

Delivering Educational Excellence

A draft strategic plan for school improvement on the Isle of Wight
June 2017 to July 2021



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the key focus areas and associated actions to improve further the quality of education in Isle of Wight schools, in line with the Department for Education's (DfE) letter of direction.

This strategic document identifies our key priorities and objectives for the remaining timescale of the period of the DfE direction ie until the end of July 2018. However, it establishes some clear priorities and action areas that will form the backbone of our strategy to continue the transformation of educational opportunities and outcomes to 2021 and beyond.

It is intentionally written as a high level, strategic plan. It is built upon the evaluation of the impact of previous actions and reflects both the encouraging success to date and the considerable challenges that remain.

BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2016, progress made since July 2013 was evaluated against the plan to improve education on the Island (**'Improving Education on the Isle of Wight' – an evaluation of progress between July 2013 and April 2016**). This concluded that significant progress had indeed been made in improving the quality of schools and education standards across the Island.

There is still much work to be done, but it is clear that the focus of this work now needs to change to reflect the improvements that have been secured over the past three years and to address a fresh set of challenges.

This document sets out the strategy and activities needed to address the key focus areas, and their intended impact. It draws on the evaluation identified above, as well as the analysis of pupils' attainment in Island schools across all the statutory key stages in 2016. It has been written to cover the remaining period of the DfE's letter of direction and beyond.

Our strategy remains driven by the desire to be ambitious for all children and young people on the Island. It is this desire that will drive us to challenge underperformance in schools where it exists and to support schools, their leaders and their teachers in developing their practice to deliver further rapid progress in improving education outcomes for all our young people.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Island deserves an education system that is a source of pride to every learner, parent/carer, educator, business and member of the community. The realisation of this ambition would greatly enhance the quality of life, economic prosperity and social cohesion of the Island. Moreover, the collective drive to achieve this, if widely shared and co-operatively constructed, would transform educational opportunities and success for all pupils.

The Isle of Wight Council is pledged to improve the education of all pupils on the Island. We expect that every pupil will have access to a place in a good or better school by 2020/21. More than that, we are committed to driving up standards, step by step, for all pupils whatever their background or starting point. Every pupil should expect to make progress every day through high quality teaching and learning and inspirational leadership. They will be supported and challenged throughout their education and to aspire for successful, rewarding and worthwhile lives on the Island or beyond.

We are committed to working closely with all schools on the Island, irrespective of status and governance arrangements, to support their pursuit of high standards. This entails building strong partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders, organisations, sponsors, businesses and further education institutions who share our ambitions for our pupils.

We will play our part in ensuring that our Island schools recruit, retain and motivate teachers of the highest possible calibre; making the Island a beacon of excellence in teacher training and career development; and inaugurating an annual Beacon of Excellence in Island Education Award.

This Strategic Plan sets out the actions and support to enable schools to strengthen achievement with the expectation that all will engage and work alongside each other, together with the further education colleges and the Isle of Wight Council.

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In addition to providing specific challenge and support for individual schools, and through working with all schools collaboratively in order to share expertise and solutions and develop a more cohesive approach, there are four key strategic objectives that will drive the strategy for school improvement:

1. Ensuring that all schools are good or better

We will provide appropriate challenge and support to all schools, irrespective of status and governance, to strengthen their performance, improve professional learning opportunities and play our part in strengthening recruitment and tackling financial challenges.

2. Building on the improvements in standards

We will maintain a keen focus on schools' drive to improve the standards achieved by all their pupils. We will ensure that there are opportunities for sharing and developing excellent practice in the teaching of mathematics. We will facilitate the development of stronger transition arrangements between the primary and secondary phases.

3. Ensuring schools are good for all children

We will challenge and support schools to do more for children with lower attainment on entry to education, or who fall behind their peers. An excellent Island schools' system needs to deliver for all children, irrespective of their start in life or barriers to learning and participation. We will continue our work in highlighting effective practices, working with a wide range of partners to develop expertise in each school.

4. Leading a cohesive system for children based on effective partnership working

The leadership needed to transform life chances for all our children resides in schools, colleges, partner organisations, employers and our communities themselves. We intend to play our part in brokering the appropriate partnerships and collaborations to realise this potential and offset possible fragmentation and distraction. We will offer strategic leadership so that the Island's education system is a source of pride to all.

For each objective this Strategic Plan sets out a rationale and provides some context in an opening commentary before identifying the strategies that will be used in the next two years to realise our ambitions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Ensuring all schools are good or better

Commentary

The overall quality of the school system on the Island has improved, as measured by the outcomes of Ofsted inspections. There is now only one school judged as inadequate – a significant reduction compared with the recent past, but still far from an acceptable situation for children. There is no significant difference between the proportion of inadequate schools on the Island and that nationally, but meeting the national average is the minimum for which we will aspire. We want to exceed national averages by driving up standards still further in all those Island institutions that provide education and training to our youngsters.

Schools that were previously inadequate have improved, as have other schools vulnerable to being judged as failing. But, whilst these schools improved from inadequate, a number of them are not yet good and are judged by Ofsted to require improvement (RI). Consequently the proportion of RI schools on the Island, (14 out of 48, 29%) is greater than that nationally (9%, April 2017) at the moment. This means that the proportion of schools that is good or better is lower than that nationally (69% against 89%) Again, although the improvement and trajectory is welcomed, this is an unacceptable situation.

We will address these challenges by maintaining a sharp focus on the specific issues in each school, challenging underperformance and supporting school leadership in their drive for improvement. Furthermore, we want every school leader on the Island to seize the opportunity to work with us in whole Island improvement beyond the boundaries of any single school or school group and irrespective of school status. This implies promoting collaborative approaches with diverse partners and explicitly challenging all behaviours which undermine the success of all schools for all children. We will play our part in developing a healthy culture and ethos that strives for excellence across the Island school system, using expertise wherever it resides to drive up the quality of education for all.

This strategic ambition contains two significant challenges. First, the RI schools need to continue to improve so that they are judged good at their next inspection. Secondly, good schools need to secure their position - and not slip into RI – and develop outstanding features.

Expected impact

All schools on the Island must be good or better in the future. The variable time interval between inspections of schools currently rated 'Good', which is decided by Ofsted, means that it is highly unlikely that this could be achieved by July 2018, the timeframe of this plan. Currently, 89% of schools nationally are good or better. Given the constraints around the scheduling of Ofsted inspections, **we would anticipate that the performance of Island schools will be in line with this figure by July 2018**. It remains the longer term strategic objective that all schools are good or better by 2020.

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There are eight specific action areas that will contribute to ensuring that more schools reach an Ofsted rating of ‘good’ or better before 2018. These are:

Strategic objectives	Rationale	Actions we will undertake
<p>1.1 Challenge and support through an annual review of every community school, conducted by the Leadership and Learning Partner (LLP)</p>	<p>The LLP has a key role in ensuring there are more good schools on the Island. The annual Leadership and Learning Partner Review (LLPR) is undertaken in all community schools. Through this visit we validate and celebrate success, challenge underperformance and help each school clarify its priorities and the bespoke support that is needed to rapidly effect improvement. In carrying out this review in schools currently rated ‘good’, the LLP works in partnership with leaders to identify any risk factors to the school’s good status and strategies to secure outstanding features of provision. When the LLP visits schools in which practice is not yet good they identify with the school the actions needed to secure rapid and sustainable improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prioritise schools for support from the local authority • bespoke support package for each individual school, designed to address key improvement areas • formally monitor and evaluate the progress in schools that are not good or are at risk of losing that rating, reporting to each school’s governing body. • Training so that teachers develop a clear understanding of the standards that are expected, and in how to use this understanding to plan appropriate lessons for the children they teach and how to assess accurately whether pupils have successfully learned all the elements of what has been taught • identify elements of good practice that can be shared more widely through school to school support and the dissemination of good practice
<p>1.2 Introduce an annual discussion with academies</p>	<p>Increasingly, schools see the benefits of sharing data with us so that we can collectively more clearly identify the challenges that they face and be supportive in dealing with them. Academies, of course, are ultimately accountable to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) but we will continue to encourage an open and robust conversation about performance and offer support wherever it is needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit academies every year, once results of annual statutory assessments have been published in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss challenges with schools, ○ strengthen emerging good practice and ○ support improvements in other schools or across the Island

Strategic objectives	Rationale	Actions we will undertake
<p>1.3 Supporting Governing Bodies so that they offer the necessary strategic leadership to all community schools</p>	<p>Governing bodies play a vital strategic role in ensuring that all community schools become 'Good' or better and maintain that rating over time. The resource of time and expertise that governors invest in our schools is an expression of their public service and we wish to recognise that commitment through our support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to sold services which ensure good quality information, advice and support. • Strengthen the leadership capacity of Island governing bodies and brokering of effective support from other schools and expert governors. • Work closely with the Island Governor Forum to ensure we understand the current issues governors face and offer our support and challenge, as appropriate. • Run governor recruitment campaigns to support governing bodies' attempts to reduce the high level of vacancies across the Island.
<p>1.4 Ensuring that all Island schools have access to training opportunities that raise awareness and improve safeguarding practices</p>	<p>One of the fundamental responsibilities of schools is to ensure that they play their part in keeping children safe, especially but not exclusively during the school day. Effective support enables them to take the appropriate steps to assure themselves and stakeholders that their ethos is right and procedures are secure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight safeguarding priorities to Island schools through signposting to training and guidance. • Undertake further bespoke activities in relation to any issues that we identify in the course of our work with schools.
<p>1.5 Responding to educational priorities in Island schools by identifying a 'targeted offer' and establishing 'good practice reviews'</p>	<p>Whilst some schools will be a priority for support and therefore receive bespoke support packages, others will not. So, we will review the information from the reports of each visit to schools and our discussions with academies to identify common issues. We will focus training and development on these issues, using the most appropriate approach, in a 'targeted offer'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary schools to meet and discuss the relationship between the new accountability measures and curriculum design. • Schools that currently Require Improvement to attend a series of seminars on 'Getting to Good' run jointly between the Local Authority and Ofsted. • Commission an inspector and where possible a headteacher representative to undertake 'good practice reviews' to enable the dissemination of effective practice, in a tightly focused way, in areas of challenge eg mathematics.

Strategic objectives	Rationale	Actions we will undertake
<p>1.6 Developing a high quality and cohesive professional development offer</p>	<p>Part of the challenge for teachers and leaders in ‘Getting to Good’ lies in knowing what ‘Good’ looks like, as well as involvement in the ongoing professional discussion that this knowledge generates. Providing professional development that helps to exemplify this and encourages such debate is another important part of our strategy.</p> <p>We will use the findings from LLP visits, and the insights of inspectors and advisers working regularly in schools, to formulate the programme. It will be discussed with headteachers so that they are able to shape such an offer and suggest other partners and approaches from schools. In this way we are able to give schools access to the best of thinking and to experts in their fields and ensure leaders are kept abreast of key national developments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer significant professional learning through our Hampshire Teaching and Leadership College (HTLC) for primary schools on the Island in six main areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ leadership and management ○ assessment ○ English ○ mathematics ○ professional development programmes for newly and recently qualified teachers, and ○ Inclusive education for all pupils • Offer a range of further training through the Island Workforce Development Team and Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service (HIAS) in other important areas such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ safeguarding, ○ early years, ○ sports and ○ wider curriculum subjects and aspects.
<p>1.7 Investing in recruitment and retention strategies</p>	<p>If we are to build a sustainable and healthy educational environment we need to recruit, retain and motivate the best possible teachers. To address this issue will take further efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted recruitment campaigns so that the best are motivated to apply for Island jobs. • Secure the involvement of Teach First and other organisations to bring additional resources. • Inaugurate ‘The Island’s Beacon of Excellence in Education Awards’ to acknowledge the contribution of all those who go above and beyond in their work in our schools and colleges. • Carefully consider the case for key-worker, affordable housing to be made available to teachers coming from the mainland.

Strategic objectives	Rationale	Actions we will undertake
<p>1.8 Developing an ‘Affordable Schools’ strategy</p>	<p>Current school funding arrangements and potential changes to the National Funding Formula are presenting schools on the Island with challenges, despite the potential for some to be a net gainer and an overall settlement that could add £847,000 to Island resources. Nonetheless, it is clear that there are significant challenges to many schools and in particular smaller primaries. In addition, there are some long-standing financial challenges in the secondary sector that present a risk of dissipating energy away from the central educational challenges.</p> <p>It is our view that addressing these financial constraints will require some clear strategic planning and strong leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and challenge school leadership thinking through an ‘Affordable Schools Strategy’ based on a financial analysis of each school that identifies the long-term strategic implications of future funding. • Headteachers, governors and business managers will be invited to share thinking about models of staffing and curriculum organisation linked to financial and personnel matters. • Broader discussions with all stakeholders, including headteachers, professional associations and Governor Forum, will be used to further explore the issues and engage in solution focused problem solving.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Building on the improvements in standards

Commentary

The effort spent improving schools will count for little if pupils' standards are not high. The ambition for our pupils can be expressed at an individual and collective level. Given the current national volatility, there are challenges to setting a reliable numerical target in terms of the proportion of pupils who might over the next couple of years be expected to be performing at the new national standards. However, data collection gives us the opportunity to benchmark with similar authorities and we expect to perform consistently in the top quartile of this reference group, which would provide a positive comparison to national averages.

Primary performance measures

Work over the past three years has brought about significant improvements in performance in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (KS1) so that standards are now broadly above the national average in these areas. Pupils' Key Stage 2 (KS2) and GCSE performance now needs to build on this firm foundation.

Performance at KS2 has improved between 2013 and 2015. Improved progress, as a result of better teaching throughout the key stage, has improved standards. However, in 2016 there has been a major change to the primary curriculum and associated assessment system coupled with more demanding expected standards. It is difficult to make any meaningful comparison between the KS2 results in 2016 and previous years, not least due to the widely acknowledged national and local variability in understanding of the revised curriculum standard and statutory assessment arrangements. The challenge is for primary schools now to build on previous improvements and secure stronger outcomes for 2017 and beyond.

There are two elements to this work. First, there is more work to do with helping school leaders and teachers understand the demands of the new standards, designing their curriculum accordingly and challenging children appropriately. Secondly, there is work to do further to improve pupils' performance in mathematics across all key stages but especially KS2.

Expected impact (primary)

KS2 performance in mathematics needs to improve significantly over the next two years so that the proportion of children at Age Related Expectations (ARE) is at least in line with that of the Island's statistical neighbours. Reading and writing performance will also improve so that standards at KS2 will be in the top quartile of those statistical neighbours. These improvements will lead to the combined reading, writing and mathematics measure moving above the performance of statistical neighbours.

Secondary Performance Measures

The metric also changed for secondary schools in 2016. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 A*-C (including English and mathematics) GCSE measure has been replaced by attainment 8, progress 8, A*-C in the basics (i.e. English and mathematics) and pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate. In addition, the nature of GCSE courses themselves is in a process of change. Over the next few years pupils are going to study more challenging GCSE courses. These courses are being phased in over the three-year period, with first revised examinations starting in 2017 in English and mathematics. Schools will need to keep abreast of these subject developments and ensure that they build higher expectations of pupils into their work. The grading system is also changing, with English and mathematics moving to a nine-point scale in 2017 and other subject areas will be transferring over the next two years. As with Primary Performance Measures this will make it difficult to make accurate year-on-year comparisons.

However, the key for secondary schools, in their drive to raise standards, is that they build effectively on improvements to standards in KS2, understanding the better capabilities of their pupils. This starts by improving transition between KS2 and Key Stage 3 (KS3) and ensuring that learning in Years 7 and 8 has the necessary rigour. Schools need to ensure that they plan their curricula to maximise pupils' chances of maintaining or improving progress if the pupils are to do well in Key Stage 4 (KS4). They must also understand the higher expectations now being made of pupils in their preparations for GCSE examinations.

In terms of GCSE performance, we will target our efforts to community schools and academies so that each understands the significance of their school's performance in relation to our ambition for children.

Expected impact (secondary)

This ambition is for the Island to perform at least in line with statistical neighbours after two years before reaching top quartile performance in 2020.

Strategy

To secure this improvement in standards in all key stages we will use four key drivers:

Strategic objectives	Rationale	Actions we will undertake
<p>2.1 Use the Leadership and Learning Partner (LLP) to support and challenge the improvement of standards in Island community schools</p>	<p>Standards in some primary schools at KS2 have risen, despite all the changes nationally, largely as a result of understanding and adapting to the new standards. New statutory assessment information becomes available in Summer/Autumn 2017. There is no doubt that effective leadership plays a significant part in schools' resilience and adaptability in times of curriculum and statutory assessment change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LLPs identify more specific reasons for success and share that understanding across the system, enabling the transference of good practice across the Island's schools. • Work with schools to help them understand reasons for any surprising underperformance and what steps might be taken to address this issue. • Work with secondary schools to help them reach a better understanding of why standards are as they are in particular subject areas and how this contributes to the school's overall performance, challenging any underperformance. • Provide bespoke support to subject departments and the school's leadership to improve specific subject performance when this is needed. • Advocate for an unwavering focus on teaching, learning and the curriculum to all schools irrespective of Ofsted status and governance arrangements.
<p>2.2 Provide guidance and support on the new KS1 and KS2 standards and statutory assessment arrangements</p>	<p>Primary schools that have understood the increased challenge in the new standards, and used this understanding in both designing their curriculum and challenging children appropriately through more effective teaching, have secured stronger outcomes at KS2 in 2016.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will provide three distinct elements of support in terms of understanding the new standards and their statutory assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ regular updates through the year for assessment leads so that all schools can be clear on the statutory assessment processes and exemplification of the related standards

	<p>This contention is supported in a recent Ofsted report on schools that stay satisfactory, rather than improve to good. It concluded that one of the major challenges in such schools lies with helping teachers to develop a clear understanding of the standards that are expected, use this understanding to plan appropriate lessons for the children in front of them and then to assess accurately whether pupils have indeed learned all the elements of what has been taught.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a moderation programme that enables Year 2 and Year 6 teachers to meet to compare children’s work and identify how close they are to the standard ○ sessions on how teaching and curriculum design can be developed to help more pupils reach these more challenging standards across all primary year groups ● Support schools to set expectations in year groups that do not have statutory assessment (ie Years 1, 3, 4 and 5 in primary) that enable pupils to reach the greater demands at the end of KS1 and KS2.
<p>2.3 Improve teaching of mathematics throughout the key stages</p>	<p>Many schools have found the recruitment of suitably skilled teachers of mathematics, particularly in the secondary phase, to be challenging both nationally and locally. The revisions to the national curriculum at KS2 mean that there is a need to improve teachers’ subject knowledge in mathematics across this phase in particular. Too many pupils fail to ‘catch up’ in mathematics. They fall behind at KS2 and are joined by further numbers throughout KS3 and KS4 leading to unacceptable underachievement. Whilst the ‘mastery’ approach to teaching is now based on all children ‘keeping up’, the legacy of previous teaching still remains, with pupils having significant gaps in their understanding, which impedes progress in KS3 unless tackled and results in poor GCSE performance for too many pupils.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue our work with the universities of Chichester and Winchester to provide subject conversion courses for secondary teachers to provide a greater pool of trained mathematics teachers on the Island. ● Provide a programme to develop mathematics subject knowledge in Island primary schools. ● Work with schools to train groups of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) so that they can support mathematics effectively through primary and secondary phases. ● Provide training on the key areas of mathematics teaching that enable children to successfully develop their mathematical achievement such as reasoning. ● Work with secondary schools to establish the principles of ongoing curriculum based assessment and responsive teaching that emphasises the importance of both ‘catch up’ and ‘keep up’ in KS3 and KS4 and increases the impact on learning for all pupils.

Strategic objectives	Rationale	Actions we will undertake
<p>2.4 Work with schools to develop a transition programme across Years 5, 6, 7 and 8</p>	<p>There have been significant successes at improving teaching and learning in primary schools. Standards have risen over the past four years. Teachers in upper KS2 can now build on their successes to date to further refine their expectations. This forms a strong foundation for the eventual improvement of GCSE outcomes, but that will only happen if secondary phase teachers take account of these improvements and raise their expectations so that pupils who enter KS3 build on this work.</p> <p>There are examples of great teaching and learning in both phases. Our best primary teachers are able to inform curriculum expectations planned for Year 7 so that progress is accelerated. Secondary teachers often have subject knowledge and experience in teaching the most challenging aspects of subjects that can benefit primary colleagues and enrich teaching and learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with clusters of schools to set up effective transition work that focuses on understanding the challenge and curriculum in these year groups so that it better informs teaching. • Support co-operation within and between primary and secondary phases to share best practice so that teachers with excellent subject knowledge can nurture and support teachers in other schools who need it.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Ensuring schools are good for all children

Commentary

We want all Island children to do well at school, irrespective of any social or other characteristics. Too often in the national education system, groups of children underperform. Children should not have to ‘fit the system’, rather the system needs to have high expectations and aspirations for all and must enable all children to succeed.

National, local and school performance measures focus on the narrowing of the gap in performance between specific groups. In simple terms the gap narrows if attainment of these specific groups rises and this is our focus; to support and challenge schools to do better for these pupils.

Analysis of Island performance measures identifies that the key groups for focus are so-called ‘disadvantaged’ children, a category consisting of children who have received free school meals, and children-in-care of the local authority. In addition, those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are an important priority group. These groups do not perform as well as their ‘non-disadvantaged’ peers. They are more likely to be excluded and not to attend school. Children who do not ‘fit the system’ may also be more likely to become non-attenders, excluded or be electively home educated. There are also concerns that children who are disadvantaged are more likely to find transitions more challenging between schools and from education to their next step, whether that might be college or employment.

Expected impact

We will deliver further improvements in the educational performance of disadvantaged children. Currently, this lags behind that of the Island’s statistical neighbours. We are determined that over the next two years it will improve, so that it is at least in line with that of the group of statistical neighbours with an aspiration to do significantly better.

Strategy

To ensure that Island schools are good for all children we will focus on six main strategies:

Strategic objectives	Rationale	Actions we will take
<p>3.1 Use the LLP annual visit to evaluate the performance of ‘disadvantaged’ groups of children and the provision for them</p>	<p>There are several elements to developing the provision for ‘disadvantaged’ children throughout the school system. It is important to provide schools with support and advice at the same time as challenging them to do better. Areas upon which we intend to focus include understanding the needs of these children in terms of both teaching and the curriculum, improving their attendance and reducing exclusions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LLP visits will focus on vulnerable groups, evaluating their performance, attendance and any patterns in exclusions. • Challenge and support concerning the performance and provision of elective home educated children. • Where performance is a concern, commission reviews of inclusion work, the provision for pupils with SEN, or a Pupil Premium review to help schools clearly understand what is needed to bring about the required improvements.
<p>3.2 Further develop schools’ leadership of teaching and learning: getting it right for all pupils including the more vulnerable</p>	<p>We recognise the need to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children. We intend to work with schools to increase leaders’ focus on strategies to ensure that they successfully plan for and teach children who have traditionally not performed well. We will build on a successful cross-phase conference held in January 2017 with Ofsted HMI. We believe that tackling educational disadvantage and establishing high aspirations for vulnerable children is a core priority for every leader and teacher.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with Headteachers, inclusion leaders and governors in further professional development that draws on current research into what works well. This will include a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ exemplifying effective teaching and learning that is good for all pupils ○ good practice reviews and ○ focused school to school partnership working.
<p>3.3 Provide joint training with HMI and other leading experts on inclusion matters for secondary schools</p>	<p>We will continue to work with HMI so that secondary schools have a clear understanding of good inclusive practice and how this will be inspected by providing joint training with them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer places to Island schools on an action research programme set up between HIAS and the National Education Trust (NET) and Teach First that focuses on improving the performance of disadvantaged pupils at KS2, KS3 and KS4. • Engage with other leading experts in the field of inclusion to develop training and advice for schools.

Strategic objectives	Rationale	Actions we will undertake
<p>3.4 Provide ongoing support and challenge in relation to exclusions and attendance</p>	<p>We will provide schools with appropriate support and guidance to improve attendance further. In relation to exclusions, we recognise that there are circumstances where this is an appropriate response to a child's poor behaviour. However, we will continue to monitor such actions carefully. The consistent application of agreed principles for positive behaviour and engagement supports good learning for all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the work of attendance support networks to disseminate latest advice, share good practice and address patterns across groups of schools. • Update the attendance code of practice to reflect any changes to the guidance in light of the recent legal ruling on parental requests for absence in term time. • Hold a full and genuine consultation on school terms and holiday dates. • Ensure that exclusion decisions are taken in accordance with guidelines and that generally the frequency and length of such sanctions is proportionate and justified. • Develop schools' understanding of the links between qualities of provision for education and creating the conditions for positive behaviour and engagement.
<p>3.5 Work with local stakeholders to develop a better transition between schools and employment</p>	<p>There are challenges in helping pupils make this transition successfully despite our previous work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a group of relevant stakeholders to better understand transition issues and identify steps that need to be taken across the system to ensure that pupils, and particularly vulnerable pupils, make this transition more effectively
<p>3.6 Develop support to parents of home educated children</p>	<p>There is existing good practice that can be built upon to ensure that parents who choose this option are well informed and making a positive choice in the best interests of the child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current practices on the Island and nationally so that schools and others are well placed to offer evidence based information to parents who are considering this option.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Leading a cohesive system for children based on effective partnership working

Commentary

The leadership needed to transform life chances for all our children resides in schools, colleges, partner organisations, employers and our communities themselves. However, a disjointed and strategically confused educational community is not helpful to pupils and their parents. It is unlikely to promote the excellence and equity for all pupils which should be their expectation.

Expected impact

We intend to promote schools' focus on learning from the best, working in healthy partnerships to address common priorities and issues. We intend to play our part in brokering the appropriate partnerships and collaborations to realise potential and offset fragmentation and distraction.

Strategy

We will offer strategic leadership to the Islands' education system through seven strategies:

Strategic objectives	Rationale	Actions we will undertake
4.1 Work in partnership with the two Diocese who provide so many of the Island schools	We recognise the key role for Diocese given the significant number of faith-based schools on the Island and will seek to work in a strong partnership with them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings with representatives of the Diocese that have oversight of faith-based schools on the Island. • Liaison around school-based developments and issues.

Strategic objectives	Rationale	Actions we will undertake
<p>4.2 Liaise with education partners including Teaching Schools, Trusts and others to focus their potential for impact</p>	<p>A feature of national policy for school improvement is to utilise the potential for effective school to school professional links. This is a key feature of Local Authority improvement strategies on the Island and links to the mainland and beyond.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brokering the contribution of high quality organisations that have capacity to add value to the Island education system. • Work closely with the Regional Schools Commissioner and other regional partners to identify where their expertise might add to our own resources and plans to support and challenge schools. • Seek to influence the strategies planned for the Island so that these can be integrated and offer schools choice without unnecessary overlap and complexity. • Offer to establish effective partnerships with Teaching School Alliances, National Support Schools and Trusts as well as nationally funded structures such as maths and music hubs. • Seek to work with the best National Leaders of Education and Governance.
<p>4.3 Work with south coast universities to promote excellence, aspiration and opportunities for routes into higher level education</p>	<p>The theme here will be to explore and foster the links between higher education and higher skills and the link to economic prosperity and community cohesion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how universities such as Winchester, Chichester, Portsmouth and Southampton can develop partnerships on the Island, including offering university level opportunities particularly in technical subjects. • Work with the new Regeneration Department on the Island to draft an Expression of Interest to the Leading Places programme – an initiative to link higher education and local government, creating the capacity to address priority challenges.

Strategic objectives	Rationale	Actions we will undertake
<p>4.4. Support and challenge for all schools that become academies</p>	<p>We do not accept that being an academy, or a free school, or an local authority maintained school, or any other sort of school, determines whether it will be a good school or not. What matters is the right commitment, the right leadership, the necessary resources and committed and inspiring teachers. However, it clearly has a place in current policy and is an option for individual schools, the RSC and ourselves where we believe it will promote educational excellence.</p> <p>If schools are effective, improving rapidly or have the necessary capacity to do so and do not want to become academies, they should not have to. What matters is what is best for the children in our schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all schools have the support, encouragement and challenge they need as they go through the process of academisation and subsequently. We will continue to engage and shape the impact of academisation to achieve the best results for the Island's schools. • Work to develop effective working relationships with all academy sponsors on the Island in order to further our ambition for all children to have an excellent education. We will challenge under-performance of any academy sponsor who is not prepared to invest resources and promote improvement in the pursuit of excellence. We will celebrate the impact of academy sponsors whose work meets these criteria. • Work with both the Anglican and Roman Catholic Diocese to explore the concept of an Island Multi-Academy Trust so that all the church schools can work together, share expertise and best practice.
<p>4.5 Improving community perceptions of education on the Island</p>	<p>Challenges remain, but the trajectory is positive and our resolve undiminished. We would hope to listen and use feedback constructively, but also celebrate our successes so that we can encourage optimism and the commitment in others to engage with us and participate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support schools in developing a positive communication strategy that seeks to highlight the improvements that are already happening and how parents and carers, businesses and all in the wider community can act positively to enhance what is happening.

Strategic objectives	Rationale	Actions we will undertake
4.6 Enhance careers advice and guidance and engagement with industry and commerce	We have a programme of events already underway to secure greater involvement by employers in providing skills training, apprenticeships and careers advice; along with events to boost aspiration both among students and their parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue this important work.
4.7 Strategic leadership and oversight by the Isle of Wight Council	It is important that members and officers are clear about where the overall responsibility for challenge and strategy rests, so that focus can be maintained during this important next phase of improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structurally, in terms of how the council itself oversees education, we intend to review the current committee arrangements and ensure that they are fit for purpose.