



Greater Manchester: Support for school improvement peer review

Post-review summary of key findings

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

Please use the spaces below to capture a summary of the key overarching messages that have been developed through this peer review.

Overall summary (4-5 sentences to sum up the “health” of local support for school improvement arrangements)

Historically Bury has had an effective school led system, which has been well regarded, by schools and, partly due to the success of the former system, progress towards a school led system has been relatively slow. The launch of the Bury Education Improvement Toolkit in 2016 set out a clear vision for school improvement and specified roles and responsibilities of key players and movement towards the school led system has been supported via the Strategic school Improvement Fund Project and the development of teaching schools. The LA is currently in a period of transition and has recognised the need to review and consult on the current model to ensure clarity and commitment going forward

Key strengths and areas of effective practice (top three)

1. High level commitment to schools at council and senior officer level
2. High trust between schools and willingness to share data and strengths and areas for development
3. The Strategic School Improvement Project and other peer review projects have provided excellent models to develop school led leadership, effectively facilitated by the LA

Key priorities for development for local support for school improvement (top three)

1. Review and restate the vision for school improvement and school assurance and clarify roles, responsibilities and processes
2. Develop a comprehensive communication strategy including a regular feedback loop to aid continuous improvement
3. Identify celebrate and make maximum use of the talent and expertise in Bury and, in parallel with this, develop a training and mentoring support to develop future leaders

Key findings on priority areas (Please use this space to include a summary of the key messages about the priority area(s) on which it was agreed that the peer review should focus.)

Key Strengths

- Strong political commitment: Lead member is well informed through regular briefings and direct contact with schools and is able to support and challenge officers accordingly. The Life Chances Commission set up by the leader in 2017 states that the ambition is “to give everyone the best chance in life and do more to help everyone fulfil their potential”. The lead member confirmed that good education provision is the essential basis for success for the development of a highly skilled workforce and economic success. Schools value



the current active involvement of the DCS and her willingness to work with them to develop an effective system

- Individual officers are generally well regarded and respected
- Heads have a strong sense of loyalty to Bury and are passionate about Bury children
- There is high trust between Bury headteachers. They have embraced the opportunities for data sharing and this will provide an effective platform for the school led system and an increasing capacity to challenge and support each other.
- School on a page: some teething troubles because of specific concerns about aspects of the content and the limited consultation, but potentially an effective tool to develop key lines of enquiry and also very useful for governors.
- Health Checks are well regarded. This is a good vehicle to develop school led system moving from LA led to peer review (work under way already on this)
- Support for schools in categories very positive. Schools identified a range of internal and external support including HR, Governance. SCC referred to good signposting and that officers coordinate well with the diocese for church schools
- Heads value a cluster model and recognise opportunities to share good practice and support one another. They say that clusters also provide a good vehicle for moderation and for staff at all levels to come together for a specific purpose. They felt that the KR (ABCD) model had potential and should have been allowed to embed.
- The inclusion clusters have been well received and appear to be having an impact, specifically on exclusions.
- The SSIF project has proved an effective vehicle for building trust, developing partnership, identifying and sharing good practice and working together on key challenges. The LA has played a key role in facilitating this but ensuring that it is system led.
- The Teaching School Partnership has made significant steps forward in supporting the development of the school led system- for example the Schools Partnership peer review model is proving effective. Leaders have commented on its rigour and the impact that it has had on building capacity with middle leaders.
- LA has facilitated a good model for developing and improving maths practice, which is school led and based on a peer review model
- New AD has raised the profile of governance, which is very much appreciated

Areas for development

- LA needs to revisit, consult on and relaunch a clear vision for the future, which specifies roles, responsibilities and expectations of all parties, including governors and provides clarity re systems and what will happen when and how. This will enable the school led system to develop and consolidate
- Need to review and develop effective communication and consultation systems so that all parties are informed and engaged
- Need to decide if clusters are the way forward and if so agree on and co design a cluster model, which builds on identified strengths and responds to current shortfalls. Cluster leads (and other system leaders) will need support, training and modelling to develop their role effectively
- Need to identify the capacity within all Bury schools (both badged and unbadged) and put in place effective mechanisms to ensure this support is utilised and coordinated. This should then be brokered to support vulnerable schools and to facilitate the sharing of good practice.



- A programme of talent spotting and training should be put in place (using current leads and external support) to develop the next generation of system leaders
- Limited LA resources should be targeted at most need.
- Need to fine tune mechanisms for risk assessing schools to make best use of information from SEPs and clusters so that vulnerable schools can be identified and supported earlier.

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

To enable common strengths, challenges and themes can be identified across Greater Manchester, please use the space below to capture any key messages under each of the three areas of the peer review framework. (You may find it helpful to refer back to the descriptors of good practice in the framework.)

Area 1: Strategic leadership

- **Vision:** There is a clear vision and ambition for school improvement, articulated by political leaders and senior officers. This needs to be further developed to ensure all system leaders are fully engaged and involved

Area 2: Identification of priorities for supporting school improvement

There is high trust between schools and a willingness to share data to support each other to develop and improve

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

There is evidence that, once in place, there is effective school to school brokered support for schools causing concern.

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.