation* which places the school in a category for support

The Learning and Achievement Division monitors aspects of school and setting performance to provide a clear basis for distinguishing between those schools, teams and settings that are making good progress and those that would benefit from levels of additional support. This enables it to:

- *assess strengths and areas for development* with schools and settings;
- *target resources* to schools and settings with the greatest need, providing and commissioning the required support for them to improve;
- ensure schools and settings have the information to *set and meet demanding performance targets for all pupils*, including those from vulnerable groups or experiencing challenging circumstances;
- *challenge, where necessary, targets* set by the governing body as well as any aspects of the school or setting where there is evidence of under performance;
- bring together school and settings targets and Local Authorities contribution to achieving them through its Learning and Achievement programme;
- *identify and share good practice.*

Functions

SIP Programme

LAD carries out its responsibilities for monitoring and supporting schools through a programme of visits led by the school improvement partner (SIP). The programme of SIP visits include:

- review and evaluation of the most recent set of results and agreement of future targets;
- advice to the governing body on the performance management of the headteacher;
- monitoring of progress against the school's priorities for improvement;
- sign-posting schools to providers that can support the schools improvement agenda and
- annual review leading to an overall judgement of effectiveness.

As part of the annual review, schools moderate and agree their own self-evaluation judgements against the criteria in the Framework (see Framework Document 2), based on robust evidence using quantitative and qualitative indicators and in dialogue with the SIP. This leads to agreement of the school's strengths, areas for development and overall category of school effectiveness.

Classification

The identification of schools within categories of school effectiveness (classification) enables headteachers and governors to have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their school and enables the Local Authority to identify those schools that have the expertise and capacity to support others and differentiate its support to schools experiencing difficulties or challenges. In partnership with schools, the Local Authority will review classification outcomes at least twice a year based on the school's judgements and the evidence it holds separately. (October/March)

Support

Central to supporting schools is an enabling ethos that strives for effective communication, manageable structures and procedures for discussion, information sharing, the provision of advice that is timely and effectively communicated and consultation that engages professionals appropriately in the decision making process.

Identifying the school's improvement priorities is the starting point, and thus the kind of activities needed, then signposting how it can be done. Developing and maintaining a register of 'areas of expertise' will enable us to readily access the expertise that we currently have within our learning community. At the same time we also need to build a register of providers which contains the relevant information on freelance consultants, consultancy services, trainers, schools and agency whose business is school or setting improvement. This register of providers will include those services provided by the LA.

Monitoring

The monitoring of schools by the Learning and Achievement Division is undertaken mainly through an assessment of performance of all schools through the programme of SIP visits and an analysis of performance data. These visits include meetings with the headteacher and other senior staff, the chair of governors and the SIP in order to evaluate the school's overall performance. This is based on its own self-evaluation evidence, including performance data and other information supplied by the full range of Local Authority services. It leads to agreement of the school's statutory targets. Where there are issues related to particular groups of pupils such as looked after children, minority ethnic pupils, pupils eligible for free school meals and LDD groups, the SIP may be accompanied by a specialist officer from the Directorate.

In preparation for the programme of visits, the school updates its self-evaluation report and prepares to engage with the SIP in evidenced validation of the SEF judgements. The school also prepares draft statutory targets for discussion and agreement with the SIP prior to approval by the governing body. These documents are sent to the SIP at least one week in advance of any visit.

As a result of discussions based on the overall achievement, progress and wellbeing of the pupils, the school will be placed in a category on the overall framework, which will determine the nature of LA support. This category is confirmed in writing as part of the report completed by the SIP; the head teacher will have the opportunity to comment on this. In the case of a difference of opinion between the school and the SIP about the category, there may be a verification process after which the confirmed LAD judgement will stand. The school's view will be recorded, along with the evidence to support it.

The level of school support will determine any required programme of activity over and above the remaining SIP visits. This programme will be agreed by the SIP with the Commissioner for Standards and Principal Advisers and recorded in the annual report.

Information from the programme of SIP visits, along with other data, will identify areas of strength and expertise as well as support needs, then. It will thus give early indications of schools causing concern. A school will be placed on the Learning and Achievement register of schools causing concern if:

- it is facing emerging difficulties or challenges;
- it has limited capacity to drive its improve agenda;
- there are other serious concerns which will affect the outcomes for children
- it is in an Ofsted category;

Inclusion on the register of support to schools should be a shared decision between the authority, the Governing Body and the Headteacher, as this releases resources to support the school. However guidance from the DCSF arising from the Education and Inspection Act 2006 clearly identifies the process for the authority to issue warning letters under the LA Code of Practice. Identifying a school as needing support should be seen as proactive and in the best interests of children and young people so that the issues causing concern can be remedied in the shortest possible time.

The use of the Ofsted SEF and the validation of the school self-evaluation report to inform the Annual Report will enable headteachers, governors and officers to identify trends, be clear whether the school is improving coasting or declining and plan accordingly. There may on rare occasions be a disagreement between the SIP and the Headteacher and governors the SIP's quality assurance of the school's self-evaluation. In these circumstances the LAD may undertake a 'progress check' by reviewing performance and standards in a school. While the progress check will be available as a traded service for schools' active self evaluation, its use to resolve disagreements on performance and standards in a school will be rare.

Additional support is also available for schools which have recently been in an Ofsted category of concern, have new headteachers, or are experiencing unforeseen challenges.

Challenge

We recognise that self-improving schools welcome constructive professional challenge in order to ensure continuous improvement. This challenge will be provided by SIPs, governors, LAD Officers or by external agents commissioned by the school/setting or by the LA on their behalf. The main challenge from Learning and Achievement Division to schools is provided through the SIP programme when considering:

- targets for the improvement of pupil performance, attendance and reductions in exclusions;
- the school's self-evaluation judgements against each aspect of the validated school self-review framework, based on evidence;
- any aspects of a school's performance (for example, partnerships with other providers and organisations, under-achievement of particular groups of pupils) where there are concerns;
- the progress of the school against its priorities for improvement;

- the extent of improvement from a school's previous best.

'Challenge' includes exploring the priority ascribed by the headteacher and the governing body to any issues needing improvement, discussing the evidence and offering advice and support so that a school can deliver its own action plan for improvement. The process may lead to inclusion in a classification of support or to the identification of the school into supportive intervention as causing concern.

Quality Assurance

The Learning and Achievement Division is committed to working with schools and other stakeholders to ensure high quality, effective services, based on ease of access and regularity and consistency of delivery.

The work of SIPs will be quality assured by the Commissioner for School Standards and Principal Advisers (0-13/11-19) in accordance with the national guidelines. Schools will make a significant contribution to this process through a range of feedback procedures. If a school or governing body considers that Learning and Achievement Division has disregarded the Code, complaints should be addressed to the Head of Learning and Achievement.

The authority is monitored and challenged on a regular basis through the Annual Performance Assessment (to be replaced by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment). Schools' views on the effectiveness of the authority are gained through the Audit Commission Survey of Schools, the evaluation of central training programmes by participants, and the wider communication process which includes a termly briefing and conference day for key leaders.

LAD will introduce Support Agreements that articulate the aim and objective of any support whether provided, commissioned or traded. This agreement will clarify the form, volume, frequency and duration of that support and the dates on which the support is reviewed and evaluated. The final evaluation will contribute to LAD developing quality assurance processes.

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