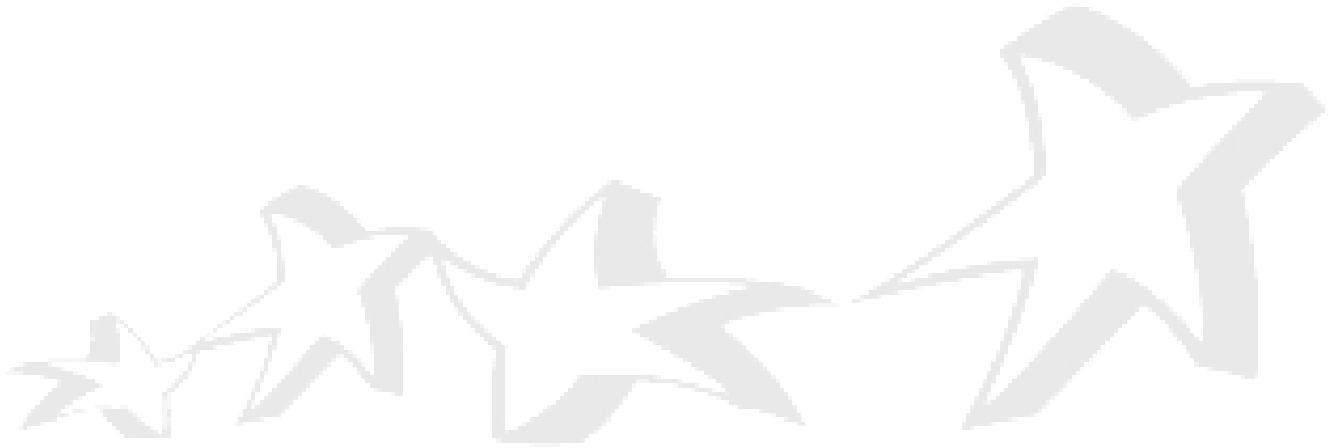




QUALITY & IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK



Preface

Our vision is to improve the quality of schooling and the outcomes for children and young people by promoting communities that trust in learning and the endeavour of education to transform lives.

We support and challenge this improvement through fostering the autonomy and empowerment of effective leadership and governance.

In order for us to fulfil this vision we need to establish, improve and sustain quality schools or academies which are self-evaluating, have excellent leadership and have the highest expectations for their children and young people as well as themselves.

As an Academy Trust we have an overriding obligation and accountability to ensure that our schools and academies deliver outstanding outcomes. From September 2014 the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) (South West) will hold all academies and multi academy trusts clearly to account over their outcomes. The RSC role is laid down by Government and they have powers invested in them by the Secretary of State for Education.

This document is therefore linked directly to the legal framework under which we work and are held to account. The framework outlines how we work with our schools and academies and the professional relationships that we will develop.

Underpinning this framework and our work with schools and academies is our commitment to:

- Inclusive school communities
- Overcoming educational disadvantage
- Supporting and providing outstanding leadership

Trust in Learning understands that, even within the same city, county or region, no two schools or academies are alike. This requires an understanding of 'context' in order to ensure that resources can be targeted to ensure improvement is made. With this in mind this framework will refer to minimum standards or floors in performance. As an Academy Trust we will work with our schools and academies to ensure that they do not fall below those minimum expectations.

Equally, in resonance with our vision, for schools or academies performing at high levels we will deliver on the principle of 'earned autonomy'. However, the expectation for such schools and their leaders will be to contribute more widely within the family of schools/academies so that the transference of best practice is an integral part of our collective work and responsibility in being a part of Trust in Learning.

This framework provides information on:

1. The standards expected by the Academy Trust within nine areas of academy or school work
2. The criteria for intervention if an academy or school falls below those standards

The quality standards that Trust in Learning operates consist of:

1. Governance and Leadership
2. Achievement
3. Teaching
4. Finance
5. The Curriculum
6. Behaviour and Safety
7. Attendance
8. Professional Learning and Development
9. Appraisal/Performance Management

1. Quality Standard: Governance and Leadership

Governance

The Board of Directors delegates significant responsibility to the Local Governing Body. Where schools are good or outstanding Ofsted demonstrates that these schools or academies have effective governors who play an important role in securing good outcomes for children and young people. The Local Governing Body plays an important and integral role in the quality of leadership and management and in ensuring that day to day Heads and Principals are effectively held to account.

Standards

- The Local Governing Body establishes a clear and shared vision for the academy/school that is both understood and communicated with stakeholders and that it is in line with the agreed aims, values and objects of Trust in Learning
- The Local Governing Body ensures that statutory duties are complied with and that procedures are in place to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of students, staff and visitors
- Governors hold senior leaders to account for ensuring that the strategic direction of the academy/school, within the parameters set by the Board, is being met; they therefore have a central and significant role in its leadership
- The Chair leads the Local Governing Body effectively providing leadership to their team and works effectively alongside the Headteacher/Principal
- The Local Governing Body provides high levels of support to the Headteacher/Principal as well as professional challenge in their duty to hold senior leaders to account
- The Local Governing Body understands the academy/school data on performance and outcomes and have an accurate overview of the achievement of children and young people
- The strengths of the academy/school are known to Governors and they are able to assess priorities for improvement and whether plans are appropriate to realise these priorities
- The Local Governing Body have a total commitment to raising standards and the achievement of pupils/students within the academy/school. They promote the wellbeing and personal development of people within their community

- Governors understand the barriers to learning, including attendance and behaviour issues and what the academy/school is doing to overcome them
- Governors have systems and processes to engage effectively with parents/carers and the wider community so that they are conversant with external views from stakeholders
- The Local Governing Body has a good understanding of the quality of provision within the academy/school and how its performance compares locally and nationally
- The Local Governing Body is a self-evaluative body and keeps its own work and that of the academy/school under review

Leadership and Management

The Academy Trust and its Board recognises the importance of ensuring we develop and embed outstanding leadership in our academies or schools. Leadership refers to senior, middle and that demonstrated by Governors (see above).

Standards

- All leaders are highly ambitious for their academy/school and they lead by example
- Leaders stringently hold others to account for all aspects of the academy/school's performance
- Heads/Principals support the development of highly effective leadership and management skills within their academy/school and amongst all levels of staff
- Leaders concentrate their efforts on continuous improvement of the classroom experience thus ensuring progress and attainment through high quality professional development
- Leaders are committed to sharing and transferring excellent practice within their academy/school and between academies/schools in the multi academy trust
- All leaders base their actions upon a deep and accurate understanding of the academy/school's performance and of staff and pupils' skills and attributes
- Leaders understand that practices are underpinned by effective policies which are followed, monitored and reviewed
- Leadership targets areas of underperformance effectively and engages in practices to secure the progress of disadvantaged groups and to ensure they are not left behind
- Heads and Principals demonstrate a good appreciation of the curriculum; to ensure that provision is broad and balanced and that it meets the needs of all groups and is strategically driven
- The academy/school leadership ensures that all practices prioritise the safeguarding of children and young people in the academy/school
- Leaders fully understand the link between quality classroom experiences and attitudes to learning and behaviour and work to ensure that the school has a positive culture and ethos

2. Quality Standard: Achievement

The objects of the Academy Trust clearly emphasise its responsibility to improve the life chances and opportunities for children and young people in its care. Clearly this is directly related to ensuring that all children achieve well and make good or better progress in relation to their starting points. It is for governors and senior leaders to ensure that they focus upon the achievement of their children and young people with rigour and with a total commitment to improvement.

Standards

- Achievement is characterised by pupils/students making expected or better progress over the range of subjects
- The core skills of literacy and numeracy are seen as essential in the life of a child or young person and therefore prioritised in planning provision
- All pupils/students will be effective readers and will read widely and often
- The academy/school will target interventions effectively to further support the specific learning needs of disadvantaged groups and those with learning difficulties
- Pupils and students are well prepared for the next phase of their education or life
- Pupils/students acquire knowledge and develop understanding quickly and securely in a wide range of subjects in all of the Academy Trust's schools

3. Quality Standard: Teaching

The quality of teaching is the single most important factor in securing successful outcomes for children and young people. It represents the core business of schools as through good and outstanding teaching emerge successful and confident learners. Our efforts as school leaders are directed at constantly improving and developing the quality of the classroom experience.

Standards

- Teaching is characterised by learners responding positively to learning and being engaged in the lesson
- High expectations for all pupils/students are consistent in lessons
- Teachers plan and teach lessons that enable pupils/students to learn and make good and improving progress from their starting points
- Teaching is characterised by an effective and formative dialogue between teacher and pupil/student that is developed through marking, constructive feedback and a range of assessment strategies
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject/area and can impart this to engage pupils/students
- The quality and use of assessment strategies is good or better and teachers use these to systematically check and monitor understanding and progress of learners
- Teachers are effective in using data and other information to plan and develop their lessons for all pupils/students and thus promote individual progress

4. Quality Standard: Finance

The Board of Directors are responsible for the effective use of monies to support the educational objectives of the Academy Trust. Whilst the overall responsibility lies with the Board each individual academy/school and its Local Governing Body have delegated responsibility to set a draft budget for their academy/school, which then has to be ratified by the Board, and they have the responsibility to run the academy/school on a day to day basis within the set budget. The Local Governing Body also has a responsibility to ensure it takes into account financial matters in its future strategic planning.

Standards

- The Local Governing Body will set balanced yearly budgets
- The Local Governing Body fully understands that it is forbidden for an academy/school to be overdrawn at any time
- The Local Governing Body will ensure that yearly income is maximised for the pupils/students being educated in that year and therefore avoid significant carry forwards
- The Local Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that they are continually familiar with the current funding arrangements
- The Local Governing Body understands and demonstrates that it has a responsibility to ensure best value in its day to day practices; allocation of resources both physical and human
- The Local Governing Body follows and adheres to internal control, monitoring and reporting procedures as laid down with the Academy Trust's Director of Finance and Operations
- The Local Governing Body is clear and demonstrates an awareness of conflict of interest in terms of its practice and particularly in procurement of services/goods – such procedures being in line with the Academies Financial Handbook and Charity Commission guidelines
- The Local Governing Body holds its senior leaders and business staff to account for in-year spending, this being done by a continual process of review which the Local Governing Body puts in place e.g. via a Finance Committee
- The Local Governing Body and senior staff are aware of the financial authority of the Board, the Director of Finance and Operations and the Accounting Officer
- The Local Governing Body and senior staff comply with regulations outlined in the school finance manual

5. Quality Standard: Curriculum

Recent legislation is requiring academies and schools to remodel their curriculum offer. Whilst academies lie outside of national curriculum guidelines we need to ensure that our children and young people do not lose out in terms of any positive aspects of new national challenges, for example, the introduction of languages into primary. Equally we need to ensure that the curriculum on offer is consistent with a changing accountability and qualification regime.

Standards

It is expected that each academy or school will ensure that the following standards or principles lie at the heart of the curriculum offer:

- The agreed curriculum is both broad and balanced – meeting the needs, aptitudes and interests of all pupils/students and promotes high levels of achievement and good behaviour
- The agreed curriculum promotes successful progression to the pupils'/students' next stage of education, employment or training
- That the curriculum promotes spiritual, moral and cultural development
- The curriculum includes strategies and procedures, together with advice and guidance, which help pupils/students prepare for life in modern democratic Britain and a global society
- The curriculum reinforces the importance of core skills and learning

6. Quality Standard: Behaviour and Safety

a. Safeguarding

Everyone working in, or for, the Academy Trust shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

- providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn and develop in our academy and school setting, and to flourish
- identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and
- taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in our academy or school setting, which would include obligations within the Prevent Duty

b. Behaviour

Each academy/school will have in place a Behaviour Policy and related practices that fit into the context, culture and expectations of the individual academy or school. These policies will promote individual responsibility and good citizenship; respect for others and to those in authority. The Academy Trust's academies and schools will draw up a Behaviour Policy in conjunction with the community they serve, for example pupils or students having a direct input into policy development and review.

Standards

It is essential that each academy/school:

- Operates the agreed Academy Trust policy for safeguarding and child protection and ensures that its practices and procedures are in line with these policies
- Has clear policies in relation to behaviour, bullying, health and safety and discrimination and that each academy/school meets its statutory duties in relation to these
- Has established clear management responsibilities in relation to child protection including relevant designated staff
- Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of policy and practices (its own and the Academy Trust's)
- Ensures that adults working with pupils/students are appropriately recruited and vetted

- Maintains an up to date Single Central Record of all staff, included those recruited on a day to day or temporary basis
- Encourages and enables pupils/students to report any concerns or complaints including concerns about poor or abusive practices
- Takes reasonable steps to ensure that pupils/students are safe on the academy/school site, for example by monitoring visitors or volunteers or those using the site during normal working hours
- Identifies concerns about possible abuse and/or neglect and/or pupils who may have gone missing, and refers such concerns to the relevant agencies
- Records information relevant to safeguarding concerns clearly and accurately and shares it appropriately, both internally and with other agencies
- Helps pupils/students to keep safe, including encouraging them to adopt safe and responsible behaviour/practices and deal sensibly with risk, for example:
 - when handling hazardous equipment and materials
 - looking after themselves during outdoor activities
 - when attending alternative educational or work related provision
 - using the internet (e-safety)
 - if they come into contact with groups that encourage the use of violence
 - not being drawn into radicalism
- Follows legal procedures and best practice in terms of exclusions
- Monitors behaviour patterns and the effectiveness of practices related to promoting positive attitudes to learning and each other
- Ensures that the school promotes positive behaviour via effective use of rewards

7. Quality Standard: Attendance

Each school or academy will seek to ensure that pupil/student rates of attendance are high. Very simply, the more a child comes to school, the more likely they are to succeed in their learning.

Standards

- The Local Governing Body alongside senior staff will set an attendance target annually
- The target attendance should be aspirational and clearly highlight the expectations of the academy/school to pupils and parents
- The Local Governing Body and senior staff should consider the attendance target in relation to national figure and propose these to the Academy Trust's Quality Standards and School Improvement Committee alongside their academic targets
- Targets set below the national figures will only be agreed if it is clear that attendance issues and difficulties experienced by the academy/school are ones which would mean that a target at the national figure would be unrealistic at this stage – if so the set target should be stretched and would signify rapid improvement if obtained
- The Local Governing Body and senior staff will have clear strategies in place for tackling poor attendance and punctuality

- The academy/school will review systems and strategies regularly in order to continually drive up rates of attendance
- Data gathered on attendance will be broken down into specific groups for more detailed analysis for example, pupil premium

8. Quality Standard: Professional Learning and Development

Whether we are an individual academy or school that is part of a multi-academy chain such as Trust in Learning everything we do is about learning, for both children and adults. The importance of developing a professional learning community as individual schools, as well as collectively as part of the Academy Trust, is crucial to our academies and schools and the Academy Trust's success in moving our institutions to outstanding providers.

Professional development for all of our staff is integral to this success and in this respect looking inwardly to share or transfer best practice is as important as looking externally for new ideas and practices.

Standards

- The Local Governing Body and senior staff will have in place a Continuing Professional Development Policy which promotes the importance of professional learning
- Each academy/school will have a senior leader(s) responsible for Continuing Professional Development
- Continuing Professional Development is targeted to the academy/school and individual need and is a blend of internal and external provision
- Continuing Professional Development activity is strategically planned for the whole workforce and links directly to and from the academy/school development or improvement plan
- The very best Continuing Professional Development in the academy/school utilises the strengths of individual staff to deliver learning to their peers – within the Academy Trust the Local Governing Body of each academy/school will ensure that this is a major feature of their work
- All aspects of the Continuing Professional Development programme is monitored, evaluated and reviewed with suggested improvements considered and incorporated when necessary
- Continuing Professional Development activity promotes new thinking and ideas which have a positive impact upon the classroom and to the learning of children and young people
- There is shared Continuing Professional Development between the academy/schools within the Academy Trust – this is seen as a regular and important aspect of our collective learning
- Opportunities to offer staff experiences across the Academy Trust are considered, planned and delivered where it is in the interests of both the schools and the member of staff

9. Quality Standard: Appraisal and Performance Management

It is an important aspect of leadership to ensure that staff benefit from appropriate professional development and that their performance is rigorously managed and evaluated. The Trust has established an agreed Appraisal (Performance Management) Policy which provides the framework for each school or

academy to work from. The purpose of appraisal is to raise standards by monitoring and improving whole school/academy performance

Standards

- Staff see appraisal as an opportunity for self-review and one in which they can assess their own performance against national standards, outcomes and individual goals
- The Local Governing Body will ensure that any progression for staff is on the basis of a thorough appraisal in line with the Academy Trust's policy
- The Chief Executive and the Local Governing Body will be responsible for conducting the review of the Headteacher's/Principal's performance
- There will be clarity/transparency in decision making
- The Local Governing Body will review the effectiveness of appraisal procedures in practice and fully understand who has progressed along a pay scale and who have not
- The Local Governing Body and senior staff will analyse performance data against the quality of observed teaching and outcomes



Trust in Learning

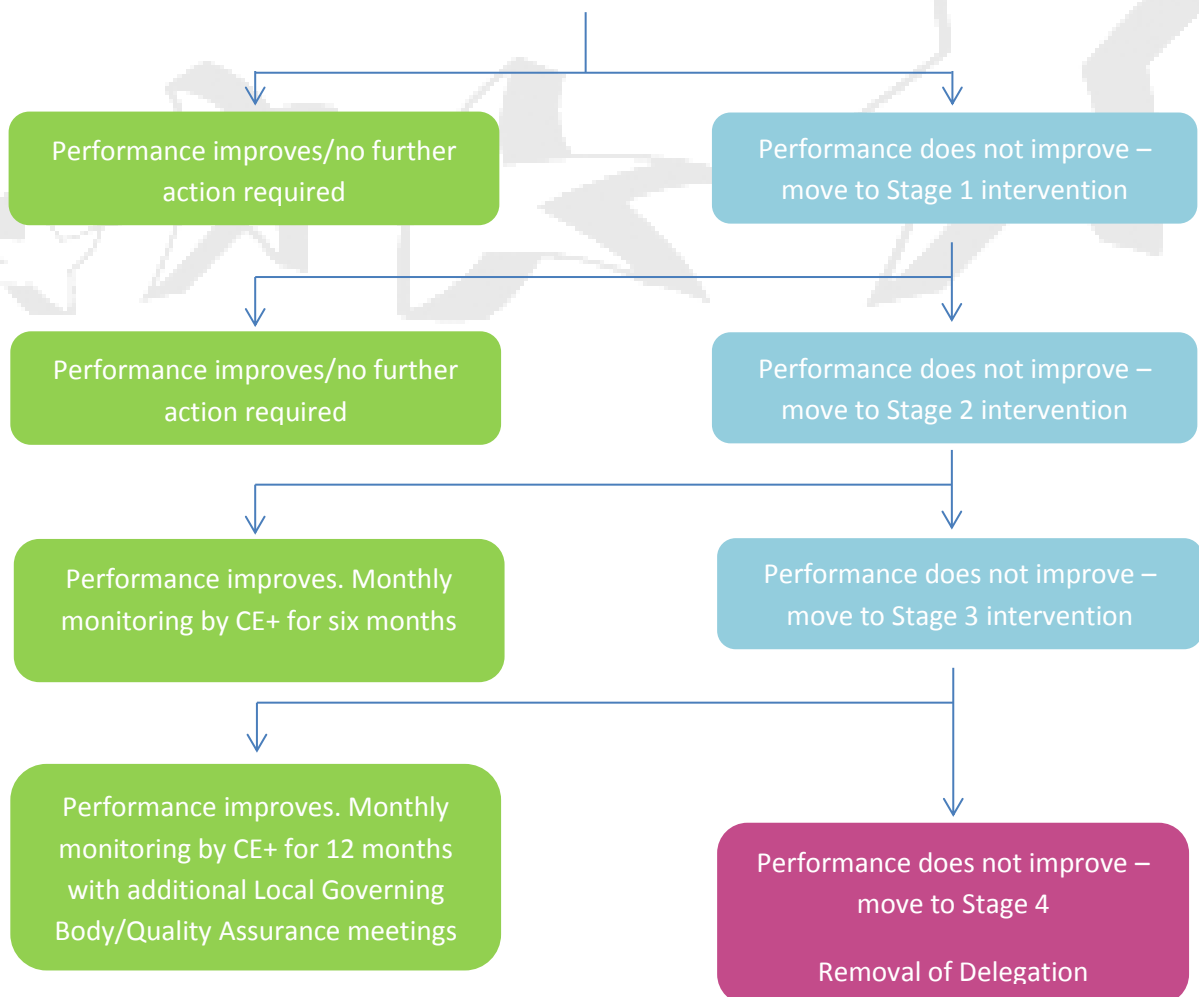
Stages of Intervention

Trust in Learning is both accountable and responsible for the multi academy trust fulfilling the educational objects as laid out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. It is therefore important to outline clearly when and how the Academy Trust will intervene in order to sustain and improve performance if an individual academy or school is deemed to be not improving.

Trust in Learning Intervention flow-chart

Those academies/schools judged to require 'intervention' will be triggered by:

- Heads/Principal/Chief Executive or Chair of Governor's concerns
- Quality Assurance reports
- Internal/External examination results/outcomes
- External or Academy Trust auditing reports
- Ofsted Section 8 or Section 5



Stages of Intervention

The aim of both Trust in Learning and its academies/schools is to provide a good education for all of our children and young people. We work towards this aim by securing good or better Ofsted judgements for our schools.

If we fail to ensure that our academies/schools are all good then we are failing in this aim, however as a Board of Directors we fully appreciate that improvement takes time, resources and excellent leadership. Whilst the Board has overall responsibility for the academies/schools outcomes it has been decided that in general it will delegate its responsibility for the leadership and governance of an academy/school to a Local Governing Body and a Headteacher or Principal.

Yet where the Board has concerns about performance it has a duty to intervene. This document helps to set out the stages of such intervention and the action the Board will take in response to concerns about performance.

Triggers for Concern

*These are outlined in the Intervention flow chart

Any or all of the following may trigger the judgement that an academy or school may require intervention by the Board:

1. If a predecessor school was in need of leadership support or new leadership
2. If significant concerns are raised by the Headteacher/Principal/Chair of Local Governing Body or Chief Executive
3. Performance reporting (via the Academy Trust's Quality Assurance meetings) shows concerns over performance outcomes
4. Examination results which show a negative trend or that an academy/school is below the floor targets for attainment and/or progress
5. Academy/School auditing of the institution (internal and or external) gives cause for concern over key Ofsted performance indicators (achievement, teaching, behaviour and leadership)
6. Ofsted (Section 8 or 5) puts the academy/school in requires improvement and leadership is not graded as good
7. The Regional School Commissioner reports or raises a concern
8. Safeguarding: if there were concerns over safeguarding. For example, if there were concerns raised by the LADO in respect of a senior member of staff

Stage 1: (60 academy/school days)

- Stage 1 intervention is primarily intended to support and challenge an academy/school that is judged, internally or externally, to require improvement

- An academy/school where leadership is judged to be 'good' (2), may not be placed in Stage 1 intervention – unless there were discrete concerns (safeguarding, maladministration of exams/tests, fraud etc)
- The Board will decide upon Stage 1 intervention after considering evidence regarding one or more of the above triggers and the Chair of the Board will formally write to the Chair and Headteacher/Principal of the academy/school
- Prior to this letter the Chief Executive will have a conversation with the Chair and Headteacher/Principal to explain the concerns outlined in the letter of intervention
- The Headteacher and Chief Executive will work together to agree Stage 1 intervention and a needs analysis will be undertaken. A monitoring/leadership review will be arranged – unless leadership has been judged as good or better
- The Headteacher and Chief Executive will agree further external to work with the Headteacher/Principal and senior leadership team to develop an initial short to medium term action plan – within 10 school days – that is quality assured by the Chief Executive
- The external support will work alongside the Headteacher/Principal for at least a 12 week period (60 school days) reporting to the Chief Executive at the end of each month. The Chief Executive will report to the Board on progress
- Consideration of a Future Leader (or similar) to be appointed will take place (at the academy/school's expense) on a short term (12 month) contract to further support leadership capacity
- The Director of Finance and Operations will work closely with the Headteacher/Principal to agree a fully resourced improvement plan
- The Chief Executive will liaise with the Head/Principal and external support to provide additional support for key issues identified. This might include:
 - Leadership coaching/mentoring
 - 360° evaluation for senior leaders
 - Lesson observation training and /or moderation
 - Subject reviews/action planning
 - CPD learning
 - Understanding and use of data
 - Brokering support form outstanding providers
 - Implementation of a Rapid Improvement Plan
- The Board will consider improvement strategies and action planning of a school in Stage 1 within six weeks of the letter of intervention – this will be an additional item for Board meetings. The Board will consider: progress on outcomes and leadership and will challenge the effectiveness of leaders (including governance)

- The Chief Executive will supply data and progress reports to the Board for them to consider (monthly)
- After 12 weeks the Board will review progress made and will decide upon whether the academy/school is:
 - Removed from Stage 1
 - Continues for a further 12 week period under Stage 1
 - Or indeed needs to be moved to Stage 2 because of insufficient progress

Stage 2 (60 school/academy days)

- Stage 2 intervention is primarily intended to challenge and support an academy/school that is judged, internally or externally, to be fragile and/or failing to provide an adequate standard of education
- An academy/school in Stage 1 intervention may move to Stage 2 if progress in Stage 1 is not reasonable or rapid, as explained under Stage 1 above
- When an academy/school is placed at Stage 2 the Chief Executive will meet with the Chair of the Local Governing Body and the Headteacher/Principal to agree strategy and actions. These will be recorded in a Statement of Intent within 10 school days of the meeting
- Additional leadership and management capacity will be secured to ensure progress is accelerated
- Possible actions may include:
 - Additional support for the Chair of the Local Governing Body
 - Additional support for the Headteacher/Principal e.g. commissioning an Ofsted inspector to work with the academy/school
 - The Board outlines its concerns in a letter to the Local Governing Body and the stages leading up to removal of delegation if progress does not improve against agreed targets set within the agreed timescale
 - A management board may be formed to replace or strengthen the Local Governing Body
 - The Headteacher/Principal is clear about their own responsibility and accountability and possible actions if improvement/progress is not being made
- The Chief Executive and other external support will monitor every six weeks and the impact of actions will be judged; these monitoring reports will be forwarded to the Board
- The Local Governing Body will receive a letter of warning if progress is not being seen to be made and that the outcome will be a move onto Stage 3 and removal of delegation

Stage 3: Removal of Delegation

- The Local Governing Body is removed
- An interim leadership and management team will be placed in the academy/school