

Local Authority High Level Action

All Suffolk Local Authority (LA) maintained schools who meet the criteria are entitled to timely High Level Action (HLA). HLA is proven to work and supports leaders in securing rapid and sustainable impact on pupil outcomes and Ofsted outcomes as part of the Raising the Bar (RtB) school improvement strategy.

The HLA process is a key part of the school improvement strategy and enables the LA to fulfil its statutory roles and meet expectations as described in the Department for Education (DfE) [Schools Causing Concern guidance](#).

HLA is the LA's process to provide a period of intensive support and challenge to school leaders to support them to address the cause of concern. It is not taken lightly. It is taken in LA maintained schools where evidence indicates that, following previous additional support, actions taken by school leaders, including governors, have not or will not secure the improvement at the pace needed. The RtB school improvement strategy summary shows where HLA fits.

To meet the criteria for HLA the evidence will indicate:

- leaders' actions are not ensuring that pupils are safe at the school and/or
- leaders' actions are not mitigating the risk of pupils' significant underachievement and/or
- leaders' actions are not ensuring all pupils get a good quality of education and/or
- a risk of breakdown of leadership and management.

The purpose of HLA intervention is to bring about rapid recovery and ensure the school has the capacity to sustain improvements.

This information provides further detail about the box in section 1 of the LA school improvement strategy summary that reads; *"Timely high level LA action in schools where progress is not rapid enough"*.

Bespoke challenge and support from the Local Authority (LA) through regular Standards and Excellence Officer (SEO) visits and, if the school is in the Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network (SLIN), two peer reviews a year.

Evidence seen by ESL Officers indicates that school leaders are securing the school's improvement at an appropriate pace.

Evidence seen by Education Skills and Learning (ESL) Officers, indicates a risk of the school meeting one of the four criteria for HLA as listed on page 1. These are discussed with school leaders and the actions they are planning to take. Additional support from ESL officers may be agreed.

Evidence seen by ESL Officers indicates that school leaders are not securing the school's improvement at an appropriate pace.

ESL Officers consider the evidence and whether the appropriate HLA is a Declaration of Concern (DoC), Preventative Warning Letter (PWL) or Warning Notice (WN). A meeting is held with the chair of governors and headteacher to discuss the concerns and causal factors. Actions are agreed for the school leaders and LA. This will include any external support needed to secure rapid improvement. Timescales and processes for the HLA period are confirmed. For WNs this will include regular Accountability Improvement Board (AIB) meetings.*

During the HLA period, all LA officers working with the school give clear messages about the pace of improvement and any further evidence of impact needed. At the end of the timescale for DoCs and PWLs, the range of evidence goes through a two stage moderation by senior ESL Officers, before being signed off by the Head of School Improvement and ratified by the HLA board. For schools with a WN the impact of actions taken is evaluated at each AIB meeting. The frequency of the AIB meetings is adjusted to reflect progress against the concerns.

Evidence shows that leaders are taking appropriate actions to address the concerns and that the impact of these actions will be sustained. Meeting with school leaders acknowledges this and the HLA is lifted.

There is not sufficient evidence seen to indicate that leaders are taking appropriate actions to address the concerns. Meeting with school leaders explains this and what further HLA will be taken.

Further actions within the HLA process that will be considered are:

- issuing a Preventative Warning Letter
- issuing a Notice of Financial Concern
- issuing a Warning Notice
- appointing additional governors
- suspending the delegated budget
- request that Ofsted inspect the school or setting.

Further actions for schools with a Warning Notice that will be considered are:

- applying to the Secretary of State to establish an Interim Executive Board in schools with a WN
- liaising with the Regional Schools' Commissioner to secure an academy solution