



## Tameside: School improvement peer review

Post-review summary of key findings

### Part 1: Overall reflections on the local system, strengths and priorities

Overall summary (4-5 sentences to sum up the “health” of local support for school improvement arrangements)	
<p>School improvement in Tameside has been subject to a period of significant turbulence during which it has lost the confidence of some of its heads.</p> <p>There is now a completely new Leadership team in place, supported by a newly appointed DCS and lead member who have acted swiftly to identify priorities, clarify roles and responsibilities and build confidence in the system.</p> <p>As a result there is growing confidence in the systems and processes around the school-led school improvement systems which are developing in Tameside.</p>	
Key strengths and areas of effective practice	Key priorities for development for local support for school improvement
<p>Education is a high priority for Tameside Council. The lead member is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and committed to education.</p> <p>Local Authority (LA) priorities have been Identified, disseminated, understood and agreed with schools and the LA is beginning to take key actions, in which schools are involved and engaged.</p> <p>The new team are highly respected. They have outlined a clear vision and there is increasing confidence in their capacity to deliver.</p> <p>There is an increased understanding from schools that the system leadership role of the LA in School Improvement is to identify need via data and local intelligence, signpost/facilitate/broker support, monitor impact and identify and share good practice.</p> <p>The LA is beginning to work effectively with System leaders and relationships are strong. Projects underway on key issues demonstrate good partnership working.</p>	<p>The Tameside Primary Heads Consortium (TPC) School Improvement Committee, supported by the LA, should review its role and expand its membership to ensure that all partnerships are represented. This group should then consult and agree on guidelines for effective partnership working and provide a vehicle to gather and disseminate information about good practice and areas for development.</p> <p>The LA need to clarify the protocols for Associate Headteachers (AHTs) appointed to support vulnerable schools so that all parties are clear about their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>The new team have made an excellent start but are concerned that there is insufficient capacity to develop and realise the vision. The council should consider allocating additional resource to support implementation, as this will lead to faster progress in delivering the ambitious targets that have been set.</p>



## Key findings on priority areas

Education is a high priority for the council. The lead member has a clear understanding of the key education priorities. She underlined the importance of linking these priorities into culture in particular and other areas of the Council in general. There is a lot of work going on to raise the profile in the local press and at local events Regular reports are provided to Cabinet Executive. The lead member holds joint meetings with the Director of Children's Services and Education Lead and more regular meetings with the Education Lead. She also values the meetings with counterparts in Oldham as these provide a valuable opportunity to share good practice and discuss common issues to the benefit of all. She chairs the Education Improvement and Attainment Board, which has representation from officers, heads, councillors and unions. She has attended primary heads meeting and a planned visit to secondary heads is imminent. She intends to visit every school over time to talk about issues and priorities to inform her meeting with the Assistant Director .She also has regular conversations with local councillors and residents, listens to what they have to say and follows it up. Schools value the commitment of the elected member.

The LA's priorities for school improvement are known and understood with a particular focus on reading and SEND. Headteachers also mentioned school readiness, EYFS, phonics, getting every school to good, developing effective cluster work, raising attainment and progress, progress of disadvantaged, LAC and mental health and wellbeing. Colleagues confirmed that officers have worked hard to get the main priorities across and engage schools in working in partnership to address them.

There is a general understanding that the role of the LA in school Improvement is to identify need via data and local intelligence, signpost/facilitate/broker support, monitor impact and identify and share good practice. Some primaries also referred to facilitation/coordination of moderation. Schools are also clear that the LA has a responsibility to signpost to external support as well as internal expertise.

The new team have outlined a clear vision and a good strategic overview. There is increasing confidence in their capacity They are all permanent posts, outward facing, more proactive in working with stakeholders and have a more joined up approach. The Assistant Director is providing a clear steer in terms of moving to a system led, collaborative model. The team acknowledge that they are not an advisory service and are very clear about what they should and should not do.

Officers have identified the key issues and are building good relationships They are keen to consult with heads both individually and collectively and use this information to take action. Some schools embrace their independence and a minority do not engage with the local system. Officers are injecting pace and a sense of urgency. They are clearly focused on delivery e.g. reading interventions in place, EYFSA project funded and in place.

The current team have made an excellent start but the council need to consider some additional investment in this team in order to support the implementation phase as officers are currently covering an enormous amount of work which may not be sustainable in the longer term.

There is a great variety of partnerships and variations of practice within them. Some are more active and rigorous than others. The picture is complex and it is difficult to capture and analyse what is going on. Some schools are involved in a variety of clusters (diocesan, geographical, new heads group, maths hub schools/SEN). However some schools are not



clear about how to engage and some do not see the benefits at this stage. Partnership activities include providing mutual support, sharing data and areas for development and supporting wellbeing. Others spoke of peer observation, book looks, learning 3s, co-coaching, looking at good practice in each other's schools, support for NQTs, work on maths and curriculum design and shared training for schools. Many heads were of the view that the partnership was more about networking and mutual support rather than challenge, but the quality of relationships evidenced in particular by primary heads will provide a good basis for future development.

TPC maintains an overview of all aspects of primary education, wider than school improvement. It provides a helpful vehicle for two-way dialogue and consultation, as well as sharing good practice and discussing common issues. The minutes are shared with all Head and officers attend these meetings.

Tameside Association of Secondary Heads (TASH) meets five times per year and deals with all aspects of secondary and post 16 education. They have tried clusters of 4 as a vehicle for sharing good practice but with limited success. They are currently doing a visioning exercise with a focus on partnership working for a purpose. This has involved relationship building.

Support for vulnerable schools is largely brokered by the LA to a team of AHTs. These are experienced heads with effective practice, some of whom have other designations such as LLE or Ofsted inspector. The LA has a highly valued data support team and good data and knowledge of the schools ensures that the categorisation process works well. AHTs are carefully matched with vulnerable schools and relationships are described as professional and challenging. AHTs are generous with their time. Involvement ranges from a couple of days of analysis by AHT to more sustained support involving other members of the AHT's school. LA involvement ranges from autonomy, to close support and involvement. There is a need to develop greater consistency of communication and paperwork relating to brokered work. Some colleagues talk of completing proformas, others record activity, other are not providing anything to the LA. Clarification is needed with regard to how the LA monitors, quality assures and judges the impact of the work of AHTs. Supported schools state that officers are responsive to their needs and always willing to listen. They now feel confident to ask for support where needed.

## Part 2: Key findings under each area of the peer review framework

### Area 1: Strategic leadership

There is a clear vision for supporting school improvement, shared by all key strategic leaders. The strategy for translating this vision into practice is still in its early stages but is developing at pace and in partnership with schools. The LA is working hard to develop a clear understanding of partners' respective roles and responsibilities in supporting school improvement.

### Area 2: Identification of priorities for supporting school improvement



The LA's priorities for school improvement are known and understood as attendance, reading and SEND. There are clear and agreed arrangements in place for gathering and sharing pertinent data and strategic leaders make rigorous and intelligent use of data to inform decisions about support for school improvement.

### **Area 3: The effectiveness and impact of support for school improvement**

Support is provided swiftly and effectively for individual schools and there is evidence of the impact of this work. Support for crosscutting themes is developing at pace.

### **Part 3: Next steps**

Please use the space below to capture key next steps agreed between the “host” local authority and the peer review team – for example, any specific actions that the “host” local authority will undertake and any agreed further support from the peer review team or the wider Greater Manchester group of local authorities.

Victoria Ross: Salford LA

Martin Obermuller: Stockport LA

Margaret Woodhouse: GMLP

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