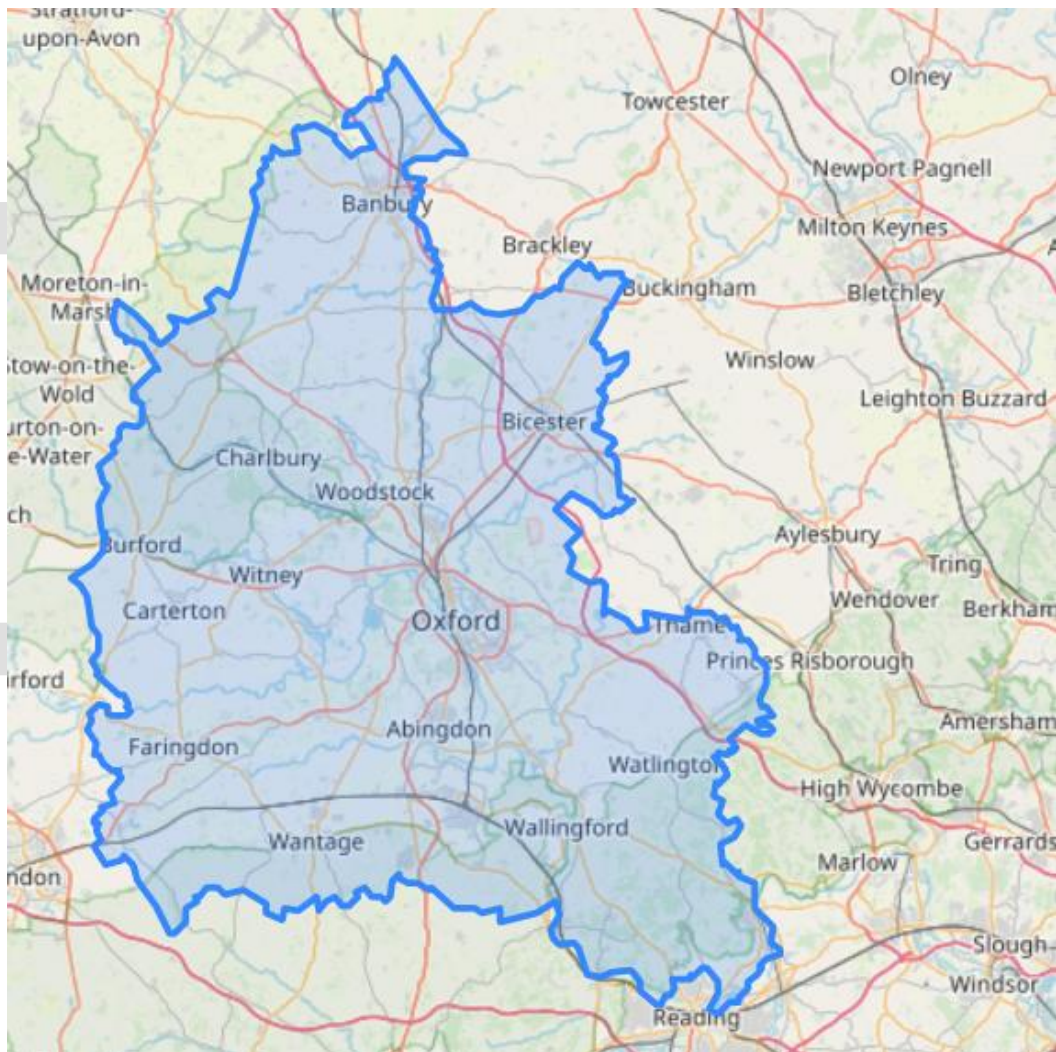# Oxfordshire County Council

Children, Education and Families Services

Improving Education Outcomes – a strategic review

14 December 2019

Oxfordshire

Index

1. Background

Oxfordshire 2030 https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/our-work-communities/oxfordshire-2030 identifies how we will respond to the challenges facing Oxfordshire through a Sustainable Community Strategy. It sets out a long-term vision for Oxfordshire's future:

> *By 2030 we want Oxfordshire to be recognised for its economic success, outstanding environment and quality of life; to be a place where everyone can realise their potential, contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity and where people are actively involved in their local communities.*

> *This strategy has been developed by the Oxfordshire Partnership on behalf of the people living and working in Oxfordshire. The partnership brings together people from Oxfordshire's most influential organisations and groups to tackle the issues that are important to local people. There are five district Local Strategic Partnerships – the Oxford Strategic Partnership, Cherwell Community Planning Partnership, West Oxfordshire Strategic Partnership, South Oxfordshire Partnership and the Vale Strategic Partnership. They each have their own challenges, priorities and action plans.*

> *Oxfordshire is a diverse and changing county. There are pockets of deprivation amongst prosperous communities; areas of outstanding natural beauty and areas of significant housing and commercial development. Our rural areas, market towns and Oxford itself have different local identities, challenges and priorities. In consequence this strategy seeks to recognise broad priorities whilst recognising that action needs to reflect the needs of our local communities.*

Oxfordshire County Council's corporate plan (pdf format, 4Mb) sets out its key objectives and priorities for action until 2022.

The County Council delivers 80 per cent of local government services in the county. In working to deliver these services we have in mind our ambition for a county where residents and businesses can flourish.

To the Council this means having:

- a strong and thriving economy - with small businesses starting, existing small businesses growing and large businesses choosing to locate here, creating good jobs for local people.
- protection for vulnerable people – where we support and safeguard some of the county's most vulnerable residents, focusing on those we have a duty to consider, such as older people, disabled adults, and children. We must ensure these residents are aware of, and can easily access, the services and care to which they are entitled.
- efficient public services – we will modernise the way the Council runs and provides services alongside working effectively with our local partners to ensure that residents receive joined up and value for money services.

The Council has a key role in supporting people across the county. It provides services and often this is with other public sector providers and the voluntary sector. Early years settings, schools, colleges and the universities are central to provision of services in Oxfordshire.

2. Our vision for children and young people in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Plan 2018-21 is a joint plan which says what the priorities are for children, young people and families in Oxfordshire. Joint plans help organisations work together to deliver the very best services to children, young people and families. Partnership working is key to tackle the priority areas which are identified by children, families and professionals in Oxfordshire.

Our Vision

The Plan defines the vision as *'Oxfordshire – a great place to grow up and have the opportunity to become everything you want to be'*

Areas of Focus

Our 'obsessions' are for all children and young people to:

- Be Successful
- Be Happy and Healthy
- Be Safe
- Be Supported

What do we know about growing up in Oxfordshire?

We want Oxfordshire to be a great place for everyone to grow up and be healthy and successful - this is already the case for many, but not for all. The Plan notes:

- We have a growing population that is becoming more diverse.
- Social deprivation and child poverty still persist in some places, but we are all working together to tackle this.
- Some groups of children and young people in Oxfordshire still do not do as well as the national average in achieving good school results.
- Persistent absence rates in secondary schools in Oxfordshire are worse than the national average.
- Demand for services has increased: we have experienced a significant increase in the number of children in care in recent years, and more children /young people are referred to mental health services.
- Children and young people are generally healthier than elsewhere.
- Some data suggests that alcohol, drug use and substance misuse is worse in Oxfordshire than other areas.
- There is an increase in reports of self-harm among young people in Oxfordshire.
- Domestic crimes involving children have increased (although this may be a result of recording changes).

What do we need to do to make a difference?

To make a difference we need to enable children and young people to be well educated, and grow up to lead successful, happy, healthy and safe lives, through:

- Schools and universal services working together with local, targeted and specialist services is key to improving outcomes.
- Shift the focus to prevention and early help through real partnerships and using resources effectively.
- Support the most vulnerable, including children with SEND, to make sure everyone has an equal opportunity to become everything they want to be – for too many of our children and young people outcomes are not yet good enough.
- Deliver responsive services that place children, young people and families at the heart of what we do.

Children's Services Transformation Programme – 'Journey of the Child'

The Children, Education & Families Directorate is also undertaking a whole service transformation programme which will review and improve all services across education and social care over the next three years. The programme is overseen and managed by the directorate leadership team and the key workstream activities are outlined below:

- Family Safeguarding Plus model
- Fostering programme
- Reconnecting Families
- Youth Justice & Exploitation service development
- LAC/ Leaving Care & UASC service development
- LCS Electronic Social Care record implementation
- Third part commissioning savings
- Improved supported lodgings services
- Education Service redesign
- Education electronic recording system replacement project
- Improvements to Special Education Needs services
- Improvement to Special Education Needs transport arrangement

What do we need to do next?

It is now timely to review the vision through our partnerships with the Children's Trust Board, the Parent Carer Forum, the Diocesan Authorities, the Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership (OSSP), the Oxfordshire Secondary School Headteachers' Association (OSSHTA), the Oxfordshire Association of Special Schools Headteachers (OASSH), the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA) and a newly formed Oxfordshire Primary Schools Headteachers' Association (OPSHA).

3. National context

One of the defining features of the recent history of the English education system especially since the 1988 Education Reform Act has been the growth of school autonomy. The 2010 White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' stated that "the primary responsibility for improvement rests with the schools themselves" and set out an ambition for "the school system to become more effectively self–improving." The aim of creating a self-improving school system led by networks of schools, soft federations, hard federations and multi academy trusts is part of a process which is transforming the relationships between schools and local authorities.

The area which is changing most rapidly is in school improvement and interventions:

- More school-led partnership leading school improvement
- School leaders are becoming more confident they can access high quality support
- School leaders see the attraction of being connected to at least one formal network
- School improvement is increasingly characterised by joint proactive development and peer evaluation
- Local Authorities developing a new way of working with all schools and academies

Many may agree that the move away from the traditional role and size of the Local Authority is timely and appropriate. Such a change may pose risks to local coherence or support the opportunities to build new partnerships. In any case the focus should be on raising educational standards, enhancing outcomes and life chances for all children and young people. It does raise important questions as to how a self-improving system can be managed recognising that in a state funded system there is unlikely to be complete autonomy for schools. The Government emphasises that it does not want to see a system micro-managed by the Secretary of State (SoS) or by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) or by the Local Authority (LA). With the move to a school led system then the quality of partnership between individual schools is crucial. Central, regional or local planning would then focus on ensuring sufficient good quality school places. Local and sub regional solutions can support and enable school improvement and may be relevant to local communities.

There remains an issue for all Local Authorities as to how their role is to evolve with the focus on three key areas of responsibility: as a convenor of partnerships, as a champion of children, families and communities; and as a maker and shaper of effective commissioning.

The statutory Director for Children, Education and Families (CEF) commissioned this strategic review to consider how best Oxfordshire County Council can contribute to further improve education outcomes for the young people of Oxfordshire. It reflects on what the offer is currently and what it could be in the future. It reflects the Council's legal duties including these relating to intervention. Opportunities to further develop collaborative models are explored. Value for money is a factor.

4. The continuing role of Local Authorities in supporting local school improvement systems

Since the publication in 2010 of the White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' there has been much debate about the continuing and future role of Local Authorities (LAs).

David Hargreaves published his think-pieces for the then National College for School Leadership (NCSL) about the key features of the self-improving school system (for example, *Creating a self-improving school system,* 2010; and *A self-improving school system: Towards maturity,* 2012*;* National College for School Leadership). The 2010 McKinsey report had emphasised the importance of collaboration between education institutions and the role of the "middle tier" in education (Mourshed, Chijioke, Barber, *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better*, 2010, McKinsey).

In 2012, Isos Partnership published a report for the Department for Education (DfE) and Local Government Association (LGA) that considered the role of the LA in education (Baxter, Parish, Sandals, Action Research into The Evolving Role of the LA in Education, DfE/LGA, 2012). The report concluded that in response to the extension of school autonomy, the role of the LA in education was evolving to focus on three key areas of responsibility: as a convenor of partnerships; as a champion of children, families and communities; and as a maker and shaper of effective commissioning. The convenor brings leaders together, connecting to best practice within and beyond the system, facilitating partnerships. The champion of educational transformation brings a moral purpose, democratic mandate to ensure good outcomes, vision. The commissioner brings the strategic picture, intelligence and data, enabling and commissioning support and development.

In 2014 the Isos Partnership produced a follow-up report for the DfE (Bryant, Sandals, *The Evolving Education System in England: a temperature check*, DfE, 2014). This report looked at the ways in which school improvement, school place-planning and support for vulnerable children were evolving. That report characterised the ways in which local systems were evolving and summarised three main types:

• **Timely adapters** – systems in which Local Authority (LA) services were highly regarded by schools, with a history of encouraging partnership-working, that were mostly high-performing systems, and in which change to a schools-led system was already underway and/or had been led proactively, with LAs and schools working together to create the space and conditions for schools and academies to lead the transition.

• **Slow movers** – systems with historically higher levels of intervention in schools, in which LA services were seen by schools as weak or variable in quality, that were mostly lower-performing systems, and that had been slower in adapting to change or where the leadership of change had been ineffective.

• **Sudden reactors** – systems with different starting points, but the same end goal in mind: namely that LA services should diminish, regardless of quality, and that school partnerships should lead, regardless of their maturity. Change had been dictated and driven quickly, with pace outweighing precision in planning and engagement with school leaders, and without creating the conditions for schools to lead a successful transition.

The White Paper Educational Excellence Everywhere (DfE, 2016) proposed that the role of LAs should focus on ensuring every child had a school place, ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils were met, and acting as champions for all parents and families. A role for LAs would be established within an education system in which all schools were academies. Since publication of the White Paper, the Government signalled that it would not bring forward legislation to compel all schools to become academies. For the time being, therefore, local education

systems are likely to remain a mixture of different types of schools, with a range of different organisations, partnerships and leaders.

By February 2017, in its report on the development of multi-academy trusts, the House of Commons Education Committee said about the role of LAs:

"The Government must clearly define the future role of local authorities, particularly in areas with high numbers of academies. The current uncertainty about their place in the school system is not sustainable and making their role clear should be a priority for the Secretary of State. Their relationship with RSCs [regional schools commissioners] must also form a part of this and formal protocols between local authorities and the RSC structure should be established."
House of Commons Education Committee, MATs, HC204, February 2017

In terms of funding for LAs' duties, the most significant change since 2014 has been the phased removal of the Education Services Grant for LAs. Wide-ranging proposals for a new national funding formula for schools have also been published.

The document January 2018 'ENABLING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - Research into the role of Local Authorities in supporting local school improvement systems' was based on research undertaken by the Isos Partnership and commissioned by the Local Government Association. This report draws on that document. The term "local school improvement system" can be defined as:

local – the geographical area based loosely on LA boundaries but not restricted to these boundaries for the purposes of, for example, school-to-school support, activities with other local areas, or work on a sub-regional basis;

school improvement – the activities undertaken within and between schools and academies, and between schools and other key players such as LA officers and advisers, that lead to improved outcomes for children, higher-quality teaching and learning, and strengthened capacity for schools and academies to manage change; and

system – the connections between groups of schools and academies, the LA, teaching school alliances, multi-academy trusts, dioceses, and other local leaders.

Central government's position is defined in the White Paper Educational Excellence Everywhere (DfE, 2016). Department for Education civil servants were reported in September 2017 as talking about 'resetting' the relationship with Local Authorities. What is clear is that for the time being, therefore, local education systems are likely to remain a mixture of different types of schools, with a range of different types of Local Authorities, organisations, partnerships and leaders. The nature of any strategic education partnership and a local school improvement system is largely a matter for local determination.

The January 2018 Isos Partnership document highlighted nine key conditions important for establishing effective local school improvement systems based on its research across the country. The nine conditions are summarised below:

1. Clear and compelling vision for the local school improvement system
- mutually developed, focussed on impact on teaching and learning and outcomes for children

- relentless focus on continuous improvement and providing the best educational opportunities for all children across the local community

- understanding of the local challenges and context that is driving the vision and 'what holds us together'

- developed with elected members and supported by local key stakeholders

2. Trust and high social capital between schools and with the local authority and key partners
- formed from close working, mutual respect and credibility, shared common goals, transparency of school level-data

- willingness to act collaboratively to address vulnerabilities

3. Strong engagement from the vast majority of schools and academies
- they can see the purpose and benefits of having a Local School Improvement System, are excited by the potential, and can agree on the key priorities for the local system

- role of Headteacher and governor associations, importance of Teaching School Alliances

4. Leadership from key school system leaders
- engage colleagues, share intelligence and expertise, and forge solutions. Role of the "guiding coalition" with key LA staff

5. Crucial empowering and facilitative role for the local authority
- co-ordinate and contribute

- bring expertise, local intelligence, validation, impartiality and objectivity

- no evidence of other player that can fulfil this role

6. Sufficient capacity in local schools to support other schools
- from National Leaders of Education, Teaching Schools, Local Leaders and Specialist Leaders of Education, National Leaders of Governance, Multi Academy Trusts and local clusters of schools

7. Effective local links with regional partners
- Regional Schools Commissioners, Ofsted, Teaching School Council, sub-regional links

8. Sufficient financial contributions
- from schools and the LA to make the system work, ensure all have a stake, and provide capacity

9.   Structures to enable partnership activity
- structures working at a range of levels, from local clusters focussed on peer review, to authority-wide groups to identify common priorities across the local system

The Local Government Association (LGA) commissioned and part-funded research to understand the comparative costs of the middle tiers in England. It defines 'middle tier' as the systems of support and accountability connecting publicly funded local authority (LA) maintained schools and academies with the Department for Education (DfE). The study published in July 2019, 'Understanding the Middle Tier: Comparative Costs of Academy and LA-maintained Systems', focused on the costs of England's two parallel systems for overseeing academies and local authority (LA) schools. It stated that research found 'a complex and confusing picture that reinforces the Public Accounts Committee judgement that 'The Department's arrangements for oversight of schools are fragmented and incoherent, leading to inefficiency for government and confusion for schools.'' On the other hand the Department for Education Permanent Secretary wrote to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee on 7 November 2018 and stated 'The whole system is kept under close review and regular checkpoint meetings are held with RSCs and LAs to monitor how these relationships are working and in the majority of cases feedback from LAs and MATs indicate they work together collaboratively and constructively.' Wherever the arguments sit there is an increasingly diverse education system which may produce local opportunities and challenges and it is for local areas to consider ways forward.

In Oxfordshire, the highly diverse nature of the education system is illustrated by the 355 schools and circa 1000 childcare providers (nurseries, childminders, pre-schools, after school clubs) and 30 Language schools summarised in the table below as at 31 August 2019:

Nursery	Primary		Secondary		All through	Special		Pupil Referral Unit	Independent	16-18 Further Education College
	LA Maintained	Academy	LA maintained	Academy	Academy	LA maintained	Academy	Academy		
7	106	131	1	37	3	9	5	1	53	3

5. Current Oxfordshire County Council Education staffing structure

DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES SERVICES (CEF)

EDUCATION LEADERSHIP TEAM

Tier 2	Deputy Director for Education VACANT		

Tier 3	**Head of Access to Learning** Allyson Milward	**Head of School Improvement and Learning** Kim James	**Head of SEND** Jayne Howarth	**Head of Learner Engagement** Deborah Bell

Tier 4	**School Admissions and Transport Manager** Neil Darlington	**Lead Advisory Teacher** Catherine Hayward	**Post 16 Project Officer** Janet Bailey	**Education Inclusion Manager** Joanna Goodey
	School Organisation and Planning Manager Kevin Griffin	**Lead Officer Special & Secondary** Sandra Higgs	**SENSS Manager** Vacant	**Education Inclusion Manager** Josephine Hatfield
	Early Years and Access Manager Deborah Rouget	**Lead Advisory Teacher** Jane Ratcliffe	**Principal Educational Psychology** Catherine Roderick	**Lead for Learner Engagement** Clare Pike
	Academies Manager Susie Morrisey	**Early Years Lead Officer** Michelle Jenkins	**SENDIASS Manager** Wendy Cliffe	
	Pupil Place Planning Service Manager Barbara Chillman	**Headteacher Virtual School** Michelle Johnson	**School Age Lead Officer** Cathy Clarke	
		Lead Officer Governor Services Tim Brock		

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6.   Education standards in Oxfordshire

6.1   Education data 2019 summary

Understanding education data is essential for the Council and early years settings, schools and colleges to identify priorities and from there organisational goals, objectives, time frames impact and monitoring and resources. Headlines, achievement/attainment, value-added, context, gender, free school meals, disadvantaged, Special Education Needs, prior attainment, deprivation and ethnicity should be reflected in needs analysis. Education standards should be compared across the Key Stages and in relation to Oxfordshire, statistical neighbours and national.

Education attainment performance summary

Updated 17th October 2019

	Early Years Foundation Stage Profile valid	Phonics screening - validated		Key stage 1 - validated			
		Year 1*	End of KS1	Reading*	Writing*	Maths*	RWM
Performance	73.5%	82%	92%	77%	70%	76%	64%
Comparison to 2018	→	→	↓	↑	↑	↓	→
Comparison to national	Above	In line	Above	Above	Above	In line	Below

	Key stage 2 Updated				Progress not published		
	Reading	Writing	Maths	RWM*	Reading*	Writing*	Maths*
Performance	74%	78%	78%	64%	+0.1	-0.1	-0.6
Comparison to 2018	↓	↑	↑	↑	→	↑	↓
Comparison to national	Above	In line	Below	Below	Above	Below	Below

*published key performance indicators   RWM – combined reading, writing & maths

Strengths	Challenges
• Above national averages for EYFSP, KS1 reading and writing, KS2 reading and reading progress.	• EY – reading has declined from 2018 but remains above national.
• Phonics – the proportion reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 2 (92%) ranks in the top quartile nationally.	• Maths remains a focus for improvement. KS1 maths declined and is now in line with the national average. KS2 maths remains below the national average.
• KS1 writing – increased this year to 70% against a national decline. Oxfordshire is now above the national average and ranks 59th out of 149 local authorities. This reflects a year on year increase from 2016 (implementation of new assessments) when Oxfordshire ranked in lowest quartile nationally	• Achieving the combined RWM (reading, writing & maths) at both KS1 and KS2 appears to be more challenging in Oxfordshire than the achievement in the individual subjects.
• KS2 writing has increased by 9 % points from 2016 (implementation of new assessments) and is now in line with the national average.	• Progress in maths (KS1-KS2) is statistically significantly below the national average; there is a three year decline.
• KS2 maths has increased by 4 % points since 2018 but remains 1% point below the national average.	• Progress in reading (KS1-KS2) has continued to decline but remains above national.
• Pupils working at greater depth at KS2. Girls working at greater depth in writing (28%) – ranked joint 39th out of 150 local authorities Boys working at greater depth in reading (24%) – ranked joint 37th out of 150 local authorities.	• *NB progress data remains unvalidated until December 2019.*
• Progress in writing (KS1-KS2) continues to increase but remains just below the national average (*data will be validated December 2019.)*	• • Oxfordshire ranks in the middle of the statistical neighbour group of 11 local authorities for the majority of these performance measures.

Key Stage 4 and 5 performance summary

17th October 2019

	GCSE updated (validated due Jan 2020)							
	Attainment 8	Progress 8	English & maths		English		Maths	
			Grade 4+	Grade 5+	4+	5+	4+	5+
Performance	47.2	0.07	66%	46%	76%	62%	72%	52%
Comparison to 2018	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	➡	⬇
Comparison to national	above	above	above	above	In line	above	above	above

	A levels & equivalents (updated)					
	A level APS	A level % AAB	A level 3+ A*A	A level 2+ passes	App Gen APS	
Performance	32.43	17%	10%	83%	26.68	
Comparison to 2018	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	
Comparison to national	below	In line	In line	above	below	

APS – average point score   A levels are for schools and colleges and compared to national state funded provisions. App Gen – Applied general qualifications

| Strengths	Challenges
• GCSE performance remains in line or above the national average in all key performance measures • GCSE – Oxfordshire pupils make significantly more progress than other pupils nationally (Progress 8 score +0.07 compared with -0.03 nationally). Last year Progress 8 in Oxfordshire was -0.01. • A-Levels – the average point score for Oxfordshire pupils increased to 32.43 (equivalent to a high C grade). This increase was greater than that nationally and now Oxfordshire performs just below the national average (32.64). • A Levels – the proportion of pupils with at least 2 passes increased from 79% in 2018 to 83% in 2019. This moves further ahead of the national average of 79%. • A-Levels – the proportion of pupils with either AAB or 3+ A*A grades increased in Oxfordshire. Both measures saw a decrease nationally.	• GCSE – performance in both English and maths has dipped from last year. In most measures Oxfordshire remains in the top 50% of local authorities. However, progress in the "open element" remains significantly below that nationally, not reported above. • A Levels – performance in Applied General qualifications has declined and is below the national average.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
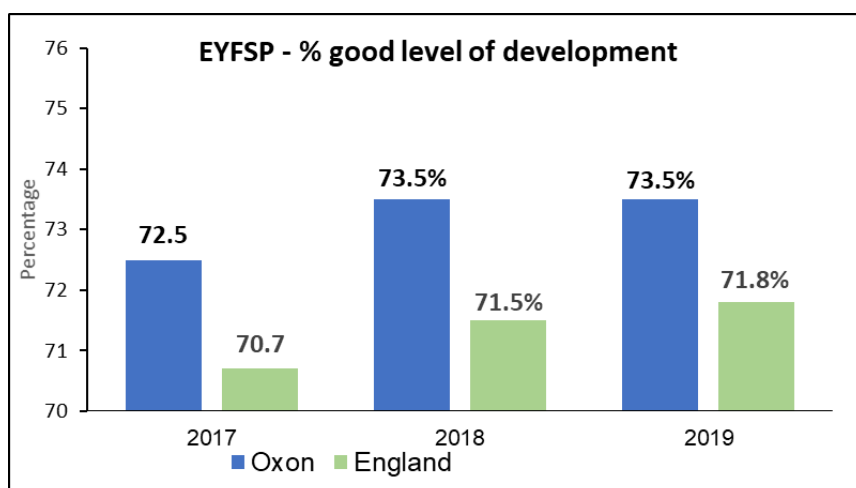
Oxfordshire remains above the national average for the percentage of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage
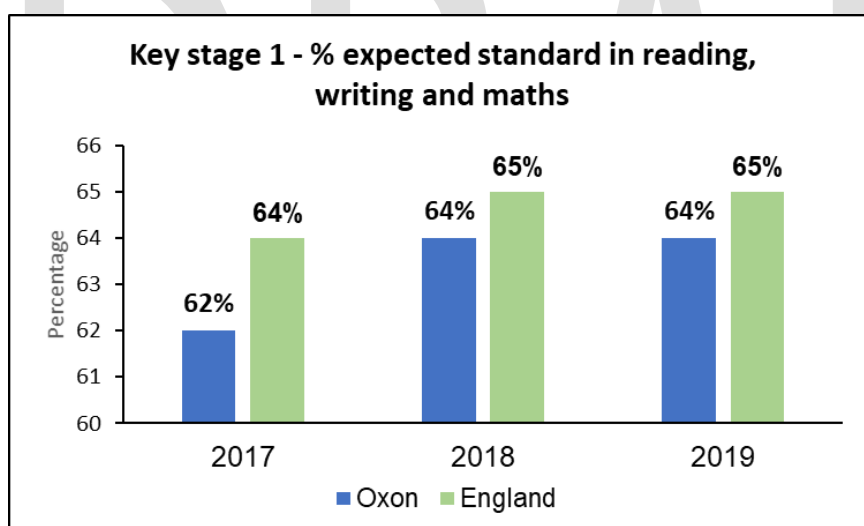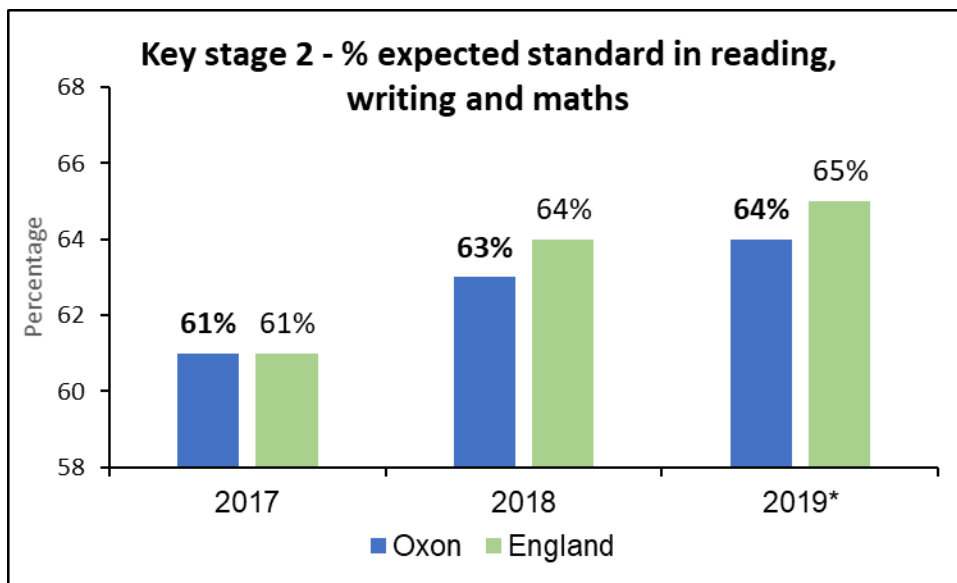
Key Stage 1

64% of Oxfordshire pupils reach the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 1. This is 1% point below the national average of 65%.

The proportion of Oxfordshire pupils achieving the expected standard in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 increased this year to 70% against a decrease nationally. Thus, there is a year on year increase since 2016 (implementation of new assessments) when Oxfordshire ranked in lowest quartile nationally

The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in maths dipped in 2019 and is now in line with the national average (76%).

Key Stage 2

Key stage 2 - % expected standard in reading, writing and maths


64% of Oxfordshire pupils reach the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, which is 1% point below the national average of 65%.

The proportion of Oxfordshire pupils reaching the expected standard in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 has increased by 9% points since 2016 and is now in line with the national average for this measure.

Oxfordshire is ranked amongst the top 25% of local authorities for pupils working at greater depth at Key Stage 2.

Key Stage 4

GCSE - Average attainment 8 score

% English and maths at grades 4+ and 5+
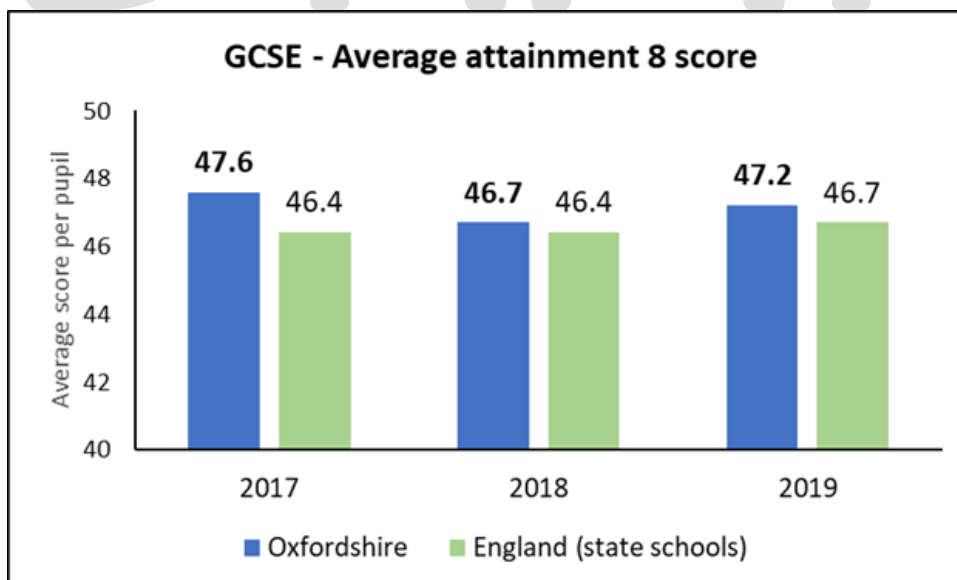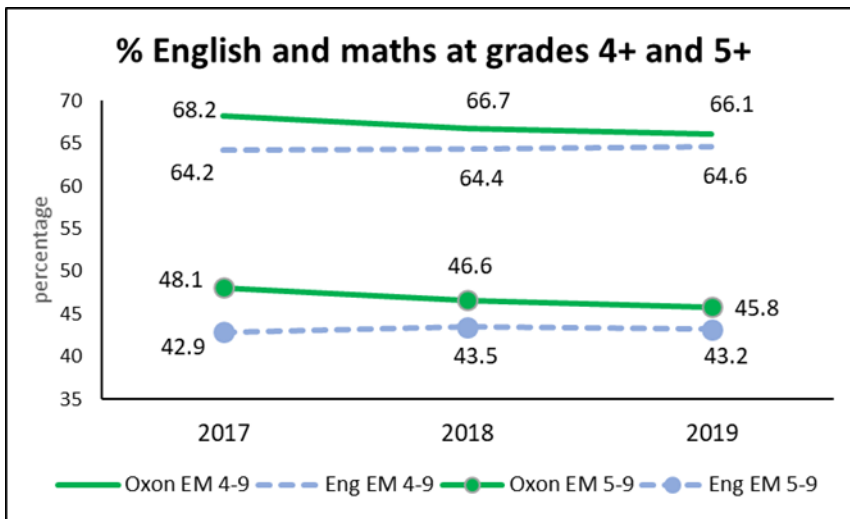
Performance at GCSE remains at least in line with or above the national average in most key performance measures.

Pupils in Oxfordshire make significantly more progress that other pupils with the same prior attainment, with a Progress 8 score of +0.07 compared with -0.03 nationally).

The performance in both English and maths 4+ and 5+ has declined from 2017 but remains above national and in the top 50% of local authorities.

Key Stage 5

A-level Average point score per student

A-level - % grades AAB
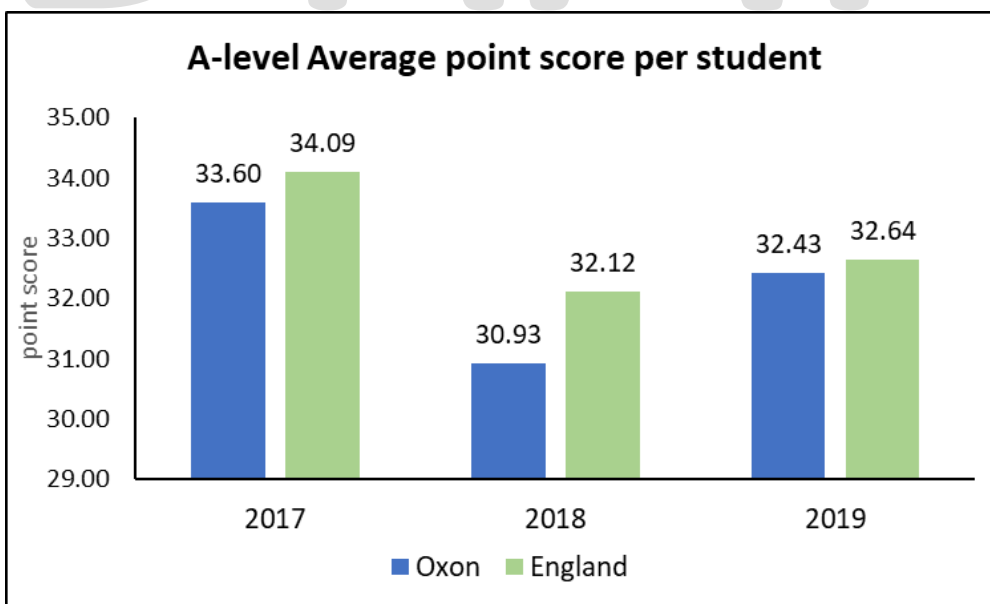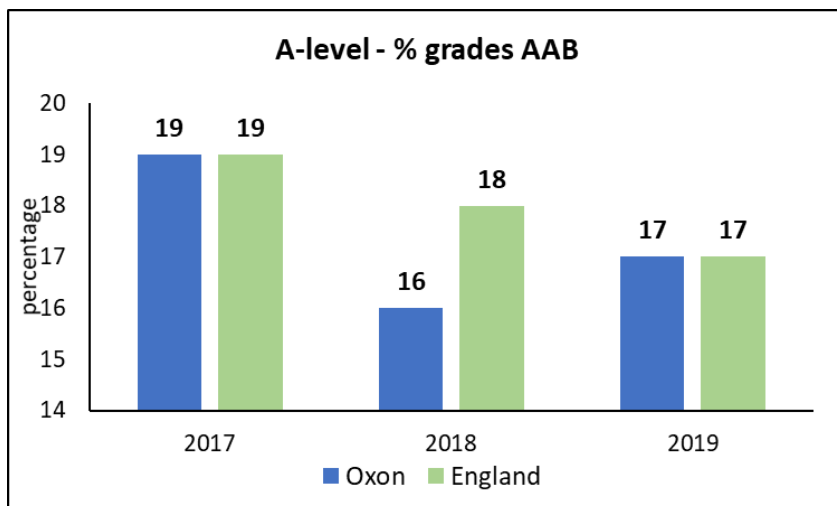
The average point score per student for A-levels increased in Oxfordshire to 32.43 in 2019 (equivalent to a high C grade). This increase was greater than that nationally and hence Oxfordshire performs just below the national average (32.64).

The proportion of pupils with grades of AAB or above at A-level increased in 2019.

6.2   Vulnerable groups (to be added after January 2020)

6.2.1   Gender

6.2.2   Ethnicity

6.2.3   Looked After Children (LAC)

6.2.4   Disadvantaged Pupils (including pupil premium)

6.2.5   Special Educational Needs and Disability (including those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and pupils at SEN support)

6.2.6   Service families' data

6.2.7   Pupils on Child Protection and Child in Need Plans

6.3   Oxfordshire School Ofsted Inspections at August 2019.
- The proportion of pupils attending a good or better school is 87% at August 2019 compared to 83% in August 2014. Nationally in August 2019 this was 85% so 2% points above national.

- The proportion of schools judged as good or better is 89% as at August 2019 compared to 64% in August 2012. Nationally in August 2019 this was 86%, thus 3% points above national.

7   The Local Authority (LA) education duties

All LAs have a legal duty to promote high standards and the fulfilment of children and young people's potential.

Under section 13A of the Education Act 1996 LAs must:

• Promote high standards in schools and other providers
• Ensure fair access to opportunity for education and training
• Promote the fulfilment of learning potential

Additionally, the Children Act 2004 established a statutory chief officer post (Director of Children's Services (DCS)) and Lead Member for Children in every upper tier LA, with responsibilities for education as well as social care services.

In respect of education the DCS must ensure:

• Fair access to schools for every child
• Provision of suitable home to school transport
• Promote a diverse supply of strong schools
• Promote high quality early years provision
• Access to sufficient educational and recreational leisure time activities
• Children and young people participate in decision making
• Participation of children and young people in education or training

Oxfordshire County Council's current education staffing structure reflects these key priorities and is delivered by having a Deputy Director Children's Services - Education and four 'Heads of Services' in the following areas:

• Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
• Access to Learning (Admissions, school transport and school place planning)
• Learner Engagement (Fair access to schools)
• School Improvement

Local authority education duties 2018
School place planning duties (s13-14 Education Act 1996)

The Council as an education authority has a duty to promote high standards of education and fair access to education. It also has a general duty to secure sufficient schools and places in their area, and to consider the need to secure provision for children with SEN. This includes a duty to respond to parents' representations about school provision. These are referred to as the school place planning duties.

The LA has a duty to follow statutory processes when establishing, closing, or making alterations to a school (s6A, 7, 9, 10, 11, 15 and 19 Education and Inspections Act 2006 and school organisation regulations).

The class size duty requires the LA to restrict class sizes for 4-7year olds to 30 pupils per class (s1 School Standards and Framework Act 1998).

Education otherwise than at school

The Council as an education authority has a duty to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise for each child of school age who for reasons of illness, exclusion or otherwise would not receive it unless such arrangements were made.

LAs may establish pupil referral units (PRUs) but do not have a duty to do so (s19 Education Act 1996). However:

- Where a PRU is established, the LA has duties to set up a management committee and to delegate its duties to the management committee

- The LA has a duty to provide education for a permanently excluded child from the sixth day after the exclusion or the first day after exclusion for a child looked after

Welfare/Inclusion

The local authority has a duty:

- To make arrangements to establish the identities of children residing in the area who are not receiving suitable education (s436A Education Act 1996)

- To begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order if it appears to the local authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (s437 Education Act 1996)

- To consider serving an education supervision order before prosecuting for non-school attendance (s 447 Education Act 1996)

- To develop accessibility strategies to facilitate better access to education for disabled pupils. Schools also have to develop access plans which build upon the local authority access strategy. (s88 Equality Act 2010)

- In relation to Child Work arrangements (Children and Young Persons Act 1933 sec.23.30 and local byelaws)

- In relation to Child Performance and Chaperone arrangements (Children and Young Persons Act 1963 sec. 37.44)

- The local authority has wider duties including those defined under s447 school attendance duties, s436 children missing education s7 Elective Home Education; the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011; the School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012; the Education and Inspections Act 2006; the Education Act 1996; the Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by the Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014; Performance licencing, chaperone licencing and juvenile work permits legislation 1933, 1963 and regs. 2015; Juvenile work permits 1933 and local byelaws.

Special Educational Needs

The Council as education authority has specific duties in relation to provision of education for children with special educational needs (SEN). The main duties are reflected in the Children and Families Act (2014) which includes a section (Part 3 of the Act) for children and young people (CYP) in England with special educational needs and disability (SEND). Significant

reforms are to be implemented. Central to these reforms is replacing previous special educational needs statements with Education Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans).

- To publish information about SEND provision available in and outside the area

- To identify whether a child for whom they are responsible has SEN

- To assess a child who in their opinion has SEN

- If the assessment shows that it is necessary, to make an Educational Health & Care (EHC) Plan determining the child's needs and the educational provision required

- To ensure the specific provision set out in the Plan is made

- To keep the Plan under review

- To educate children with SEN in mainstream schools where possible

- To inform parents when SEN provision is made

- To arrange for and participate in mediation where required

- To make all decisions with regard to:

  - The views, wishes and feelings of the child and his/her parent or the young person
  - The importance of involving them in decisions and providing the right information and support to allow them to do so
  - The need to support the child or young person and help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes

- To promote integration of education and training provision with health and social care

- To make joint commissioning arrangements about education, health and care provision

- To make arrangements for an advice and information service and a dispute resolution service for parents of children with SEN

School transport duties
The local authority has a duty:

- To make provision for suitable home to school travel arrangements for eligible children of compulsory school age (5-16) to facilitate attendance at a relevant educational establishment. Travel arrangements are provided free of charge. (s508B Education Act 1996)

- To promote sustainable modes of travel to assess general school travel needs. The local authority must publish each academic year a document containing their strategy to promote the use of sustainable school travel. (s508A Education Act 1996)

- To have regard to religion and belief in exercise of travel functions (s509 AD Education Act 1996)

- To specify to what extent the arrangements they include in their annual transport policy statement facilitate the attendance of disabled persons and persons with learning difficulties

- To publish annual Post-16 Transport Policy Statement which must set out the arrangements for the provision of transport, and for financial assistance towards transports costs, it considers necessary to facilitate attendance of students of 6th form age.

Admissions duties

The council has duties in relation to school admissions both as local authority and as the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools. These duties are:

- To provide advice and assistance to parents when deciding on a school place and allow parents to express a preference (s86(1A) School Standards and Framework Act 1998)

- For each school year, the local authority must publish the prescribed information about the admission arrangements for each of the maintained schools in their area, and if regulations so provide, such maintained schools outside their area (s92 SSFA)

- To publish each year a composite prospectus for all publicly funded schools in the area

- To formulate, publish and adopt a scheme to co-ordinate admission arrangements for all publicly-funded schools in the area, which allows parents to apply to schools in other local authority areas, and to provide information to the Secretary of State on primary and secondary school admissions on National Offer Days

- To make arrangements for parents to appeal against admissions decisions

- To establish and manage a Fair Access protocol for in year admissions

- To annually write to parents of prospective schools in their locality with information about schools with atypical admission ages within the local authority or within reasonable travelling distance. (To include details of schools with a typical admission ages in the local authority or within reasonable travelling distance in their composite prospectus).

As an admissions authority, the council has to determine each year the admissions arrangements for community and voluntary-controlled schools.

Curriculum and assessment

The local authority, and governing bodies have a duty to exercise their functions with a view to securing, and a head teacher has a duty to ensure, that the curriculum provided is:

- broad and balanced

- comprises the National Curriculum, including implementing key stage test arrangements (SATs)

- includes provision for religious education and includes from September 2020 relationships and sex education

- and that they have regard to statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State (Education Act 2002, s79,85(9) and 88 1(A))

In relation to key stage 1 assessment, the local authority must:

- make provision for moderating teacher assessments in respect of 25% of relevant schools

- collect teacher assessment information from relevant schools and quality assure it, and submit it to the DfE

- ensure school share training and advice in all aspects of key stage 1 assessment and electronic systems to submit data

In relation to key stage 2 assessment, local authorities must visit 10% of schools administering tests for monitoring purposes.

From summer 2012, local authorities must monitor at least 10% of relevant schools to ensure Year 1 phonics screening check is being administered correctly. They must visit at least 10% of relevant schools before, during and after the check and submit information to the DfE. (Key Stage 1 assessment Order and statutory guidance).

Religious Education
The local authority must establish a body called a standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE) (s390-391 Education Act 1996).

The local authority must ensure that head teachers comply with their duties to secure due provision of religious education, and that all pupils take part in a daily act of collective worship. (ss 69-70 School Standards and Framework Act 1998).

School Finance
The local authority has a duty to (s45 etc School Standards and Framework Act 1998, School Finance Regulations 2008 and 2011):

- Determine school and Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) budget shares in accordance with the school finance regulations

- Establish a schools' forum for the area

- Maintain a scheme for financing schools

- Provide accounting information to the DfE under the Consistent Financial Reporting Regulations

School Governors
The local authority has a duty to:

- Appoint parent governor representatives to local authority committees dealing with education (s499 Education Act 1996)

- Appoint local authority governors to all maintained school governing bodies (s19 School Standards and Framework Act 1998)

- Provide training and information for school governors (s22 Education Act 2002)

- Set up temporary governing bodies for new maintained schools (s34 Education Act 2002)

School sites and buildings

The local authority has a duty to:

- Ensure that school buildings meet minimum standards (s543 Education Act 1996 and School Premises Regulations 1999)

- Maintain school premises (s22 School Standards and Framework Act 1998)

- Comply with legislation governing disposal of land on school sites (s77 School Standards and Framework Act 1998)
- Transfer land when school changes category or becomes an Academy (Education and Inspections Act 2006)

Inspection/intervention

The local authority has a duty to:

- Provide information, distribute report and to produce and distribute a post-inspection action plan for Joint Inspections and Ofsted inspections

- Produce an action plan if a school goes into special measures following an Ofsted inspection https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-causing-concern--2

- Comply with statutory requirements if the authority decides to use its powers to intervene (s64-66 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

- To comply with a direction of the Secretary of State to give a school a warning notice (s60A and 69B of the Education & Inspections Act 2006)

Teachers and Staff

The Local Authority is the employer of all staff in community, voluntary-controlled and special schools. In academies, foundation, voluntary-aided and foundation special schools, the governing body or trust is the employer.

Under the school staffing regulations, the governing body and head teacher in all schools are responsible for the day-to-day management of staff. The following duties are therefore largely delegated to schools, although the local authority will have supervisory or residual role, particularly where they are the employer.

The Local Authority has:

- Duties in relation to teachers pay (s122 Education Act 2002 and School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document)

- A duty to check that teachers have Qualified Teacher Status (School Teachers Qualifications Regulations)

- A duty to ensure that staff have the necessary health and physical capacity (Education Health Standards Regulations 2003)

- Duties in relation to the appointment, management and dismissal of staff (School Staffing Regulations)

- A duty to keep a register of vetting checks carried out on staff (School Staffing Regulations)

The Local Authority retains the following duties in relation to staff:

- To act as the Appropriate Body in the statutory induction process for maintained schools, jointly responsible with the head teacher for the supervision and training of Newly Qualified Teachers and deciding whether they have passed their induction (s19 Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998)

- To establish a performance management policy for teachers (s21 Education Act 2002)
- Duties as employer for pension purposes of all teachers in maintained schools relating to service and contribution remittance (Teachers' Pension Regulations 2010)

The Prevent duty
This duty arises from the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and relates to a range of organisations including schools and LAs. They must take steps to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Local Authorities must work with local partners to protect the public, prevent crime and promote strong integrated communities. Some local authorities do this through Community Safety Partnerships.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
The LADO has responsibility under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 to manage allegations against individuals who work with children.

Academy conversions
The Local Authority has a duty to, where the Secretary of State has made an academy order, to arrange to transfer the land and buildings to the academy trust on a 125-year lease and assist with the preparation of the lease and Commercial Transfer Agreement (CTA) within reasonable timescales.

Early Education and Childcare
The Local Authority has a duty to (s6, 7, 9 Childcare Act 2006):

- Secure sufficient childcare places, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children)

- Take into account what is 'reasonably practicable' when assessing what sufficient childcare means in their area and:

  - the state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists
  - the state of the labour market
  - the quality and capacity of childcare providers and childminders registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff, premises, experience and expertise
  - encourage schools in their area to offer out-of-hours childcare from 8.00am and 6.00pm
  - encourage existing providers to expand their provision and new providers to enter the local childcare market

- To report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents

Miscellaneous

The Education Acts also impose some more specific duties to:

- Determine the dates of school holidays (s32 Education Act 2002)

- Provide independent careers advice for pupils aged 14-16 in pupil referral units

- Secure access to positive activities, to ensure young people have access to sufficient educational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being and personal and social development (s507B Education Act 1996)

- Post 16 participation duties

Schools causing concern

The Government expects that 'Local Authorities should act as champions of education excellence across their schools'. The Education Act 1996 states that a local authority must exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards. This enshrined in (s64-66 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006). All local authorities (LA) have the freedom to define their approach to school improvement. The Education Act 2011 encourages a more diverse approach to the provision of school improvement services. This includes working closely with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), Teaching School Alliances (TSAs), National Support Schools (NSS), National Leaders of Education (NLEs), Local Leaders of Education (LLEs). Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs), National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) and other outstanding providers to continue to support and challenge schools.

In order to fulfil this role, the local authority needs to:

- know its schools sufficiently well to make effective judgements about their performance and the progress they are making
- challenge and support all schools, regardless of status, to improve
- identify, celebrate, share and disseminate effective and outstanding practice
- have clear processes for early identification of schools requiring external support
- target support to secure improvement in schools requiring external support
- intervene in LA-maintained schools as required and use statutory powers where appropriate to secure improvements.

The Act also includes provision for local authorities to ensure early action to address underperformance in LA-maintained schools through prompt and timely use of the powers set out in the Act to challenge, and where necessary intervene, where a school is not able to address underperformance itself. Local authorities are expected to take robust action to tackle failure, and to challenge and support schools. The Local Authority may issue a performance standards and safety warning notice to LA-maintained schools; however, the RSC may also issue a warning notice where s/he believes the local authority has failed to act swiftly enough in a specific case. Schools that fail to comply with a warning notice to the satisfaction of the local authority or RSC, as appropriate, is 'eligible for intervention' and further action may be taken.

Where schools have been judged by Ofsted to be 'inadequate', the RSC has a duty to make an academy order in respect of a LA-maintained school; will be responsible for identifying a suitable 'sponsor' and for brokering the new relationship between that sponsor and the

maintained school. Local authorities will retain responsibility for ensuring that robust action is taken to address weaknesses identified whilst the school remain LA-maintained.

Section 72 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a statutory duty on all local authorities in England, in exercising their functions in respect of schools causing concern to 'have due regard' to this statutory guidance. In following the statutory guidance, the local authority is ensuring that it is meeting the following legislation requirements:

• School Standards and Framework Act 1998
• Education Act 2002, including Schedule 2
• Education Act 2005
• Education and Inspections Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act')
• Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (amended the 2006 Act)
• The School Governance (Transition from an Interim Executive Board) (England) Regulations 2010 ('Transition Regulations')
• Academies Act 2010
• Education Act 2011 (amended the 2006 Act, and Schedule 14)
• Education and Adoption Act 2016 (amended the 2006 Act and the Academies Act 2010)

A copy of the statutory guidance 'Schools Causing Concern' can be accessed at the following web link:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-causing-concern--2

In the case of LA-maintained schools, where necessary, statutory powers will be used to seek solutions to secure improvement, which will include the following:

• Power to issue a warning notice
• Power to require the governing board to enter into arrangements
• Power to appoint additional governors
• Power to appoint an Interim Executive Board
• Strengthen leadership through the appointment of an Interim Headteacher, Executive Headteacher and/or Headteacher mentors
• Power to suspend the delegated budget

School performance
Statutory guidance on local authorities' and Regional Schools Commissioners' responsibilities relating to schools and PRUs causing concern is clear. A local authority must exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards.

'This is statutory guidance for local authorities given by the Department for Education, on behalf of the Secretary of State. Section 72 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a statutory duty on all local authorities in England, in exercising their functions in respect of maintained schools causing concern, to have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State.

This guidance covers:

• maintained "schools causing concern" (within the meaning of section 44 of the Education Act 2005);

• maintained schools that are "eligible for intervention" (within the meaning of Part 4 of the Education Act 2006);

• other maintained schools about which the local authority and/or Secretary of State have serious concerns which need to be addressed2; and

    • academies causing concern.

It sets out the factors which local authorities and RSCs will consider, and the process they will follow in order to decide the right approach to supporting a school to improve.

The Secretary of State's powers in this area are exercised by RSCs who are expected to follow this guidance. For the purpose of this guidance, it will generally be the RSC who is referred to as using the Secretary of State's described powers. This guidance primarily sets out how local authorities and RSCs will intervene at a school level. RSCs will always approach academy trusts and in the case of schools with a religious character, the relevant religious body, not individual schools, about trusts' leadership and oversight of their schools.'

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8 The Department for Education (DfE) school improvement provisions

On 24 October 2019 the Department published updated material to support school improvement. Its focus is on professional development and support to help schools develop their leadership, staff and curriculum, so they can improve their results and performance.

Contents

1. Governance
2. School leadership
3. Support from teaching schools and system leaders
4. General teaching practice
5. EdTech
6. History and culture
7. Languages
8. English
9. Mathematics
10. Music
11. Science and geography

School resource management

Information, tools, training and guidance to help schools and multi-academy trusts (MATs) with financial planning and resource management is also available at School resource management.

Background papers

Current model of local school improvement

There needs to be a clear and compelling vision for education in Oxfordshire which emphasises the importance of improving outcomes for all our children and young people so that they can achieve their ambitions and live in vibrant, thriving communities.

9.1 Statutory Responsibilities – school improvement

The Council has a range of statutory functions to perform as outlined in section 6 of this review. Its statutory role in this area of school improvement includes:

- To know all schools (whatever their status) in the LA through analysis of school performance data and other indicators.
- To ensure early action to address underperformance in schools through prompt and timely use of the powers set out in the Education Act 2011.
- To challenge, and where necessary intervene, when a school is not able to address underperformance itself.

  The Council also has a universal core offer to all LA maintained schools and settings. This offer appears below:

  School Improvement programme 2019-20_ (003).pdf

9.2 Areas of strength, development and challenges

The Council is committed to continuing to work with all schools, academies and other partners in order to improve outcomes for all pupils and students.

There needs to be recognition of strength in:

- Above national averages attainment for EYFS, KS1 reading and writing, KS2 reading and reading progress
- In Early Years – attainment in maths has increased
- KS 1 writing is above the national average for the first time. National ranking has increased from 71st percentile in 2017 to 50th in 2019
- KS2 writing has increased by 9 % points from 2016 and is in line with the national average for the first time
- KS2 maths has increased by 4 % points since 2018 but remains below the national average
- KS2 girls working at greater depth in writing (28%) – ranked joint 39th out of 150 local authorities
- KS2 boys with higher score in reading (24%) – ranked joint 37th out of 150 local authorities
- Progress in writing (KS1-KS2) continues to increase noticeably but remains just below the national average
- Early results indicate that GCSE performance remains above the national average in all key performance measures

- Performance in the basics (English and maths) currently is 1%point above last year at both standard pass (grades 4+) and higher pass (grades 5+)
- Updated Oxfordshire figures for all schools will be available late September. National comparisons available mid-October
- Early Key Stage 5 data indicates that performance has increased in the key performance measures

Data analysis confirms the need for a renewed focus on:

- Continuing to raise the bar for all whilst improving significantly the performance of disadvantaged and SEND pupils/students so that the gap is closed between their performance and that of their non-disadvantaged peers (particularly at Key Stage (KS) 2 and KS4)

- Attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Oxfordshire continues to be lower than that for the same cohort nationally in all Key Stages
- Attainment of pupils with SEND support in Oxfordshire is below that of the same cohort nationally in all key stages
- Progress in mathematics (KS1-KS2) is statistically significantly below the national average and is declining
- Progress in reading (KS1-KS2) has continued to decline
- Early Years - reading has declined from 2018 but remains above national
- KS1 mathematics has fallen and is now in line with the national average
- Achieving the combined (reading, writing & mathematics) at both KS1 and KS2 appears to be more challenging in Oxfordshire than achievement in the individual subjects
- GCSE - % grades 4+ in English seems to have decreased from 2018
- GCSE - performance in mathematics is currently in line with 2018
- Increasing the proportion of pupils/students attending a good or better school (as judged by Ofsted).

The Local Authority also commits to:

- Further strengthening our relationships/partnership working with all school leaders

- Retaining positive links and communication with all of Oxfordshire's educational providers whatever their status

- Strengthening partnership working with the MATs, Oxfordshire Teaching School Alliance (OTSA), and the Maths and English Hubs.

9.3 The wider Local Authority offer supporting school communities

9.3.1 Education Safeguarding Advisory Team (ESAT)

This is an advisory service for schools, colleges, early years providers and services who work with young people under the age of 18. ESAT offers support to education providers to assist them in delivering effectively on all aspects of their safeguarding responsibilities in accordance with local and national guidance. The team provides advice, practical support and guidance, as well as a range of training packages.

http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/safeguarding

9.3.2 Locality Community Support Service: Purpose and Functions:

The aims of the Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS) are:

- To provide advice and guidance to universal services, including schools, health services and voluntary and community groups to enable them to support vulnerable children, young people and families within their community.
- To identify emerging needs and safeguarding concerns within the locality.
- To be the first point of contact for universal services who have concerns about a child and are considering making a referral to targeted/statutory services.
- To monitor and oversee the effective implementation of Early Help Assessment and Team Around the Family meetings within the locality.
- To develop a good working knowledge of support services in the area and identification of appropriate resources.

The roles of the Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS) are:

- Undertake training of professionals on Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Team Around the Family (TAF) processes to increase the undertaking of whole family assessments and preventative work within agencies.
- Conduct No Names Consultations (NNC) to ensure that safeguarding processes are adhered to, plans made in the community are robust and professionals are supported in making appropriate referrals to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Join complex community based TAF meetings to explore additional approaches and interventions to enhance whole family plans and offer advice and support.
- Quality assure community based EHAs to provide constructive feedback to practitioners on assessment conducted and areas to improve supported with additional training.
- Assess children and families' circumstances and refer for Early Help targeted teams for interventions including group work relating to issues such as parenting, domestic violence etcetera.
- Link to community partners to create multi-agency approaches to specific areas of concern such as Child Drug Exploitation (CDE).

Community Around School Offer (CASO)

Agencies work more closely together to support schools and offer a more holistic support package. LCSS joined with the School Health Nurse (SHN) teams and Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in reach team to support the CASO. Other agencies attend CASOs when invited including:

- Police
- Oxfordshire School Inclusion Team (OXSIT)
- Oxfordshire Special Educational Needs Service (SENSS)
- Training Effect
- Education, Employment and Training (EET)
- Aquarius
- Young Carers
- Phoenix team (nurses)
- Learner Engagement

LCSS has arranged attendance of other agencies including from the voluntary sector such as MIND. The purpose of the Community Around the School Offer is to:

- Develop strong relationships across the agencies who are working with and within schools to provide clarity of roles and avoid duplication.
- Offer coordinated multi-agency support, consultation and training to schools supporting schools to identify and manage emerging concerns around safeguarding, mental health and wellbeing of young people. This helps prevent escalation and helps develop resilience in children, young people and families.
- 20 CASOs have taken place since offering this to Oxfordshire school.

<u>The Learner Engagement Early Strategic Board</u>

The Board oversees the development and implementation of the Learner Engagement Strategy and the Early Help Strategy ('the Strategies') for Oxfordshire. The Strategies outline how we tailor the right support and input to meet the needs of children and families through partner commitment and keeping the engagement of children and families at the heart of all we do. Inclusive ethos and practices are key to success with keeping children safe.

The key functions of the Board are to:

- Uphold the principles and approach of Learner Engagement and Early Help
- Lead the development and communication of the overall Strategies
- Promote and model the culture and values agreed in the Strategies
- Approve all key strategy documentation
- Hold all involved in the delivery of the strategy to account
- Ensure that, during its development, the content of the Strategies remains aligned with their own organisation's current strategies and direction
- Govern overall risk and resolve escalated risks and issues in development of the strategy
- Ensure appropriate staff and wider partner engagement is undertaken
- Identify strengths and areas for development and create Learner Engagement and Early Help work plans under phase 2 of delivery of a multi-agency approach
- Lead communication of Learner Engagement and Early Help
- Hold all involved in the Strategies to account
- Approve all key strategic documentation
- A wide range of agencies are included on the board including parental engagement.

9.4 The wider local school improvement offers

9.4.1 The Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA) https://www.otsa.org.uk/ comprises 10 lead schools (1 nursery, 3 primary, 5 secondary and 1 special). Each year over 100 schools are involved in delivering OTSA work to over 300 schools in Oxfordshire and beyond.

Initial Teacher Training (ITT) – OTSA's school-led ITT route was graded as outstanding by Ofsted in 2017. OTSA trains over 100 teachers a year on Salaried and Tuition Fee School Direct programmes. 'Associate Teachers' may be based at the Oxford, Banbury or Henley hubs.

https://oxfordshireteachertraining.co.uk/

Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) Induction – OTSA is a school-led Appropriate Body providing NQT Induction support and quality assurance for up to 400 NQTs each year in schools in Oxfordshire and surrounding counties.

https://www.otsa.org.uk/nqt-induction/

Professional Development – OTSA offers over 140 school-led courses and professional development programmes for teachers, support staff and governors.

https://cpd.otsa.org.uk

Professional Networks – OTSA helps to promote and facilitate new and existing Professional Networks.

https://www.otsa.org.uk/professional-networks/

School to School Support – OTSA has a team of over 200 designated System Leaders, including National Leaders of Education, who provide support to schools in a wide range of areas. OTSA is contracted to provide support to Oxfordshire's maintained schools by Oxfordshire County Council.

https://www.otsa.org.uk/school-to-school-support/

Recruitment – the OTSA Job Board is used by partner schools to advertise teaching and support staff posts. Applicant Profiles allow schools to link with potential future employees.

https://jobs.otsa.org.uk/

Discounts – OTSA partner schools benefit from significant discounts from organisations including The Key for School Leadership, Fischer Family Trust, Education Mutual and Blue Sky Education.

https://www.otsa.org.uk/partner-benefits/

OTSA was founded on the shared belief that schools and settings have a moral responsibility to work together for the benefit of all children and young people. Within every school and setting there is invaluable expertise, outstanding practice and examples of great leadership, but all schools and settings also have areas that need development. OTSA believes that by working together to identify and develop areas of expertise, and then sharing them, it will be able to develop a system for school and setting improvement, which is self-sustaining.

OTSA is a partnership of schools and settings, with the membership status reviewed on an annual basis.

Membership of OTSA is open and free of charge to every state school and setting in

Oxfordshire (including nursery, primary, secondary, special, maintained, academy and free schools) who commit to this shared ethos.

The OTSA Lead Schools believe that they will be able to achieve more and have a greater impact on children and young peoples' lives through collaboration rather than competition. Therefore, each lead school specialises in leading particular strands of Teaching School work across the whole county. This is in contrast to a Teaching School model where an area will have a number of different Teaching School alliances who are working on Initial Teacher Training, Professional Development and School to School Support, often in competition with each other. The OTSA ethos and approach has been shared with Teaching School Council, NCTL, DfE and HMI representatives and has been recognised as an effective way of working and modeling of good practice.

OTSA Lead Schools do not benefit financially from any funding generated through OTSA activity. All income is pooled and re-distributed to fund work across the activity strands for the benefit of Oxfordshire Schools. At the same time, OTSA Lead and Strategic Partner schools are not expected to subsidise the work of the Teaching Schools Alliance, and therefore all OTSA activities are costed so as to compensate schools for their role in leading aspects of OTSA's work.

It is the OTSA Board's position that any Oxfordshire state school applying to become a Lead Teaching School should be encouraged and supported to join the OTSA Partnership as a Lead School and the Headteacher as an OTSA Board Member, under the terms of the OTSA Constitution.

9.4.2 Maths Hubs Oxfordshire, schools are linked to https://bbomathshub.org.uk/. The Bucks, Berks and Oxon Maths Hub is one of 37 designated hubs and is based at Wycombe High School. The Maths Hub programme is supported by the National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics and funded by the DfE.

Maths Hubs https://www.mathshubs.org.uk/   bring together mathematics education professionals in a collaborative national network, to develop and spread excellent practice, for the benefit of all pupils and students.

9.4.3 English Hubs   https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-hubs-list-of-primary-schools   In October 2018 the government announced that 32 schools throughout the country had been selected as 'hub' schools because of the excellence of their phonics teaching. The English hub schools will promote a love of reading and support schools across the country to provide excellent phonics and early language teaching.

Literacy specialists within each hub will provide tailored support to schools. This will include running events to showcase excellent practice in teaching reading

Whiteknights Primary in Reading https://www.whiteknightsenglishhub.org.uk/ is the link for Oxfordshire schools.

9.4.4 Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs)

In addition, with the increase in the numbers of academies in Oxfordshire and the expansion of some local Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), a significant amount of school improvement work is now being facilitated or delivered in-house by school leaders within the MATs. There are also still examples of effective school improvement activity being driven by school leaders working in highly functioning learning communities of local schools.

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Analysis of Oxfordshire's strengths, opportunities, areas for development and challenges

Strengths	Areas for development
• Widespread use of partnerships to deliver strategic outcomes • Slower rate of elective home education cohort increases than the national context by 12% points • Primary phase attendance • Pupil place planning is linked with growth strategy • Early years place planning, education and school readiness strategy • The proportion of pupils attending a good or better school and the proportion of schools judged as good or better is higher than national • Most maintained schools have a balanced budget and three-year plan • Services provided by the Council generally operate within budget • Key stage 2/4 progress above national in some areas • Attainment in writing in primary phase improved from low baseline • Progress in reading in primary phase is now above national • Improving mental health services for individual children/young people and schools • The work of the Virtual School and the Hospital Education Service	• Secondary phase school attendance • Further fixed term and permanent exclusion reduction, particularly for children with Education, Health and Care Plans and undergoing statutory assessment of SEND • Increase focus on early intervention and prevention with pupils subject to exclusion or poor attendance through increased use of Early Help Assessments and Teams around the Child • Increase focus on early intervention and prevention with pupils subject to exclusion or poor attendance through increased Early Help • Establishing an improved system to support to the best of our ability the placement of vulnerable children in smart time • Supporting schools to become even more inclusive • Management of demand for high need block funding and home to school transport • Attainment and progress of pupils at SEND support and pupils identified as disadvantaged is below national average • Improved tracking and more outcome focused on specific school improvement priorities makes a difference • Even safer schools supported by better engagement between the council and other services • Mathematics progress at KS2 • Support services for pupils with Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs at risk of exclusion • Recommissioning of alternative provision

Opportunities	Challenges
• Rationalisation of some boards and partnerships to enhance synergies • Creation of an overarching education strategy for Oxfordshire's children • Build on stabilisation of OCC Education Structure focusing on strategic priorities • Linking the growth agenda with improving engagement with schools and higher education achievement and attainment • Raise and maintain all achievement targets above national • Careful use of the high needs block allocation to provide positive outcomes • To support schools as they prevent or address deficits • Potential benefits of increased funding for schools • Newly established SEND Education Data group allows benchmarking and encourages learning from good practice elsewhere • To develop more SEND provision • Refocus SEND services including voluntary and community sector whenever possible towards early intervention and prevention	• Limited range of alternative provision available, particularly for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs • Availability and cost of alternative provision • Access to consistent data from all schools in Oxfordshire • Managing services for Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education • The increasing use of Reintegration Timetables • Mixed economy of schools poses challenges in some areas of admissions and place planning • For school budgets reflecting national determined pressures e.g. salary increases and employer pension contributions • Matching sufficiency of school places to a growing population • Increasing % of deprivation • Supporting schools in deficit • High need funding is insufficient to meet needs • Consistent embedding of focus prevents a dip in standards • Engagement across the increasingly diverse education sector to build shared priorities • Ensuring integrated IT systems with schools to share data sets e.g. absence • More and appropriate SEND provision • Leadership recruitment and retention • Recruiting Governors, Trustees, Chair of Governors and Clerks.

10. The financial cost to Oxfordshire County Council of providing a school improvement service against the cost of delivering the statutory services.

10.1   The cost of the Education statutory duties of Oxfordshire County Council as the Local Authority appears below. It is the amount funded by Oxfordshire County Council by the application of Dedicated School Grants.

£		Description
18,130,000		Home to School Transport
1,359,600		SEND casework team
1,206,400		Education Management & administration
746,500		Psychology Service
383,600		Academy Support
363,800		Education support Services
308,800		Virtual School
264,000		Intervention
260,300		School planning & sufficiency
216,900		Early Years sufficiency & access
861,000		Other
24,100,900		**Total**

10.2 Support for LA maintained schools
The financial cost to Oxfordshire County Council of providing support specifically for LA maintained schools including the school improvement service is £289,992. This is the net cost after allowing for grants and traded income. This is the figure funded in 2018/19 following the ending of the Education Services Grant (ESG).

10.3 Schools Finances
As at the end of August 2019 there were 123 LA maintained nursery schools, primary schools, secondary schools and special schools and 177 primary, secondary, special and alternative provision academies in Oxfordshire. LA maintained schools with budget deficits have a Deficit Recovery Plan in place which is developed in partnership with the Local Authority. Each LA maintained school is subject to robust scrutiny.

11. Assessing the Oxfordshire model to enable support for school improvement.

11.1 Context

Oxfordshire County Council recognises and welcomes the diversity of education provision supporting the notion that decisions about education structures and systems are best taken locally. The Council understands both its role and that of central government.

Education provision within the area is in general good. The dedication of early years settings, schools, Headteachers, staff and governors in supporting the development of children and young people is acknowledged by all. The triangular relationship between settings/schools and children/young people and parents is so important in improving life chances. Standards in Oxfordshire show an improving trend of pupil performance overall in both early years, primary and secondary phases in recent years. In Phonics the proportion reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 2 (92%) ranks in the top quartile nationally. At Key Stage One Oxfordshire is now above the national average and ranks 59th out of 149 local authorities. This reflects a year on year increase from 2016 (implementation of new assessments) when Oxfordshire ranked in lowest quartile nationally. Oxfordshire schools in 2019 were either above or in line with national averages at Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (KS2) for the first time ever.

At Key Stage 4 (KS4) in 2019 in Oxfordshire, GCSE performance is at least in line with or above the national average in all key performance measures. Oxfordshire pupils make significantly more progress than other pupils nationally (Progress 8 score +0.07 compared with -0.03 nationally). In 2018 Progress 8 in Oxfordshire was -0.01.

Key Stage 5 results showed an overall LA equivalent pass rate (A*- E grades) above the national average and similarly at the number of entries achieving A*- A. The average point score for Oxfordshire pupils increased to 32.43 (equivalent to a high C grade). This increase was greater than that nationally and now Oxfordshire performs just below the national average (32.64). The proportion of pupils with at least 2 passes increased from 79% in 2018 to 83% in 2019. This moves further ahead of the national average of 79%.

11.2 Key learning point

Whilst there is an improving picture, there is still much to do to maintain this improving trajectory and some of this work is identified in section 6 above. It partly relates to standards and raising the bar for all whilst improving significantly the performance of 'groups' of disadvantaged pupils/students so that the gap is closed between their performance and that of their non-disadvantaged peers (particularly at KS2 and KS4). In addition, there is also a need to close the gap between pupils identified with Special Educational Needs and their non-SEN peers. There is an acknowledgement of the importance of further strengthening relationships/partnership working with primary, special and secondary school leaders; retaining positive links and communication with all of Oxfordshire's educational providers whatever their status; strengthening partnership working with all Teaching Schools and MATs

### 11.3 Developing the Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership (OSSP)

There is much to learn from research, work in other LAs and critically from local views. OSSP is reflecting on the next stage in its development and this coincides with the development of this strategic review. It is assessing the contribution it makes and can make in supporting

school improvement. OSSP has a constitution and terms of reference. A working group has suggested at its next meeting OSSP may wish to consider its:

- Statement of purpose
- Summarising our purpose
- Overview
- Our principles
- Partners' protocol
- Our way of working
- Area of Focus 2020 - with outcomes to monitor progress and measure collective impact
- Partner organisations

The partners play a significant role in education in Oxfordshire. Each of these organisations has its own accountability structure with all recognising the need to address key educational issues that go beyond the responsibilities of any one organisation. Current partnership representation can be defined in the diagram below.

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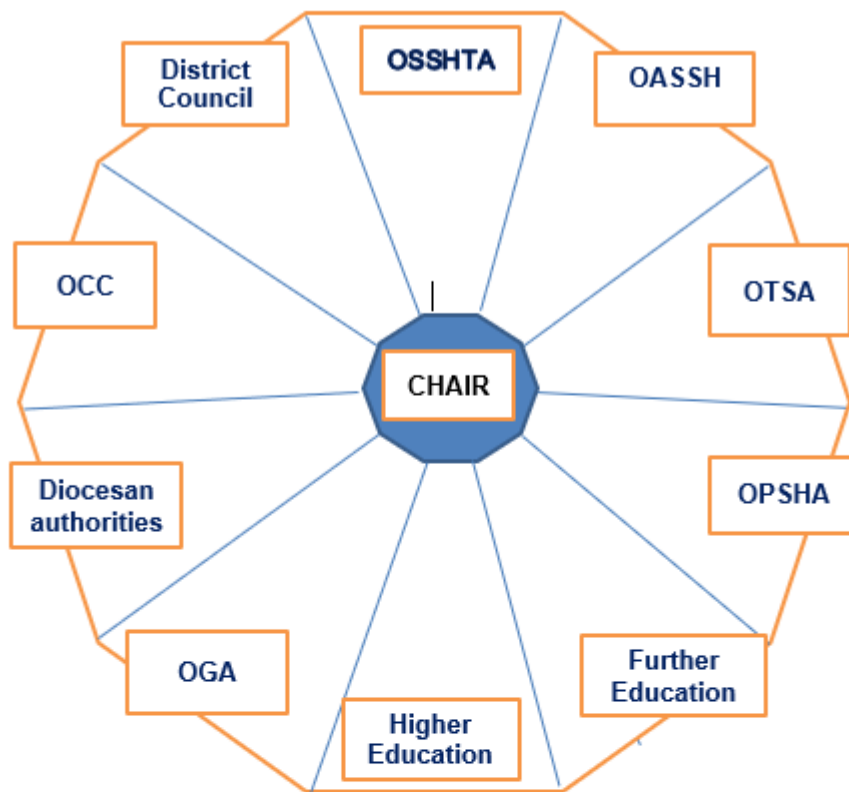
Key:

- OCC - Oxfordshire County Council
- OGA - Oxfordshire Governors Association
- OASSH - the Oxfordshire Association of Special Schools Headteachers
- OPSHA - potentially emerging Oxfordshire Primary Schools Headteachers' Association
- OSSHTA - Oxfordshire Secondary School Headteachers' Association
- OTSA - the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance

11.4 Partnership working

The Local Authority recognises the crtical importance of wider partnership working across the diverse education system in Oxfordshire. The Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership (OSSP) can play a key strategic role perhaps chaired independently. It could oversee the school system, ensuring coherence and oversight for school improvement and connecting the key partners inside and outside Oxfordshire to deliver against the top priorities. Headteachers through the Oxfordshire Secondary School Headteachers' Association (OSSHTA), the Oxfordshire Association of Special Schools Headteachers (OASSH), the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA), and a potentially emerging Oxfordshire Primary Schools Headteachers' Association (OPSHA) would provide not only strategic leadership but also critical local delivery in schools and trusts. The Council will continue to join schools to the wider Council agenda on place, people and economic development and at a local level to other critical frontline services, such as general practitioners and the police service, to help meet the wider challenges facing local communities.

11.5 Testing the Oxfordshire model

Nine key conditions for establishing effective local school improvement systems. (as defined by the Isos Partnership)	How could the Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership help to develop these conditions?
1. Clear and compelling vision	1. It is for the LA and Strategic Partnership to create the vision with a focus on teaching and learning and improving outcomes. The vision will be co-constructed by Partnership stakeholders to secure wide scale support from settings and schools.
2. Trust and high social capital	2. The membership of the Strategic Partnership, professional approach and integrity are key factors in developing trust. Sharing of school level data across the Partnership and analysis by exception by the Partnership will encourage the sharing of good practice and also vulnerabilities. In involvement of key partners such as the RSC and Ofsted would be desirable if there is mutual respect and trust.
3. Engagement from majority of schools and academies	3. Engagement from the majority of schools and academies is more likely if there are clear agreed strategic priorities with clear planning leading to improved outcomes.
4. Leadership from key system Leaders	4. Oxfordshire schools are blessed with many talented senior leaders-Headteachers, Chief Executives, Chairs of Governors. Central to the success of the partnership will be the commitment of colleagues to

	improving outcomes. That leadership will also support the wider Council agenda on place, people and economic development.
5. Crucial convening and facilitating role for the LA	5. The LA is one of the key partners has democratic accountability and a responsibility to be impartial, facilitate, encourage but, with the exception of safeguarding issues, not to direct.
6. Sufficient capacity for school to school support	6. The Strategic Partnership will wish to continue to review capacity for school to school support. Mapping provision will identify potential duplication and gaps
7. Effective local links with regional partners	7. As professional trust is developed then the involvement of key regional partners such as the RSC and Ofsted in aspects of the work of the LA and Strategic Partnership could be invaluable. Key questions could be posed: • How effectively are the existing networks enabling collaboration, connectivity and communication? • Are all our schools/partners connected? • What are we working to achieve locally and at a regional level?
8. Sufficient financial contributions	8. It is unlikely any of the key stakeholders whether schools or the LA will have new money to support the work of the Strategic Partnership, but exploitation of synergies may lead to better use of public resources. There may be opportunities to bid for central government funding if the LA and Strategic Partnership have clear strategic priorities with measurable outcomes.
9. Structures to enable partnership activity	9. It would be for the LA and Strategic Partnership to identify streams of work likely to encourage partnership activity.

12. Consultation with key stakeholders and timing

Consultation with key stakeholders is essential if Oxfordshire is to develop an effective local school improvement system fit for purpose, led by schools and multi-academy trusts yet with the active engagement of key strategic partners including the Local Authority. The strategic review 'Improving education outcomes' will be widely circulated.

Initial informal discussions will take place where possible in November and December 2019 with stakeholders and partnerships which may include the Children's Trust Board, the Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership (OSSP), the Oxfordshire Secondary School Headteachers' Association (OSSHTA), the Oxfordshire Association of Special Schools Headteachers (OASSH), the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA),a potentially emerging Oxfordshire Primary Schools Headteachers' Association (OPSHA), the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance, the Parent Carer Forum, the Diocesan Authorities and Oxfordshire Governors Association (OGA).

There will be potential opportunities for formal consultation at scheduled meetings for the aforementioned groups in the spring term 2020. There would be merit in convening meetings with the other key parties for example the Chief Executive of MATs and the Chief Executive of Teaching School Alliances. A special meeting for Chairs and Vice Chairs of Governors will need to be convened.

The priorities from those organisations could be reflected in their own planning processes but also where the Council can assist or influence within the development of priorities for incorporation into the Oxfordshire County Council Education Strategic Plan 2020/23 with a golden thread to effective service planning linked to performance management within the Council.

It is proposed that the deadline for response to the consultation document is Friday 28 February 2020, with a final document to be published in the Summer term of 2020.

13. Recommendations to the Director for Children, Education and Families and the Cabinet Member

13.1 Oxfordshire County Council commits to working with individual settings, schools and strategic partners with pace, pride and passion to further develop good and outstanding provision.

13.2 The Council considers adopting the proposed model as a basis of consultation and which if supported would create through even stronger partnerships opportunities to exploit synergies; identify both gaps in provision and duplication; create greater strategic coherence; help to secure improved outcomes.

13.3 The Council recruits to an agreed staffing structure recognising this may be through a permanent appointments or fixed term full time/part time seconded appointments.

Chris Hilliard (Consultant Deputy Director Children's Services - Education)

14 December 2019