



Lewisham Schools Forum

Report title:

**DSG 2022/23 – Report 2 of 3 –
De-delegation request for School Improvement and Brokerage
Grant**

Date: 20th January 2022

Outline and recommendations

This report is formed on the basis of the mandate agreed with schools forum at its meeting on the 16th December and the funding settlement as detailed in Report 1 – elsewhere on the agenda.

School Improvement and Brokerage Grant

Meeting of the 16th December 2021, Schools forum was advised of the partial withdrawal of the School Improvement and Brokerage Grant. A more detailed report 2 of 3 – details the work undertaken by Lewisham Learning to support Schools.

Schools Forum is asked to consider increased de-delegation to support the fallout which will require £5.25 per pupil from maintained primary and secondary phase schools.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

School Improvement and Brokerage Grant

- On the basis Schools Forum supports the de-delegation request, no further action will be required.
- If the request is not supported, an exit strategy would be actioned with immediate effect, to ensure spend for 2022/23 is within budget allocations and will have implications for the LA's ability to support schools.

Purpose of report

1. The report provides information to enable schools forum to determine the 2022/23 de-delegation to support the work of Lewisham Learning.

Background

2. The DfE guidance enables Local Authorities to provide services centrally which are funded by a process known as de-delegation.
3. The de-delegation process must be agreed every year.
4. Lewisham Learning receives funding from the Monitoring and Brokering Grant provided by the DfE. This is a formula driven grant and was estimated to be circa £300k for 2022/23. However the DfE has confirmed that the grant will cease from 2023/24 with a 50% reduction actioned in 2022/23. Schools forum is asked to consider increasing de-delegation by £5.25 per pupil in 2022-2023 and £10.50 per pupil in 2023-24 to meet the shortfall, or to agree to a reduction in service.

Current service provided by Lewisham Learning

5. The purpose of the partnership is to improve school performance amongst member schools. It does this by being;-
6. An organisation commissioned by Lewisham Local Authority (LA) to monitor the performance of all schools; brokering support for schools requiring it and challenging and intervening in those schools needing a high level of support (red school support). This is the **core programme** for all schools which is currently funded by the monitoring and brokering grant.
7. An organisation led by its members to provide school improvement activities funded by schools for schools. This is the **enhanced programme for LA maintained schools**.

8. The Lewisham Learning School Improvement Framework 2021-22 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.
9. The Lewisham Learning partnership came into existence in 2017. It is supported by a small number of staff to coordinate and commission services to meet the needs of Lewisham schools in the most flexible and cost effective ways available, using the expertise of Lewisham school leaders whenever possible.
10. Lewisham Learning is governed by a Strategic Board made up of school leaders, LA officers and other stakeholders.
11. Through this framework 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.
 - Facilitate the identification and sharing of most effective practice.

The Core Programme

12. The priority for the Core Programme, paid for by the current monitoring and brokering grant, is driven by the requirements of the local authority to know its schools well, broker support and challenge and intervene in schools causing concern. This budget is tight and fully allocated. The allocation of the core programme is transparent and in inverse proportion to success. Schools receive a categorised level of support 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. 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.

13. The core programme for secondary schools focuses almost exclusively on the 3 schools judged by Ofsted to require improvement.
14. The core programme provides a suitably qualified School Improvement Partner (SIP) for all schools to support accurate categorisation and ensure resources and interventions go where they are needed. It also provides a framework for good and outstanding schools to support other schools

Impact of the work of Lewisham Learning

15. Lewisham Learning is a universal service that supports and challenges all Lewisham schools. Depending on their agreed category of support, schools access more support than others and their level of support may vary over time in response to their self-categorisation and a number of events/circumstances. In 2022-23 there are 5 schools categorised for Red (high) level support, 7 schools categorised for Amber (medium) level of support and 67 schools categorised for Green (low) level support. The numbers of schools categorised for red and amber support has reduced significantly since the creation of Lewisham Learning in 2017.

16. Table 1- Number of maintained schools in each support category

Type	Red 2021	Red 2022	Amber 2021	Amber 2022	Green 2021	Green 2022	Total 2021	Total 2022
M.Primary/Nursery	5	4	10	4	48	55	64	63
M.Secondary	2	1	4	3	4	6	10	10
M.Special/ Pru	0	0	1	0	5	6	6	6
	7	5	15	7	53	67	80	79

17. The core programme is intended to ensure Lewisham Learning monitors performance, brokers appropriate support and intervenes in schools that are causing concern.
18. 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.
19. 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 % 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

and that the approach is most successful for primary schools. A current focus for Lewisham Learning is to develop the approach across the secondary schools.

20. Table 2 – Ofsted % of schools by Ofsted judgement

Lewisham – All Schools	Outstanding	Good	At least good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
National	17.7%	68.1%	85.8%	10.7%	3.5%
London	33.3%	60%	93.3%	5.2%	1.5%
Lewisham	26%	63.6%	89.6%	10.4%	0%
Lewisham – Primary Schools	Outstanding	Good	At least good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
National Primary	17.1%	70.6%	87.7%	9.4%	2.8%
London Primary	31.7%	63.1%	94.8%	4.3%	1%
Lewisham Primary	27%	68.3%	95.3%	4.8%	0%
Lewisham Secondary Schools	Outstanding	Good	At least good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
National Secondary	20.8%	55.3%	76.1%	17.1%	6.9%
London Secondary	39.8%	47.7%	87.5%	9.1%	3.4%
Lewisham Secondary	21.4%	42.9%	64.3%	35.7%	0%

21. 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.

22. As the school improvement partners are in the main leaders of Lewisham Schools, this also provides good opportunities for leaders to improve their practice and share that practice with other local schools.

23. The third role of the core 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 requiring red (high) level is a significant factor in maintaining that.

The Enhanced Programme

24. Currently the Enhanced Programme is driven by the needs of those schools as agreed by the strategic board. These priorities reflect issues identified through a range of sources, including data and emerging issues
25. The allocation of the Enhanced Programme is also transparent. Its aims are to meet the school improvement needs of the maintained primary and secondary schools. The programme funds:-
- The Green offer for all schools categorised as requiring low level support.
 - The tackling race inequality programme
 - Locality hubs to support Humanities and the Arts
 - A peer review scheme
 - Whole school reviews for schools expecting an Ofsted inspection
 - Data analysis services and reports for schools
 - A communication officer
 - Contextual safeguarding support for targeted schools
 - Coordinating and maximising support from external bodies such as the teaching school hub, maths Hub, English hub etc.
 - Ad hoc support as identified by the board

What would effectively change if schools do not support the de-delegation

26. As stated earlier the monitoring and brokering grant is very likely to be reduced by 50% for 2022/23 and disappear completely in 2023/24. Without additional de-delegation to make up this shortfall the work of Lewisham Learning will be severely affected.
27. The Lewisham Learning strategic board would need to consider the following options;

Reduce the quality and scope of the core programme.

28. 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 requiring Amber level support.
- Poorer relationships between schools and the LA.
- Significantly less support and challenge for schools currently categorised as requiring red level support, potentially leaving them vulnerable to further decline and special measures.
- Fewer opportunities for good and outstanding school leaders to support other schools.

Maintain the quality and scope of the core programme and reduce or cut the enhanced programme.

29. The likely impacts of this would be;

- That only schools categorised for red and amber support would be supported by the de-delegated funds.
- No new initiatives to support innovation and school development.
- Less collaboration and a deterioration in collegiality and collaboration.
- Less quality control of services commissioned by individual schools rather than brokered by LL.
- More expensive services as schools lose the current benefits of economies of scale.
- Poorer relationships between schools and the LA.
- Fewer opportunities for good and outstanding schools.

Cut or reduce contributions to staffing costs.

30. The likely impacts of this would be;

- Less effective management and coordination of what is now a well organised and successful approach.
- Potential contractual/ redundancy issues for staff.

A combination of all 3 approaches with a combination of impacts.

Timelines for when this would take effect

- 31.** If the request is not supported, an exit strategy would be actioned with immediate effect to ensure spend for 2022/23 is within budget allocations and will have implications for the LA's ability to support schools.

32. Any reduction in funds would take effect through the implementation of the School Improvement Framework from September 2022.

33. Any implications for staff will need to be considered as soon as possible.

Financial Implications

34. This report details the support provided by Lewisham Learning to Schools as part of School improvement.

35. To date a proportion of the service is funded from a grant (schools improvement and brokerage grant) which has very recently been confirmed as ceased from 2023/24, with a transitional position for 22/23 of 50% reduction

36. The grant is formula based linked to number of schools and pupils £150k reduction in funding is the estimated position

37. The report effectively notes 2 positions, being continuation of service which requires additional de-delegation or cessation of services with immediate effect.

38. If the de-delegation is not supported, then the exit strategy would need to consider any potential redundancy costs.

Equalities Impact

39. A full equalities impact assessment will be carried out to assess the impact of decisions.

Legal Implications

40. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report

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