



Excellence for All

2017 to 2019

Welcome

Our refreshed *Excellence for All* strategy comes at a time when we are well on the way towards realising our vision of a truly excellent and inclusive education system for the children and young people of East Sussex.

Thanks to the hard work of teachers, leaders and governors in early years' settings, schools and colleges across the county, significant progress has already been made towards achieving our ambitious goals.

We have seen a very rapid increase in the number of children having access to high quality primary education, with over 96% of early years' providers and over 90% of primary schools now judged good or better by Ofsted. The secondary and post-16 sectors continue to perform well in terms of Ofsted outcomes.

We are very proud of these achievements, but recognise that there is still more to do in order to provide the world-class education that our children and young people deserve. This means that we must now focus our efforts on areas where performance is not yet as strong as it needs to be, such as improving attendance, reducing the level of exclusions and accelerating progress for disadvantaged children.

Section two of this strategy, [the East Sussex school improvement procedures](#), sets out in detail how we will work with our partners to achieve our ambitions of creating a local education system that prepares all of our children and young people to play an active role in the society of the future.

Councillor Bob Standley

Lead Member for Education, Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability

Stuart Gallimore

Director of Children's Services

Our vision

- **Every early years' setting, school and college judged good or better**
- **Every child and young person supported to prosper and achieve**

East Sussex County Council has the highest expectations for the achievement of all young people in the county. We believe that East Sussex county is a great place to grow up and that our children deserve the best possible education to prepare them for their future lives. Our aspiration is that East Sussex should be one of the best places in England to go to school.

Many more schools, colleges and early years' settings in the county are now judged 'good' or better by Ofsted. Building on these successes, now is the time to focus on developing more 'great' educational provision across all phases and across all parts of East Sussex.

Great schools, colleges and settings offer outstanding teaching which accelerates progress and improves outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and provides opportunities for the most able pupils to excel. Their leadership is outward-looking; they actively support others to improve and they work in partnerships which take collective responsibility for performance across their locality. In the very best schools, colleges and settings, concern for pupils' wellbeing, mental health and resilience sits firmly alongside this drive for excellence.

We hold high expectations that all children and young people will have the chance to prosper and achieve, regardless of their educational or physical needs, their family background, the school they attend or the neighbourhood where they live.

Schools have made progress over recent years in reducing gaps in achievement between the most disadvantaged pupils and their peers. However, there is still more to do. During the lifetime of this strategy we will intensify our focus on accelerating progress and improving the attainment of all key groups of pupils, regardless of their starting point.

We know that regular attendance at school is essential for children and young people to achieve their potential. Although we have made progress in improving attendance and reducing exclusions, too many days of learning are being missed by too many pupils. Exclusion levels in primary schools are particularly worrying. Schools and settings are working together to apply best practice and ensure that even those children and young people with the most challenging behaviour are regularly attending school.

Education for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities remains a high priority in East Sussex. All those working with these children and young people must hold the highest expectations for their achievement. It is important that they receive the support they need to prepare for the next stage of education, training or employment and that they are well cared for and are supported to lead happy and fulfilled lives.

System-led improvement:

Schools, early years' settings and post-16 providers working in partnership

East Sussex schools have a strong track record of working in partnership for the benefit of all children and young people in their area. Education Improvement Partnerships (EIPs) and Teaching School Alliances (TSAs) provide strong collaborative networks in local areas across the county, working together to identify and address common priorities for improvement.

Alongside the network of local EIPs, are partnerships with phase specialisms: early years' hubs for excellence, a post-16 EIP, and a secondary leadership support group.

In addition, Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships provide a forum for schools to develop effective approaches to reducing exclusions and improving attendance. This includes discussion of local concerns, sharing practice and developing alternative provision for children who may be at risk of permanent exclusion.

Through working in partnership, providers bring their combined strengths and expertise to bear on some of the key performance challenges across the county and in their local areas. For example, strong partnerships between early years' settings and their local schools have delivered notable improvements in outcomes for children at the start of their educational journey, as providers learn from each other and work together to improve pupils' transition into the school environment.

An increasing number of schools are now working in or developing 'hard' partnership structures such as federations or multi-academy trusts. These partnerships will ensure the future sustainability of local schools and enable further improvement in outcomes for all pupils.

As we move towards creating a sustainable model of system-led improvement, all partnerships will need to build on the progress they have already made and further develop their capacity to plan, commission and provide effective support. This will necessitate further development of local leaders and governors with the expertise and vision required to work successfully across a number of schools.

Over the next two years, all partnerships need to develop to the point where they provide a sustainable network through which all schools and other providers take responsibility for improvement in their local area. This will be increasingly important in an educational environment that continues to change, where resources are limited and the local authority's role is evolving.

The role of the local authority

The current educational landscape is complex and characterised by a variety of overlapping partnerships, networks and alliances. Within this context, the local authority plays a vital role in providing collaborative leadership to enable the development of purposeful partnerships between schools; and to enable key local players to work towards shared strategic priorities to improve outcomes and children's life chances.

East Sussex County Council has a clear role in delivering a high-quality education system for the county's residents. We act as

Champion for children and parents, ensuring an inclusive education system that works for every family, particularly for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Commissioner of high quality school and early education places, and of local provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Leader when promoting high standards and having high expectations for all groups of pupils and providing challenge and intervention where standards are low.

Enabler of a strong and sustainable sector-led improvement system, with the capacity to secure improvement, and a workforce with the skills to work across providers.

Broker in matching need with support and making it easy for schools to find the support they need.

Provider of services, including safeguarding; targeted provision for the most vulnerable; and support and guidance for governors.

The local authority works closely with schools and its partners in order to discharge its responsibilities through three inter-linked functions:

Knowing our schools and our children

The local authority uses a range of evidence to form a view on how well our children are being served by East Sussex schools, whether they are maintained, academies or free schools. Data collection and analysis are important elements of this, as is professional dialogue with school leaders and governors.

Challenge and intervention

The local authority provides challenge and intervention to maintained schools where performance is judged to be high or moderate risk, in line with the national schools causing concern guidance and the East Sussex school improvement procedures.

If the local authority becomes aware of concerns about an academy, it will raise these with academy leaders, sponsors, trusts and the Regional Schools Commissioner. If necessary, it will challenge those with accountability for outcomes in academies about their plans for improvement.

Improvement and support

The local authority works with partners including the EIP Executive Committee and the local Regional Schools Commissioner to identify priorities for improvement based on analysis of trend data and comparison to national data sets. Support is commissioned and brokered from high quality providers and directed where it is most needed.

Our objectives

Working in partnership with all local providers, the local authority will prioritise these ambitious objectives by 2019:

1. Every school, college and setting to be judged at least good by Ofsted, with an increasing proportion judged to be outstanding.
2. Performance at all key stages to be at least in the second quartile and often in the top quartile on all key outcome measures.
3. Accelerate progress and improve attainment for all key groups of pupils, regardless of their starting point.
4. Increase attendance and reduce exclusions in line with national averages, with no group of pupils disproportionately represented in exclusion figures.
5. Every child and young person to be able to access high quality school places, employment, further education or training up to the age of 19 (25 for those with SEND).

How we will achieve these objectives

1. Every school, college and setting to be judged at least good by Ofsted, with an increasing proportion judged to be outstanding

- Focus resources to support the reducing number of schools that are not yet good, and intervene where school leaders or governors lack the skills or capacity to secure improvement.
- Support leaders and governors to develop strong partnerships including federations and multi-academy trusts so that all schools and settings have a sustainable future.
- Ensure governors and leaders are able to hold staff to account and have robust performance management systems linked to raising standards.
- Support the development of strong governor-led support and provide high quality training and support for governors and clerks to develop their skills and expertise to secure ongoing improvement in a complex educational environment.
- Develop and nurture leaders at all stages in their leadership journey, including identifying and developing future leadership talent; providing excellent induction, training and guidance.
- Improve safeguarding practice across all providers through the provision of high quality guidance and training and the development of local safeguarding networks.

2. Performance at all key stages to be at least in the second quartile and often in the top quartile on all key outcome measures.

- Develop effective provider-to-provider support across early years' provision by embedding successful practice from early years' hubs for excellence and building capacity for system leadership through a network of peer champions.
- Improve the range, value and quality of services and specialist provision for children and young people with SEND by:

- Making local provision responsive to the changing needs of children and young people
- Improving the quality of SEND support in schools to ensure children and young people attain good outcomes
- Support the development and alignment of partnerships to provide sustainable system-led structures through which schools take responsibility for improvement in their local area, identifying underperformance and working together to secure strong outcomes on all measures.
- Work through partnerships to secure high-quality teaching, learning and accurate assessment. Develop the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of all children and young people who are motivated and engaged in their learning and strive to succeed.
- Work with local partnerships, including maths hubs and teaching schools to provide training, opportunities and support to school leaders and governors to develop the skills and capacity required to secure improvement across groups and partnerships of schools.
- Focus resources to tackle underperformance in outcomes identified through data analysis, including a renewed focus on improving outcomes in maths across all phases.

3. Accelerate progress and improve attainment for all key groups of pupils, regardless of their starting point.

- Build expertise and share innovative practice across the workforce to meet the needs of all pupils, including, for example, those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged and ensure that no group is left behind.
- Ensure accurate tracking and assessment is in place to allow for effective curriculum planning and intervention to secure good progress for all groups of pupils.
- Analyse and share data on the performance of groups of pupils vulnerable to under-achievement to develop a shared understanding of priorities and to inform discussion and implementation of evidence-based approaches to improvement.
- Challenge, robustly, any school, college or setting where good outcomes for all pupils is not prioritised and expectations for some are not high enough.
- Commission appropriate support and specialist provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities from a range of providers, based on a sound understanding of the needs of children, their families and schools and to build a culture and capacity to be more inclusive in local schools, colleges and settings, leading to:
 - Improve early identification and intervention
 - Reduce reliance on statutory assessment in order to identify and make appropriate provision
 - More children will stay in local mainstream schools, with their peers

4. Increase attendance and reduce exclusions in line with national averages, with no group of pupils disproportionately represented in exclusion figures.

- Build on innovative practice in reducing exclusions in order to further drive down levels of fixed term and permanent exclusion.
- Develop tailored approaches to engaging with parents to secure improvements in attendance and ensure that children and young people are in school and are safe.
- Increase school-led interventions as alternatives to exclusions, including developing nurturing learning environments for children who are less able to successfully access whole class learning.
- Promote whole-school approaches to understanding behaviour, constructing a curriculum and motivating learners in order to meet the needs of all pupils and to be truly inclusive in local schools, colleges and settings.
- Raise aspirations and expectations to engage families and pupils in valuing education, improving attendance and reducing exclusions.

5. Every child and young person to be able to access high quality school places, employment, further education or training

- Ensure every school has a programme to support children and young people to develop the skills and understanding to inspire them for the next stage of their education and life and the world of work.
- Strengthen the link between schools and local employers, through careers education and information advice and guidance activities which are informed by local skills needs and driven by economic growth priorities.
- Provide support and opportunities so that all young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, can progress through post-16 learning and employment.
- Secure sufficient school places for all children in East Sussex, providing additional high-quality places as required.
- Secure sufficient childcare for families in line with the statutory guidance for early education and childcare.

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September 2017