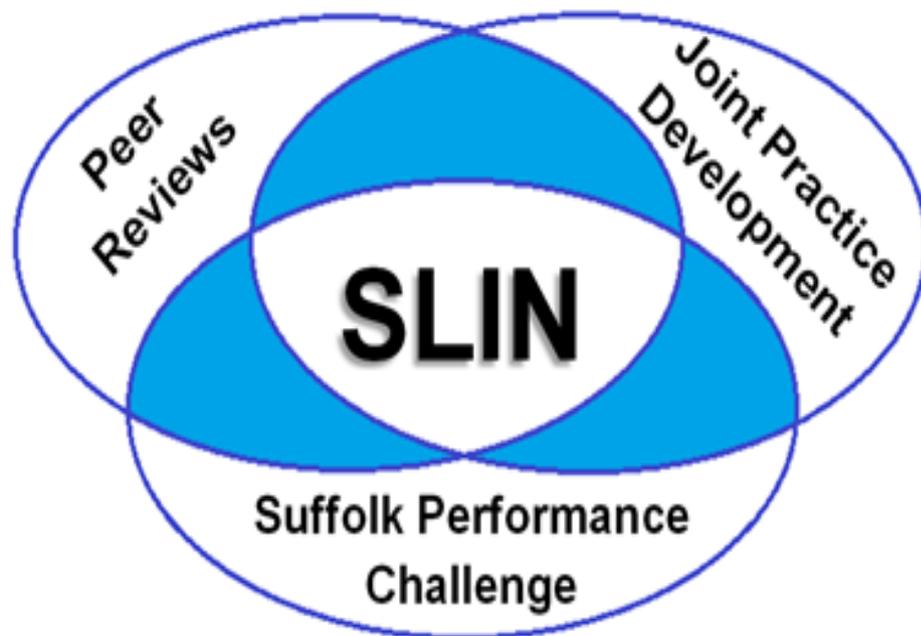


Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network

SLIN

Autumn 2021



Welcome to The Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network (SLIN). Following on from three successful years, there now fifty-seven primary schools in the network for this coming year.

Over the past three years we have achieved a great deal across Suffolk due to the engagement of schools and the commitment of leadership teams. COVID stalled SLIN for a short period of time, but we have re started the SLIN engine as signified by fifty summer 2021 peer reviews taking place.

Our aspiration aim is that 80% of Suffolk primary schools are part of this network by September 2024, Year 6 of SLIN

In this handbook you will find everything that you need to guide you through your engagement with the Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network.

Background to the model

The Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network (SLIN) has been designed by Suffolk school leaders. The Headteacher Associations in Suffolk, the School-to-School Support Partnership and the local authority have recognised the importance of establishing **a self-improving school system to address the key educational challenges in Suffolk**, particularly in raising attainment and progress in all phases to meet and exceed that found nationally.

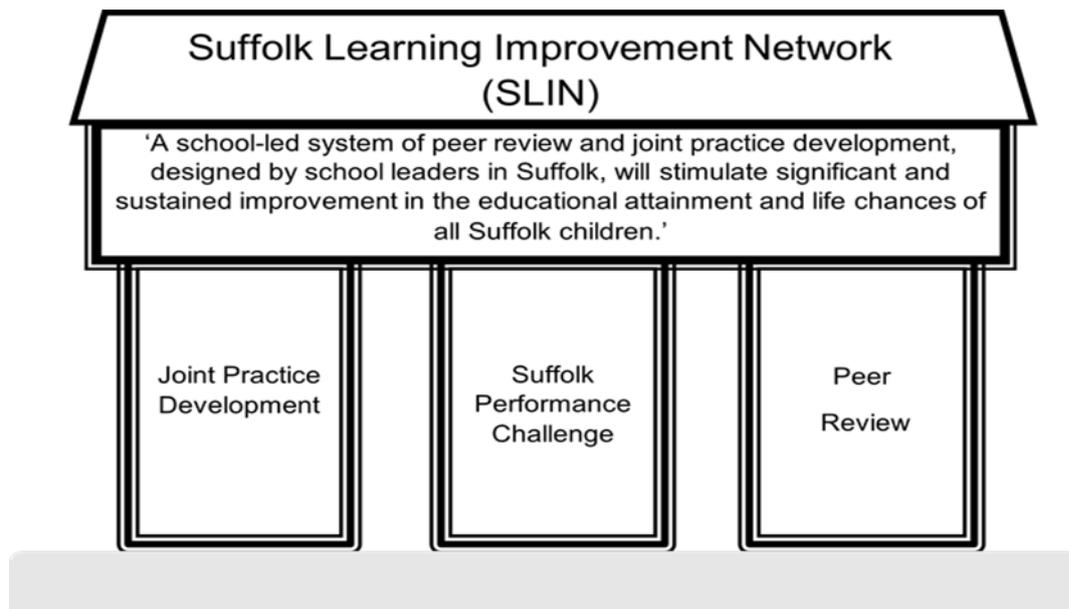
'SLIN has been invaluable in my development as a Headteacher. As a new Head of School 3 years ago, SLIN has helped me build a network of contacts, support and professional challenge. Being part of SLIN you feel part of a collective group, jointly working together to improve standards not just in your school or Academy but across Suffolk.' Helen Murray, Headteacher Wickham Market

This network is based on considerable research which was undertaken by the Headteachers' Association and the Local Authority back in 2015/16. Visits were undertaken to Liverpool, Knowsley, Peterborough and Hounslow to establish the systems and processes that would be best for Suffolk schools. The Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network is the outcome of very fruitful collaboration between all partners. The SLIN partnership will go from strength to strength with this continued partnership.

"A good opportunity to step back and reflect with the support of colleagues... gaining a new insight into your own and other school practice" Jo Austin, Headteacher Copdock and Bentley Primary Schools

The Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network

SLIN is a collaborative partnership between publicly funded schools in Suffolk and the local authority that promotes collective responsibility for the educational outcomes of children and young people in the county's schools. Shared moral purpose is reflected in the public value proposition:



The aims of SLIN are to:

- Foster and embed ambition, high aspiration and achievement for all the children and young people educated in Suffolk.
- Establish a distinctive and sustainable 'Suffolk' approach to support for school improvement, created, developed and owned by Suffolk schools, and founded on the principles of 'system leadership', in which school leaders contribute to school improvement beyond their own school.
- Adopt an approach to school improvement through robust peer review that supports and challenges all schools at whatever stage of their improvement journey.
- Provide a systematic approach to the commissioning and brokering of joint practice development, drawing on research and leading practice in Suffolk and nationally.

SLIN Organisation Structure (Appendix 1)

The Suffolk Performance Challenge 2021/22

The underlying core principle for SLIN is the improvement of outcomes for all Suffolk pupils. This is at the heart of SLIN and peer reviews. SLIN has established a collective responsibility for this- every school will do something!

SLIN is focused on improving outcomes for all pupils across all subjects so that Suffolk pupils are fully prepared for their on-going education journey.

A key aspect of the peer reviews is a conversation about pupil outcomes, this will ensure that we are seeing the steps towards improvement from in school evidence that will be seen in published performance data when it is next available as schools continue on their improvement journey

Whilst there are challenges around current national data, we must not lose sight of the aspiration that Suffolk will achieve above national figures

Joint Practice Development (JPD)

School leaders may refer to this as CPD. We have chosen to use this term JPD as it is indeed CPD jointly developed with SLIN partners to meet an identified need.

Themes for JPD will come from the outcomes of the peer reviews. The SLIN board will commission teaching schools and hubs, to provide the school improvement support required in Suffolk. This is fully funded by SLIN.

There is a SLIN Year 4 welcome event and training session on Wednesday 15th September 2021. We ask that all SLIN schools for 2021/22 attend this event.

Peer Reviews

We are working from the premise that peer reviews will be face-to-face from the Autumn term. However, due to level of uncertainty, we will leave it up to school leaders to decide whether face to face or virtual is best for their setting or triad.

When consulted, those Year 3 triads who have undertaken reviews in the summer term 2021 wished to remain in their current triads for the Year 4.

Autumn 2021 Peer Review cycle will be completed by Friday 26th November 2021.

The focus/foci for this review is chosen by the host school. It important to bear in mind that having an area of development **and** a strength or strengths that are scrutinised or validated against a wider range of evidence of the peer review by the peer review process is at the very heart of SLIN.

An area of strength- an aspect of school improvement a school would like validated externally.

An area of development- an aspect of school improvement requiring an external view on in terms of progress to date, next steps and possible different ways or method to take it forward.

A peer review is not a mini OFSTED. Asking colleagues for their validation on certain aspects of a school is valuable.

Peer Review Champions

Peer Review Champions (PRCs) are vital cogs of the SLIN engine. As a SLIN school they are your **first point of contact** should you have any questions or queries related to your triad or peer review. Core functions of PRCs

- Peer Review Champions will each coordinate a programme of peer reviews for one or two triads, working closely with the SLIN Project Facilitator- Jacqui Frost.
- Peer Review Champions will make contact with the schools in each of their triads
- They will pull together key themes from peer reviews to inform the commissioning of joint practice development.
- Peer Review Champions will also quality assure the peer review programme, by sampling peer reviews within their group of triads. Each triad will have one quality assurance visit from their PRC over the course of the year.
- Peer Review Champions will be a key point of liaison between the project team, the Programme Board and participating schools. They are central to providing information to the SLIN board, enabling the board to evaluate the impact of SLIN against the overall aims.

Peer Review Champion	PRCh Email address
Alun Davies	alun.davies@melton.suffolk.sch.uk
Ed Pearson-Shaul	e.pearson-shaul@avocetacademy.org
Ruth Slater	rslater@bures.suffolk.sch.uk
Beverley Derrett	head@tattington.suffolk.sch.uk
Gill Mitchell	Gillian.mitchell@eastbergholt-pri.suffolk.sch.uk
Christine Friar	c.friar@creetingstmary.suffolk.sch.uk
James Ratcliffe	j.ratcliffe@avocetacademy.org

SLIN IN PRACTICE

- School leaders undertaking the peer reviews will scrutinise
 - at **the quality of education**
 - how it contributes to the **Suffolk Performance Challenge**
 - establish **areas of school improvement to feed into a wider picture of JPD** that will be funded through the Suffolk Learning and Improvement Network
- With senior school staff assess the the impact of teaching and the curriculum on learning and achievement.
- Take the opportunity to scrutinise at pupils' books across the curriculum to validate the school's chosen area of strength or provide support for identifying next steps in another chosen area.
- School leaders undertaking peer reviews should also have discussions with school leaders and a range of staff about the quality of teaching at the school and how they know. These discussion should be linked to the two aspects chosen for the peer review.

Key to the success of our model is consistency in terms of:

- **Protocols**
- **Preparation**
- **Procedures**

The Peer Review remit is:

- to carry out a programme of peer review to support school improvement across Suffolk
- to scrutinise school self-evaluation
- to identify validate strengths, and provide further support for identified

Peer Review Protocols

Key to the success of the peer review process is consistency in terms of:

- Protocols
- Preparation
- Procedures

Protocols

- All colleagues must please prioritise Peer Review in their diaries.
- The Triad meeting is for Headteachers. The host school is welcome to involve senior managers to participate as part of their CPD.
- Only the Headteacher from the Lead and support schools can attend unless there is prior agreement from the Triad that a deputy can attend.
- All colleagues within the Triad must commit sufficient time to meeting preparation, attendance, and follow up.
- All colleagues must ensure that they are appropriately prepared for their Review visits.
- The Review Report should be turned around by Lead Peer Reviewer within 48 hours and sent to the host school to read and return with any amendments within 3 working days.
- The final Report should be sent to the Peer Review Champion within 7 working days of the peer review visit.
- The full findings from the visit, including the report (except for Part 2) are confidential to the Triad and Peer Review Champion, with the following provisos:
 - The Host Headteacher should share outcomes with their Chair of Governors/MAT CEO as appropriate.
 - A summary of the review findings will be incorporated into the Peer Review Champion's overview report to the SLIN Programme Board.
 - If the Triad cannot agree on any findings, the report must be submitted to the Peer Review Champion to clarify and resolve areas of disagreement.

Quality Assurance:

One visit in each Triad's Peer Review set will be quality assured by a Peer Review Champion during the year. The Programme Board is clear that Quality Assurance is essential to ensure consistency, assure credibility and robustness of the model and to eliminate risk, Quality Assurance demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement.

Peer Review Visit

Roles and responsibilities

It is important that a peer review meets the needs of the school. Schools get what they need and want from the process, and it does not replicate other accountability meetings a school may have **Host Headteacher:**

- Prepare and circulate the programme for the day, with the focus/foci for the peer review visit specified on the programme (area of development and a strength as a minimum)
- Manage logistics as set out below.
- Invite other members of SLT to participate in the day as part of their CPD.
- Share a range of evidence to support a fruitful exploration into the areas chosen.
- Engage actively with the process throughout the day, with a completely free diary.

Lead Peer Reviewer:

In advance of the review visit: Liaise with the Host HT and support HTs prior to the visit, to consider and agree the focus/foci for the review. The focus/foci should be agreed in advance and should be specified on the programme for the day.

On the day of the review:

Lead the Review process throughout the day, and chair the discussions about:

- Progress and impact of action to address areas for development identified in previous Peer Review (if applicable)
- Evidence in relation to focus/foci, validation of strength and further support/consideration/suggestions for area of development
- Projected Key Stage outcomes with reference to the Suffolk Performance Challenge
- Pupil progress with particular reference to gender, SEN, EAL and PPG pupils.
- Impact of Leadership and Management, particularly relating to quality of education
- Impact of SLIN Joint Practice Development and SLIN Summer funding
- Any other priority issues agreed with the school.

Lead final meeting of the day:

- Celebrate the school's strengths, particularly in relation to Leadership and Management/ Quality of Education
- Discuss further support needs from Triad or the wider network
- Identify opportunities for the school to contribute to a Suffolk Schools Strengths Directory
- Write the draft Peer Review Report in an evaluative style referencing evidence seen. The report is written using the standard Peer Review Report format.

Support Headteacher:

- Play an active part in the Review process through preparation
- Ask follow up questions as appropriate
- Note all meetings to support Lead, being mindful of final report format
- Note good practice and excellent teaching
- Support the identification of gaps in current school improvement support

Preparation

Host School:

The Host School should give consideration to the precise area of focus/foci for the peer review and liaise with the Lead Reviewer about it in advance of the visit day. Documentation should be provided to the Lead and Support Headteachers at least one week before the Triad convenes in your school.

The following are recommended:

- Performance on a page overview (provided by the LA) including the Suffolk Performance Challenge
- School Improvement Summary (SIS) sheet (provided by the LA)
- Current Pupil progress performance information in your school's chosen format for all year groups
- Most recent OFSTED report if an inspection has taken place since the last peer review visit, and any new and relevant external reports
- Relevant sections of the SEF and School Development Plan i.e. Leadership and Management, with sample supporting evidence
- Any other reports that the host school would like to share **Arrangements for**

the visit day:

- Host school to make sure that a suitable room is available for the day with access to refreshments, including a 'working lunch'
- Host school staff must be informed in good time and understand the purpose of the visit and class / set planning to be available during lesson observations
- A contextual sheet for the classes or sets to be available with SEN, PP, G&T groups etc.

Lead and Support Headteachers:

Familiarity with the Host School's documentation is essential. Please ensure that you have given sufficient time to reading and absorbing the information provided and plan some challenging questions as a result of your reading.

Suggested Outline for Peer Review Visit Day

The Host Headteacher should feel free to amend this timetable to suit the needs of their school, but any changes should be shared with members of the Triad prior to the meeting.

8.30 – 10.00

Triad Headteachers meet to discuss:

- Progress and impact of action to address areas for development from Summer 2021 Peer Review (if applicable)
- Areas of focus/foci for Peer Review- area of strength and area of development as a minimum
- Current pupil progress data and prospective Key Stage outcomes, with reference to Suffolk Performance Challenge
- Priorities and actions in the school development plan to improve the impact of leadership and management
- Progress and impact of Joint Practice Development – evidence of the school's evaluation
- Impact of Summer SLIN funding

10.00 – 12.00

Scrutiny of evidence to enable reviewers to validate a school's identified strength and provide fresh eyes on the area for development.

Time could include lesson and group observations and learning walks, book scrutiny and conversations with pupils and middle leaders, to validate the school's selfevaluation.

12.00 – 1.00

Discussions with Peer Review Team on findings from morning's activities over lunch.

1.00– 3.00

Further scrutiny of evidence to enable reviewers to evaluate a school's identified strength or area of development.

3.00 – 4.00 Final feedback meeting This

must include:

- discussion of findings from the day relating to leadership and management and area of visit focus/foci
- discussion of findings from the day relating to pupil progress and attainment
- discussion with Headteacher about progress and impact of Joint Practice Development and/or impact of SLIN Summer funding
- discussion of findings in relation to other themes

- professional conversation to agree and record the findings in relation to the school's evaluation of effectiveness in relation to the impact of leadership and management based on the evidence seen on the day of the review

Virtual Peer Reviews

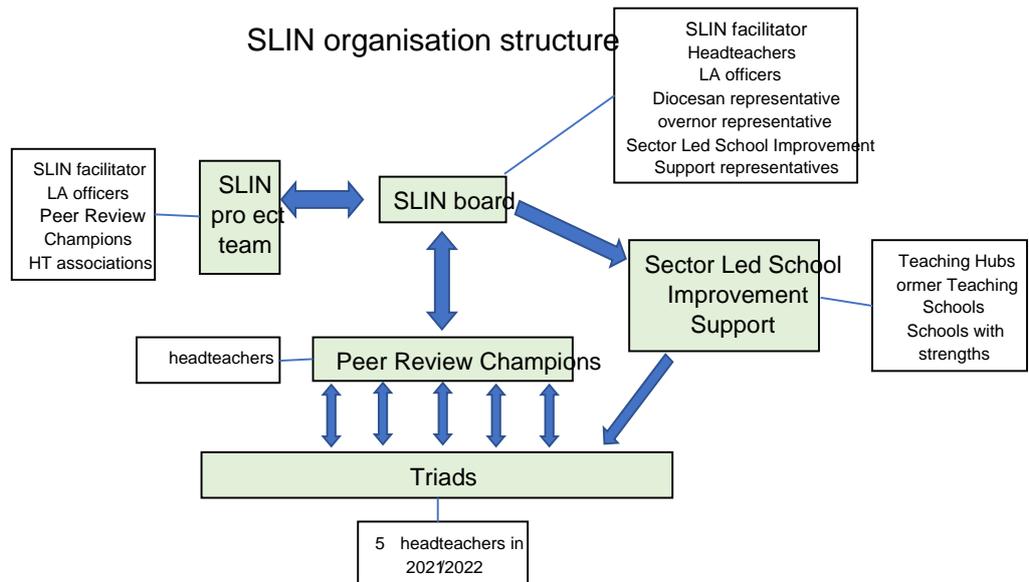
It is important, that whatever form the virtual peer review takes, it meets the needs of the school. Schools get what they need and want from the process and it does not replicate other accountability meetings a school may have.

Each virtual peer review meeting will be bespoke to the school.

For the Summer 2021 Peer Reviews, The SLIN Board listed some suggestions which may help triads plan a Virtual Peer Review, if required. This list is not exhaustive and is not a tick list.

- a half day meeting
- a full day but with plenty of gaps, maybe a morning and an afternoon session
- virtual tour of the school
- talking to pupils about their work (subject to Safeguarding protocols)
- talking to subject leads
- sampling of pupils' work
- deep dive into a specific subject, agreed prior to the meeting
- quality of teaching (sharing of videos subject to Safeguarding protocols)
- individual conversations with staff.

Appendix 1- SLIN structure



Appendix 2 Summer 2021 Peer Review findings

Main findings from Primary Overview Summary Reports Summer 2021

Quality of the Peer Review visit programme

- Face to face peer reviews happened in all but one triad.
- Reference made to a wide and rich range of evidence shared with reviewers.
- Clear foci for reviews often linked to the impact of, and the recovery from COVID but not exclusively this theme.
- Reference to reports being both analytical and evaluative, however this is not consistent across all individual school reports.
- Reference made to the timely sharing of documentation prior to peer reviews which then facilitated good discussion.
- Reference made to schools supporting each other within the triads as we move forward.

References to COVID

- Reference to children articulating their experience of home-learning, returning to school and how schools have met their needs.
- Comprehensive catch up and recovery curriculum plans shared.
- Some evidence of good support for all stakeholders' wellbeing. Family Support workers featured in many reports as being vital.
- In some reviews, school achievement was given time and consideration within the reviews in some way, but without referencing statutory assessment data. Less formal assessments and the identification of gaps in learning were referenced.

Common issues raised through peer review discussions:

COVID related.

- Effects of lockdown – difficulties maintaining new initiatives remotely, mental health and well-being, reduced curriculum to target the gaps in learning.
- Progress lost during first lockdown was more significant than second lockdown, children were rapidly catching up during Autumn Term.
- Securing the continued development of the curriculum and getting it 'back on track'
- Curriculum Catch up. E.g. Phonics, Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

- Continued use of digital platforms including school websites for sharing information.
- ICT issues and how these were overcome during lockdowns.
- Managing the variable levels of engagement during lockdown and the impact this has had on learners.
- In some schools, SEND and vulnerable, lower attaining pupils appear to have fallen back more than other pupils (but not necessarily linked to engagement with home learning).

Beyond COVID

- SEND provision - increasing numbers of pupils with diagnosis, access to and availability of external support.
- Maintaining progress for high achievers from KS1 to KS2.
- Subject leadership -time for development.
- Y6 anxiety re transition.
- Focus on developing vocabulary across all subjects.
- EYFS entry – language and social development.
- Children’s wellbeing and mental health.
- Staff wellbeing.
- Maintaining a consistency whole school approach.
- Some reports used the phrase ‘discussed with SEO’ rather than answering the questions. This is understandable but as the SEO’s are not part of this process, some evidence is therefore missing from the review.
- TA subject knowledge.
- Provision of ELSA support.
- Assessment and tracking the impact of intervention support in a meaningful and effective way.

Gaps in school improvement support:

- Behaviour support within EYFS.
- Opportunities for subject leaders to work together and learn from each other.
- Maintaining the long-term wellbeing and mental health of staff.
- Mathematics (particularly problem-solving).
- Writing.
- Emotional wellbeing support.

- Subject leadership, middle leadership training.
- Several schools are using the Ready to Progress materials – this could be an opportunity for training across schools.
- Phonics, EYFS, assessment, pupil voice, consistency/progression, moderation, marking, computing.
- One triad had identified a need for support in the moderation of writing and are going to do that between themselves.
- Subject leader networks.