

School Improvement support for the 2019 to 2020 academic year

**Guidance for National Leaders of
Education**



Department
for Education

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1. Overview of the 2019/20 Offer

Introduction

1. Once again, NLEs will be playing a critical role in the department's optional offer of support to schools. From September 2019, the department will be contacting Trusts and Local Authorities with eligible schools to inform them about the 2019/20 offer, before the Teaching Schools Council (TSC) contact the schools directly.

Eligibility

2. This year, we will be offering support to schools that:
 - enter the 2019/20 academic year with a 'requires improvement' (RI) judgement for overall effectiveness, or
 - receive a 'requires improvement' judgement during the 2019/20 academic year.
3. Schools already receiving support under the 2018/19 academic year offer will not normally be eligible for the 2019/20 offer. However, where a school has taken up the 2018/19 offer and subsequently receives a RI judgement that results in it meeting the eligibility criteria for another tier, it will become eligible for that additional support.

Support available to schools

4. We use tiers to determine the amount of support an eligible school can receive and, for the 2019/20 offer, the tier of support a school receives will depend on its Ofsted inspection history:

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools with a single RI judgement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools with two consecutive RI judgements. • Schools that receive an RI judgement on their first inspection (where they have no previous published Ofsted rating). For schools converting to an academy, the previous Ofsted judgement will still be counted for eligibility purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools that currently have a RI judgment and have not been rated above RI since 2005, across a minimum of 4 inspections
Schools will receive: up to 3 days' support and advice from a National Leader	Schools will receive: up to 3 days' support from an NLE (or equivalent) to help	Schools will receive: up to 3 days' support from an NLE (or equivalent) to help

of Education (NLE) or equivalent to help their leadership team identify and implement improvements within its school.	their leadership team to identify and implement improvements within its school and up to £16,000 to address the needs identified by the NLE.	their leadership team to identify and implement improvements within its school and up to £24,000 to address the needs identified by the NLE.
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5. NLEs will work with senior school or trust leaders to identify improvement areas and actions to address these. These actions will be delivered through evidence-based support programmes and high-quality system leader support and should be framed by the following principles:

- Support should focus on addressing leadership, governance and financial management, alongside the curriculum and pedagogy
- Support and recommended improvements should link to findings within the latest Ofsted report.
- Recommended actions should be accompanied by a rationale which makes clear how they are appropriate to the needs and context of the school, are likely to have impact and the outcomes that each activity is intended to achieve.

2. The NLE role

DfE initial contact

1. Before you are matched to a Tier 2 or 3 school, there will be a discussion between DfE's regional staff and the LA or trust about the school's position and the actions they are taking to support the school. The purpose of this conversation is to ensure that the support provided through the offer aligns with the school's longer-term plans and any improvement activity already underway.
2. The outcomes of this conversation will be shared with TSC to inform effective matching of NLEs and shared with you, where appropriate, to help inform your support to the school.

NLE matching

3. The regional Teaching Schools Council (TSC) representatives will be responsible for matching NLEs to schools that wish to take up the offer.
4. TSC will make a judgement about the most appropriate NLE, taking capacity, experience and expertise into account. TSC will not routinely offer a choice of NLE. TSC will use the information provided in the capacity survey to inform the matching process and will contact you to agree the match is suitable before making an offer to schools.
5. You will only be deployed within your own trust where it is clear that this would be the most effective form of support.

6. Following your agreement that the match is suitable, TSC will make contact with the supported school to confirm the match and to gain confirmation that the school wants to access the support offer. TSC will then formally record this match within the School Improvement (SI) Portal and you will receive formal confirmation that the match has been made.

The Support Offer

7. You will initially deliver up to 3 days' of support aimed at helping the school to identify its improvement needs and develop effective school improvement plans. These plans should address findings from the most recent Ofsted report and relevant school performance and attainment data.
8. For those schools only eligible for tier 1 support, you have greater flexibility in determining the nature of the support provided, for example, where appropriate, supporting the implementation of existing plans rather than creating new ones.
9. For Tier 2 or 3 schools, up to £16,000 or £24,000 respectively is available to support the implementation of the agreed school improvement actions. If you are overseeing the delivery of the Recommended Action Form (RAF), the agreed funding will be paid to your school.
10. You will be accountable for this funding and ensuring that it is spent in line with agreed actions. You will also be expected to provide ongoing support to the school to ensure that identified actions are implemented effectively and are having the intended impact. This activity should be costed into the RAF (at up to £2,000 for Tier 2 schools and £4,000 for Tier 3 schools).

3. Delivery of the offer

Making contact with supported schools

1. Once the TSC have confirmed that you have been matched to a school, you should make contact with the school to schedule a date for the support to start. This should take place within 2 weeks of confirmation of the match (not including school holidays). Within 4 weeks, you must have an agreed date for the support to start. Schools will also be advised that they need to agree a date within 4 weeks of you making contact.

The 3 day deployment

2. The aims of the deployment are to:
 - a. Identify improvement priorities, ensuring that the school is focussed on the right issues, through evidence gathering
 - b. Identify appropriate and evidenced-based approaches to address these issues
 - c. Agree how these approaches can be effectively implemented and monitored.

3. As a first step, you should assess relevant information about the strength of the school's leadership, including the latest Ofsted judgement for leadership and management, the school's current improvement plan and latest performance data (including phonics scores for Key Stage 1), in order to determine the nature of support required. This data will be made available to you, for each school you are supporting, through a new online portal (see section 4).
4. For those schools that are only eligible for tier 1 support, you are not required to complete a RAF, and have the flexibility to determine the nature and amount of support provided, up to a maximum of 3 days.
5. Having reviewed relevant information, you should make a judgement as to where you focus in relation to the three aims of the deployment. For example, where a school already has strong leadership and good improvement plans, you may choose to focus on supporting the school with the implementation of their plans. Where schools do not have strong existing plans, you may choose to focus on developing effective plans, including, where appropriate, a RAF.
6. For schools eligible for tier 2 or 3 support, you will be required to produce a RAF and we anticipate that this process will take the full 3 days. Any support required beyond this should be costed into the RAF.
7. Further guidance and materials how to deliver a deployment, including EEF guidance on applying evidence-based practice, is included in the NLE briefing slides. You should refer to this guidance when identifying the improvement area needs and recommended actions for each supported school.

4. The SI Portal

1. The support you deliver within the SI offer for 2019/20 will be reported through a new web portal, including:
 - recording your deployments
 - completing a short return for Tier 1 schools (see section 5)
 - completing a Recommended Action Form (RAF) for Tier 2 / 3 schools (see section 6)
2. You will also be able to access key contextual and performance information about each school you have been matched to through this portal, including Ofsted judgements, progress and attainment data and financial information.
3. You will start to interact with the portal once you have been matched to a school. A separate guide for using the portal will be shared with NLEs, covering how to access and interact with the portal; and online tutorials will also be held so that you can familiarise yourself with the portal. We recommend updating the portal in real time, to avoid excessively long data input sessions; and to allow DfE to monitor delivery of the offer effectively.

5. Completing the Tier 1 Return

1. For schools receiving Tier 1 support only, you must submit a short return once you are assured that effective school improvement plans are in place; and before you move onto supporting the school with the implementation of those plans. This return will be made through the online portal and will summarise:
 - the identified improvement areas (e.g. leadership, governance, SEND)
 - the activities completed and the recommendations for change that have been agreed with the school.

6. Completing the Recommended Actions Form (RAF) for schools in Tiers 2 and 3

Purpose of the form

1. The RAF should be used for all schools eligible for Tier 2 or 3 support. It should set out the actions that you judge are necessary to address the supported school's weaknesses, linked to the findings in its most recent Ofsted inspection report and any observations you have made during your deployment.

Improvement Areas

2. Improvement areas are key themes such as leadership, governance, financial management, the curriculum and pedagogy. We recommend that you select up to four improvement areas. For each improvement area selected, you will be asked to recommend actions. Within each area you should then articulate the actions required to address the weakness.
3. The improvement areas are in two groups: group 1 includes leadership, governance and financial management; and group 2 includes whole school (curriculum or pedagogy), subject specific (curriculum or pedagogy), SEND, assessment, behaviour and workload.
4. All forms **must** address Ofsted's findings in relation to the school's leadership, so that other actions in the form are supported by strong leadership. If appropriate, the governance or financial management areas may be replaced with a different improvement area. However, where doing so, you must provide a rationale as to why the school's governance or financial management is already secure or what actions are already in place to address it.

Recommended Actions

5. **Recommended action:** You should explicitly set out the activities to be carried out to address the identified needs. In this description, you must also include who is responsible for carrying out the action within the school.

6. Recommended actions need not only relate to funded activity. It may be that other actions are necessary to address the weaknesses identified by Ofsted or complement funded activity and you should detail these in the same way.
7. **Start and end dates:** Proposed actions must be time-bound and include a specific start and end date. Funded activity must be completed within three the school terms following the initial deployment.
8. Wherever possible, activity should be sequenced effectively over the three terms, so that priority issues are addressed first before moving onto others. Any activity beyond the third term must be funded by the school.
9. **National Programmes:** You should prioritise the use of DfE-funded national programmes wherever these are available. The key contacts for these programmes are listed in **Annex A**; with the full list of national programmes and eligibility criteria in **Annex B** (which is a separate document). Please check the eligibility criteria and availability of these programmes before including them in the form.
10. Where a relevant national programme is not available, or exceptionally, does not meet the school's needs, you should instead identify well-evidenced programmes from other providers with a proven track-record to provide the service.
11. Where, exceptionally, you are recommending a subject specific activity as an alternative to a national programme, (for example, a Year 1 phonics programme that is not drawn from an English Hub), you will need:
 - to provide evidence (on top of the general rationale accompanying all planned activity) to demonstrate why the proposed activity is likely to be effective
 - for certain subjects or phases, gain the endorsement of the relevant hub. Their details are included at Annex A. These are:
 - Maths:** below post-16 - please contact your regional NCETM lead
 - English:** Reception and Year 1 only - please contact your local English hub
 - Science:** please contact your local Science Learning Partnership
 - Computing:** please contact your local Computing hub
12. **Financial management:** where the supported school has already received advice from a School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA), any outstanding actions identified by the SRMA should be detailed in the RAF. You should not make separate recommendations.
13. Where the school is not already in receipt of SRMA support, the school should undertake a review of their resource management using DfE's online tools, and you should use this to inform the RAF. Schools that have undertaken a review in the last 12 months do not need to repeat this exercise. Please refer to the information and guidance at the following links when planning financial management support:
 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-financial-advice-for-schools>
 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/integrated-curriculum-and-financial-planning-icfp>

14. **Behaviour:** where an action plan identifies behaviour as a priority, any proposed activity should be well evidenced and align with the principles and strategies of Tom Bennett's review of behaviour in schools, as well as Charlie Taylor's behaviour checklists and the recently published Respectful Schools Tool and advice on mental health and behaviour.
15. **SEND:** in cases where you identify SEND provision as a priority you should recommend that the school commission a review of SEND provision.
16. **Provider:** the name of the provider proposed to deliver the activity should be included where relevant. If you are not selecting a national programme, as set out in annex B, or are recommending provision led by your own school or trust, a rationale should be included.
17. Where you recommend funding system leaders (NLE / SLE / NLG / Teaching Schools) within your own MAT / Teaching School Alliance, you will be asked to explain why this is the most appropriate and impactful support available.
18. **Expected outcomes:** expected outcomes must be set out for each proposed action, along with a description of how they will be measured. The expected outcomes should describe the changes anticipated and identify the evidence that will be used to assess whether those changes have been delivered, or are on track to deliver, the intended outcome. These outcomes may not always relate to pupil performance, and the EEF provides guidance on a range of possible indicators of a successful intervention.
19. **Funding:** A breakdown of the estimated cost for each of the proposed activities for each term should be included for each identified improvement area. The total cost of all recommended activities must be no more than £16,000 for Tier 2 schools; and £24,000 for Tier 3 schools.
20. Any funding requested for NLE or Teaching School coordination for the delivery of activity must be proportionate to the value of funding requested. For Tier 2 schools you can use up to £2,000 and for Tier 3 schools you can use up to £4,000 for co-ordinating and supporting implementation of the plan and monitoring.
21. Further details about funding restrictions and criteria are included in section 8.

RAF Sign-off for Tier 2 and 3 schools

22. You should ensure that the CEO of the trust or headteacher, and the Chair of the Governing Board has agreed to the plan. They will also be sent a copy of the plan once agreed by DfE.

TSC Review and DfE Approval

23. Once you have submitted the completed RAF via the portal, the TSC will review it to confirm that the recommended funded activity provides good value for money. Please provide enough detail in the description of each of the activities to inform the TSC's judgement, for example by explaining costs clearly and including the volume of activity (e.g. number of system leader days, number of teachers to be supported etc).

24. Once the TSC approve the RAF, they will submit it to DfE for final review and release of funding. DfE will issue a grant offer letter to your school, copying in the relevant TSC and departmental approver of the plan. You will receive funding each term, in line with the termly profile you have submitted on the RAF. The first term's payment will be made upfront, with subsequent terms paid in arrears once activity is complete.
25. If the TSC and/or DfE do not approve your RAF they will return it to you with comments. You will receive an email notification that the RAF has been returned and requires further action / re-submission via the portal.
26. The timeframes for completing these steps are below:

Activity	Timeframe
Tier 2 / 3 RAF submitted by NLE to TSC	Within 5 days of school visit
Tier 2 / 3 RAF submitted by TSC to DfE	With 10 days of receipt from NLE
Tier 2 / 3 RAF signed off by DfE	Within 10 days of submission from TSC
Tier 2 / 3 payment made by DfE	Within 10 days of sign off

7. Monitoring delivery (Tier 2 and 3 only)

- You will need to provide termly updates to the department on progress against the actions in the RAF, to ensure that they are being delivered in line with the plan and having the intended impact. The department will only release funding for activities delivered through terms 2 and 3 of the plan if there is satisfactory progress against the actions through the previous term.
- Updates on progress will be expected approximately one month before the end of term to capture:
 - Overall progress against each improvement area
 - Progress against each recommended action
 - Overall progress for the RAF as a whole
- Where activities are not on track, the department will work with you to intervene, to ensure priority actions – whether funded or unfunded – are delivered and achieving the intended outcome. This may involve developing mitigations for activities that are not on track or stopping some activities until others are delivered.
- You should allocate time (approximately 1 day per term) throughout the course of the plan to:
 - Monitor whether the activity agreed has taken place in that term and whether mitigations are in place for those activities that are off track. If activities have not taken place you will be able to recommend to DfE that further funding is withheld until it has.

- Assess whether the school can provide evidence to show that the action is on course to achieve, or has achieved the outcome described at the outset of the plan.
- Support the school to ensure the recommendations are implemented effectively.

Tier 3 schools:

5. When monitoring progress in a tier 3 school, you should:

- as part of the termly review, gain feedback from the chair of the Governing Board, and, for trusts, the CEO.
- review the RAF following any Ofsted inspection or monitoring visit during the course of plan, adjusting plans in consultation with DfE where necessary
- with the school, consider, how the school will sustain the activities beyond the funded period.

8. Funding Guidance

Tier 1 Deployments

1. You are required to prioritise supporting schools eligible for the 2019/20 School Improvement Offer. You will be paid £500 per day (or £600 per day where you are required to travel longer than 1 hour or over 45 miles) for each day you have been deployed, up to a maximum of 3 days, per supported school. Funding will be paid in arrears following completion of a claim to DfE.
2. You should complete the activity that results in a tier 1 return, or RAF, being submitted within a term of being matched to the school. Any remaining days, from your initial 3 day allocation, that are being used to support the school with implementing its plans should be completed in the following term.

Tier 2 and 3 Funding

3. Funding will be awarded to your school to support the delivery of the agreed actions within the RAF. This funding will be paid to your school and you will be accountable for this funding and ensuring that it is spent in line with agreed actions. Following approval of the RAF by DfE a grant offer letter will be sent to your school outlining the terms and conditions of funding. You will receive funding each term, in line with the termly profile you have submitted on the RAF. The first term's payment will be made upfront, with subsequent terms paid in arrears once activity is complete
4. You will be responsible for commissioning, procurement and other funding arrangements entered into (to deliver actions within the RAF) using the funding received under this grant. All underspend must be returned to the Department. You will be required to return a grant evaluation and assurance reports to the DfE as requested annually.

5. **Funding restrictions:** Grant funding cannot be used to fund actions that have already been planned and budgeted for by the trust or school prior to you starting work with the school, for example as already detailed in any existing school development plan or action plan. Nor can it be used to plan or deliver activities that would duplicate support that is or could otherwise be accessed free of charge during the grant period from existing available funded programmes.
6. The grant may not be used to fund mandatory qualifications for specialist teachers or classes of pupils with Sensory Impairment or the National Award in SEN Coordination as these should be funded from core school budgets.
7. Funding cannot be used to provide cover for staff release time unless exceptionally agreed with DfE.
8. You are responsible for the legality of any commissioning, procurement or other funding arrangements entered into using the funding received under this grant.
9. Where you recommend funding to be awarded to system leaders (NLE / SLE / NLG / Teaching Schools) within your own MAT / Teaching School Alliance you will be asked to provide evidence that this is the most appropriate and impactful support available. This will include whether or not this is double funding existing responsibilities of the MAT, in which case it will not be awarded.
10. The CEO / Headteacher and Chair of Governors of the supported school will be required to sign off the RAF for Tier 2 and 3 schools, and agree to the implementation of the recommendations within it (both funded and unfunded), before funding is released.
11. All funding is subject to the standard DfE terms and conditions at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grant-funding-agreement-terms-and-conditions>

Annex A: Contacts for Subject Specific Programmes

Key contacts for Maths recommended actions

Region	NCETM Regional Lead	Email
East of England and North East London	Chris Dale	chris.dale@ncetm.org.uk
North	Paul Treversh	gregory.thomas@ncetm.org.uk paul.treversh@ncetm.org.uk
South West	Annabelle Grose	annabelle.grose@ncetm.org.uk
South East England and South London	Heidi Whitney	heidi.whitney@ncetm.org.uk
East Midlands and Humber	Margaret Young	margaret.young@ncetm.org.uk
West Midlands	Barbara Rodgers	barbara.rodgers@ncetm.org.uk
Lancashire and West Yorkshire	Gaynor Bahan	gaynor.bahan@ncetm.org.uk
South Central and North West London	Matt Lewis	matt.lewis@ncetm.org.uk

Key contacts for English recommended actions

Region	School name	Hub email address
East Midlands and Humber	St Wilfrid's Primary School, a Catholic Voluntary Academy	info@stwenglishhub.co.uk
	Whiston Worrygoose J&I School	teachingschool@learnersfirst.org
	Witham St Hughs Academy	enquiries@equatetsa.co.uk
East of England and North East London	Elmhurst Primary School	newvision.englishhub@elmhurst.newham.sch.uk
	Grazebrook School	englishhub@newwavefederation.co.uk
	Myland Community Primary School	admin@myland.essex.sch.uk
Lancashire and West Yorkshire	All Souls CE Primary School	office@allsoulsce.rochdale.sch.uk
	Burley and Woodhead CofE Primary School	office@burleywoodhead.com
	Jerry Clay Academy	EnglishHub@jerryclayacademy.wakefield.sch.uk
	Outwood Primary Academy Lofthouse Gate	oie@outwood.com

	St John Vianney Catholic Primary School	englishhub@st-john-vianney.blackpool.sch.uk
	The Greetland Academy	englishhub@greetlandacademy.org.uk
North	Lealholm Primary School	lponter@yeat.co.uk
	Orgill Primary School	headteacher@orgill.cumbria.sch.uk
	St Michael's C of E Primary School	bishopmiddleham@durhamlearning.net
	Westgarth Primary School	westgarthoffice@westgarth.rac.sch.uk
South central and North West London	Roade Primary School	englishhub@roadeprimary.org
	West London Free School Primary	Hub@ks-t.org
	Whiteknights Primary School	admin@whiteknights.wokingham.sch.uk
South East and South London	Chesterton Primary School	office@chesterton.wandsworth.sch.uk
	Kingsnorth CEP	office@kingsnorth.kent.sch.uk
	Springhill Catholic Primary School	englishhub@springhillcatholic.net
South West	Broadclyst Community Primary School	nrothery@tcts.education
	Isham C of E Academy	partners@lapsw.org
	Mangotsfield CE Primary School	English.Hub@mangoschool.org
	Ramsbury Primary School	admin@ramsbury.wilts.sch.uk
	St Peter's Church of England Primary School	enquiries@spps.school.uk
	Trenance Learning Academy	Kernow.EnglishHub@TLAT.org.uk
West Midlands	Childer Thornton Primary	englishhub@childerthornton.cheshire.sch.uk
	Lacey Green Primary Academy	englishhub@laceygreen.cheshire.sch.uk
	Little Sutton Primary School	englishhub@littlesu.bham.sch.uk
	St John Bosco Catholic Primary School	headteacher@st-johnbosco.sandwell.sch.uk

Key contacts for Science recommended actions

Available here: <https://www.stem.org.uk/science-learning-partnerships>

Key contacts for Computing recommended actions

Available here: <https://blog.teachcomputing.org/the-national-centre-for-computing-education-announces-seven-new-computing-hubs/>