



Lewisham Schools Forum

Report title: Proposed de-delegation for Lewisham Learning (school improvement) 2023/24

Date: 15th December 2022

Key decision: No

Contributors:

Sandra Roberts, Director Lewisham Learning

Angela Scattergood, Director of Education

Outline and recommendations

At the meeting of the 16th December 2021, schools forum was advised of the cessation of the School Improvement and Brokerage Grant from April 2023.

Schools forum is asked to consider the recommendation from the Lewisham Learning Strategic Board to;

- maintain the 2022-23 level of de-delegation from April 2023 for 1 year

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

Changes must be made to the service from September 2023 to ensure spend for 2023/24 is within budget allocations.

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1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide the School Forum with;
- A summary of the current funding arrangements for Lewisham Learning to August 2023
 - A report on the impact of Lewisham Learning 2022-23
 - A recommendation from the Lewisham Learning Strategic Board to maintain the 2022-23 level of de-delegation from April 2023 for one year

2. Background

- 2.1. Lewisham Learning is a partnership of Lewisham schools and the Local Authority. The purpose of the partnership is to improve school performance amongst member schools.
- 2.2. The partnership is overseen and governed by the Lewisham Learning Strategic Board. The board provides overall strategic direction and approves an annual work programme including the monitoring of the budget.
- 2.3. The board meets at least six times a year
- 2.4. Membership of the board is kept under review but seeks to represent key stakeholders including;
- Executive Director CYP
 - Lead Council Member with responsibility for Children & Young People
 - Director of Education
 - Maintained Secondary Governor Representative
 - Maintained Primary Governor Representative
 - Leadership Forum Representative
 - Secondary School Leadership Forum Representative
 - Maintained Nursery and primary School Head Teacher Representative
 - Maintained Special School Head Teacher Representative
 - Non-Maintained, Academy Head Teacher/ CEO Representative
 - Tackling Race Inequality Steering Group Head Teacher Representative
 - London South Teaching School Representative

3. De-delegation, School Improvement and the removal of the monitoring and brokering grant

- 3.1. DfE guidance enables Local Authorities to provide services centrally which are funded by a process known as de-delegation. The de-delegation process must be agreed every year by school forum. To coincide with the removal of the monitoring and brokering grant the DfE changed the regulations to allow the schools forum to de-delegate to provide statutory school improvement services

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as well as the discretionary ones they could previously (see appendix 1 and 2 for details).

- 3.2. The rationale for this put forward by the DfE was that by expecting maintained school budgets to pay for these services it would;
 - result in greater involvement of school leaders in the design and delivery of them
 - level the playing field with academies who have to pay for them through their top slice to a MAT.
- 3.3. The DfE believe these services are important and expect that schools forum will ensure the LA is funded adequately to deliver them.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. The Lewisham Learning Strategic Board met on 28 November and considered the future funding and role of Lewisham Learning.
- 4.2. The board unanimously agreed to recommend that school forum agree to;
 - maintain the 2022-23 level of de-delegation from April 2023 for 1 year (Option 3)
- 4.3. If forum agrees to this the partnership board will;
 - ensure the LA, through the Lewisham Learning partnership can carry out its statutory role
 - reduce its costs by making changes to aspects of the enhanced programme, which is discretionary
 - develop a new staffing structure and programme within the budget agreed.

5. Funding and the offer

- 5.1. Since 2017 the partnership has been funded from 2 sources:
 - An LA commission (via the school improvement monitoring and brokering grant) to deliver statutory school improvement functions across the borough. (The Lewisham Learning **Universal Offer**)
 - An amount de-delegated from maintained school budgets, through the school forum, to deliver a range of discretionary school improvement activities to maintained schools. (The Lewisham Learning **Enhanced Offer**)

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5.2. The universal offer

- 5.2.1. The partnership has been commissioned by Lewisham Local Authority (LA) to deliver the statutory core duties relating to school improvement. The LA utilised a DfE School improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant to support this investment into Lewisham Learning.
- 5.2.2. The Grant was provided by the DfE to support councils to fulfil their core improvement activities, with the amount received by each council proportionate to the number of maintained schools in their area.
- 5.2.3. In October 2021, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) launched a consultation on the future of the monitoring and brokering grant beyond March 2022. This proposed that in future these functions be funded from maintained school budgets and that the grant be reduced by 50% from March 2022 and fully removed from March 2023.
- 5.2.4. The ESFA proceeded with the plans outlined in the consultation. The 50% reduction of the grant took place from April 2022 and the grant was reduced by 50% to £150k.
- 5.2.5. In February 2022 school forum agreed to de-delegate an additional £150k for one year to maintain the commission to August 2023 (£5.25 per pupil).
- 5.2.6. The grant ends fully in March 2023 and a decision needs to be made about future funding for both core statutory duties and any additional preventative work.

5.3. The enhanced offer

- 5.3.1. Since 2017 discretionary school improvement activities have been provided to maintained schools in Lewisham. These have been funded by de-delegation from maintained school budgets, through the school forum.

6. Expenditure

6.1. The universal Offer

- 6.1.1. The core improvement activities included in the LA commission (The universal offer) are set out in Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) and on page 47 of the Schools Causing Concern guidance. They include;
 - understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data as a starting point to identify any maintained school that is underperforming, while working with them to explore ways to support progress
 - brokering school improvement provision for maintained schools,

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- intervening in maintained schools as appropriate
- encouraging good and outstanding maintained schools to take responsibility for their own improvement; support other maintained schools; and enable other maintained schools to access the support they need to improve.
- making provision to carry out statutory assessment duties for key stage 2
- advising on the appointment of headteachers in maintained schools
- limited duties in relation to school governors

6.1.2. The Lewisham Learning School Improvement Framework 2022-23 sets out the processes and procedures by which the Lewisham Learning partnership works to ensure all schools offer the highest quality of education to all pupils. It reaffirms the statutory roles and responsibilities of school governors and the Local Authority and should be read in conjunction with the Local Authority Education Strategy.

6.1.3. The allocation of resources for the universal programme is transparent and in inverse proportion to success. Schools are categorised in line with the School Improvement Framework and those with the greatest needs, or carrying the greatest risk of not securing good outcomes, receive higher levels of support than those with less need or risk. This programme is highly successful in assessing risk and intervening early so that the LA can accurately predict Ofsted outcomes and ensure schools get the right levels of support and challenge in a timely way. The universal programme provides a suitably qualified School Improvement Partner (SIP) for all schools to support accurate categorisation and ensures resources and interventions go where they are needed. It also provides a framework for good and outstanding schools to support other schools. In 2022/23 the programme funded;

- A Primary and nursery school programme £137k
- A Secondary school programme £50k
- A Special school programme £4k
- Management costs of the programme £38k

6.2. **The Enhanced Programme for LA Maintained Schools**

6.2.1. Currently the enhanced programme is driven by the needs of maintained schools as agreed by the strategic board. These priorities reflect issues identified through a range of sources, including data and emerging issues

6.2.2. The allocation of the enhanced programme is transparent. Its aims are to meet the school improvement needs of the maintained primary and secondary schools. In 2022/23 the programme funded;

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- The tackling race inequality programme (£100k per annum)
- Partnerships and hubs to support Humanities Research, Science and the Arts (£45k per annum)
- primary projects including the core school offer and peer review (£117k per annum)
- Secondary projects including the core school offer and peer review (£100k per annum)
- Whole school reviews for schools expecting an Ofsted inspection (£24k per annum)
- Data analysis services and reports for schools – MIME (£55k per annum)
- FFT subscriptions for secondary schools (£22k per annum)
- Management costs of the programme (£38k per annum)
- Communications (£20k per annum)

6.3. Central costs of running the partnership to include leadership, management

6.3.1. In 2022/23 the central costs are estimated to be around £62k. The partnership has director and part time project manager. Currently all work not carried out by the part time member of staff is commissioned on a day rate basis. The partnership uses the expertise of Lewisham school leaders whenever possible. This is a key strategy and highly successful.

6.3.2. Where staff are engaged in the delivery of programmes their costs are apportioned to those programmes. For example the director and primary and secondary leads carry out school improvement partner work and deliver projects.

7. Impact of the work of Lewisham Learning

7.1. Through the combined programmes Lewisham Learning;

- Has a good understanding of the performance of partnership schools.
- Encourages good and outstanding schools to take responsibility for their own improvement and to support other schools.
- Enables maintained schools to purchase from a diverse market of providers and be the broker where collective buying power can be used to best effect.
- Signposts where schools can access appropriate support.
- Secures strong and effective leadership and governance for maintained schools that are not providing a good enough education, by identifying and supporting successful partners.

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- Facilitates the identification and sharing of most effective practice

7.2. The universal Programme

- 7.2.1. The partnership provides support and challenge for all Lewisham maintained schools. Depending on their agreed category some schools benefit more from the service than others. In 2022-23 there are 3 schools categorised as needing a high level of support, 8 schools categorised as needing a medium level of support, and 68 schools categorised as needing a core level of support. The numbers of schools categorised as high level and medium level has reduced significantly since the creation of Lewisham Learning in 2017.
- 7.2.2. The universal programme is intended to ensure Lewisham Learning monitors performance, broker's appropriate support and intervenes in schools that are causing concern.
- 7.2.3. Evidence suggests **monitoring performance** is done well. Each school is visited regularly and their performance against key performance indicators is evaluated and verified. Support is offered in a targeted way to ensure any strengths are maximised and weaknesses addressed. Lewisham Learning evaluations are consistently found to match those of Ofsted inspectors.
- 7.2.4. As the approach is **preventative** and designed to ensure schools get the best outcomes it is difficult to quantify how many schools have better Ofsted reports than they would have without Lewisham Learning but the percentage of Lewisham schools with better than national judgements from Ofsted is a good indicator that the approach is successful. There is also evidence that those outcomes have been improved over the life of Lewisham Learning (Table 1) and that the approach has been most successful for primary schools. A current focus for Lewisham Learning is to develop the approach across the secondary schools and we are now seeing the impact here in improved Ofsted outcomes.

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Table 1 – Ofsted % of schools on 07/11/22 (source Watchsted website)

All schools	Outstanding 2019	Outstanding Nov 22	Good 2019	Good Nov 22	At least good 2019	At least Good Nov 22	Requires improvement 2019	Requires improvement Nov 22	Inadequate 2019	Inadequate Nov 22
National	18.2%	15.9%	67.5%	72.1%	85.6%	87.9%	10.8%	9%	3.6%	3%
London	33.9%	26.1%	59.9%	68.1%	93.8%	94.3%	4.5%	4.6%	1.7%	1.1%
Lewisham	27.3%	23.7%	62.3%	71.1	89.6%	94.7%	10.4%	5.3%	0%	0%
Primary Schools	Outstanding		Good		At least good		Requires Improvement		Inadequate	
National Primary	17.6%	15.4%	70%	74.1%	87.5%	89.5%	9.6%	8.1%	2.6%	2.4%
London Primary	32.4%	25.2%	63.1%	70.3%	95.5%	95.5%	3.4%	3.8%	0.9%	0.7%
Lewisham Primary	32.4%	24.2%	66.7%	74.2%	95.2%	99%	4.8%	1%	0%	0%
Secondary Schools	Outstanding		Good		At least good		Requires Improvement		Inadequate	
National Secondary	21.2%	18.3%	54.9%	61.8%	76.1%	80.2%	16.8%	13.7%	7.1%	6.1%
London Secondary	40%	29.4%	46.9%	60.3%	86.9%	89.7%	9.1%	7.6%	4%	2.7%
Lewisham Secondary	21.4%	21.4%	42.9%	64.6%	64.3%	86%	35.7%	14%	0%	0%

7.2.5. Table 2 is also evidence that the approach to **brokering support** is successful. School improvement partners match a good or outstanding school with one needing support and monitors and quality assures this support. School improvement partners are, in the main, leaders of Lewisham Schools so this also provides good opportunities for leaders to improve their practice and share that practice with other local schools.

7.2.6. The third role of the universal programme is to **intervene in schools “causing concern” or inadequate** (DfE criteria). As table 2 shows Lewisham does not have any schools that meet that criteria. Lewisham Learning’s preventative approach and robust support and challenge for schools categorised as needing high level support is a significant factor in maintaining that.

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Table 2- Number of schools in each category

Type	High 2021	High 2022	Medium 2021	Medium 2022	Core 2021	Core 2022	Total 2021	Total 2022
Maintained Primary/Nursery	5	1	10	8	49	54	64	63
Maintained Secondary	2	2	4	0	4	8	10	10
Maintained Special/ PRU	0	0	0	0	6	6	6	6
	7	3	14	8	59	68	80	79

7.3. The enhanced programme

7.3.1. The activities provided through the enhanced programme are generally well received and have high levels of engagement.

7.3.2. The interim evaluation of the tackling race inequality programme was positive but yet to deliver significant tangible outcomes against the agreed performance indicators

7.3.3. The evaluation of the locality hubs show high levels of attendance and high levels of participant satisfaction. The schools most active in leading them continue to have the highest outcomes,

7.3.4. The primary projects or “core school offer” is very popular with schools. It enables all school leaders to ring fence funds for school improvement and school improvement partners to monitor that schools are prioritising activities appropriately.

7.3.5. The secondary projects or “secondary school core offer is new this year and yet to be evaluated.

8. Options for the future of Lewisham Learning (see table 3 for costings)

8.1. At the meeting on 28 November the strategic board considered the following options for 2023/24 funding of Lewisham Learning.

8.1.1. **Option One-** Maintain the programme at the same level as 2022-23. This would require a further increase in the amount de-delegated by maintained schools to make up the shortfall in the DfE grant. This would require an increase of 150k in de-delegated funding, to a total of £600k.

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8.1.2. **Option Two-** Reduce the 2023/24 programme and maintain de-delegation at the 2022/23 level of £450k, **making financial adjustments to all elements of the programmes.** The likely impacts of this would be;

- Lighter touch monitoring more dependent on desk top analysis than the deployment of school improvement partners.
- Less accurate knowledge about school performance and therefore less effective targeting of support
- Less accurate prediction of Ofsted and other outcomes leading to some schools needing more support later than if it had been offered earlier as now with schools categorised as Amber
- Poorer relationships between schools and the LA
- Significantly less support and challenge for schools currently categorised as needing a high level of support potentially leaving them vulnerable to further decline and special measures.
- Fewer opportunities for good and outstanding school leaders to support other schools

8.1.3. **Option 3-** Reduce the 2023/24 programme and maintain de-delegation at the 2022/23 level of £450k, **making savings from the enhanced elements of the programme only and protecting the universal programme.** If the quality and scope of the enhanced programme is reduced the likely impacts of this would be

- Fewer or no new initiatives to support innovation and school development
- Less collaboration and a deterioration in collegiality and collaboration
- More expensive services as schools lose some of the current benefits of economies of scale
- Fewer opportunities for good and outstanding schools to lead on LA funded initiatives

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Table 3 Options

Income	2022/23	2023/4	2023/4	2023/4
		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Dedelegated School Improvement Funding	450,000	600,000	450,000	450,000
LA monitoring, brokering and intervention SLA	150,000			
Carry Forward	391,000	Est 150,000	Est 150,000	Est 150,000
Additional known income (as of Oct 2022)	2,600			
Total funds	993,869	750,000	600,000	600,000

Expenditure			*	*
Central costs	50k	50k	50k	50k
Universal programme	320k	320k	250k	320k
Enhanced programme				
tackling race inequality	100k	100k	50k	50k
Partnerships and hubs	45k	40k		
primary projects	120k	80k	87k	25k
Secondary projects	100k	40k	50k	25k
Whole school reviews for schools expecting an Ofsted inspection	24k	20k		25k
Data analysis services	55k	45k	55k	45k
FFT subscriptions	22k			
Management costs	38k	35k	38k	40k
Communications	20k	20k	20k	20k
Grand total	894	750	600k	600k

*The figures in these columns are only examples. The totals would stay the same as in the table above but the board would consult with school leaders before agreeing an actual budget, staffing structure and action plan.

9. Financial implications

9.1. The report provides options for the continuation of the Lewisham Learning support to schools, in light of changes to funding available from DfE. The outcome of this report will be implemented into the Delegated Budget share response to DfE in January, please see associated report elsewhere on the Agenda.

10. Legal implications

10.1. There are no significant legal implications of this report.

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11. Equalities implications

11.1. There are no direct implications arising from this report

12. Climate change and environmental implications

12.1. There are no crime and disorder implications of this report.

13. Crime and disorder implications

13.1. There are no crime and disorder implications of this report.

14. Health and wellbeing implications

14.1. There are no direct implications arising from this report

15. Report authors and contact

15.1. Sandra Roberts, Director Lewisham learning sandra.roberts@lewisham.gov.uk

15.2. Angela Scattergood, Director of Education, angela.scattergood@lewisham.gov.uk

16. Appendices

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