

DONCASTER OPPORTUNITY AREA – PARTNERSHIP BOARD



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Year 5 Priority 1 Programme Business Case

Priority 1

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Summary

Purpose

This proposal aims to provide targeted programmes of support to Primary schools to support the raising of standards. Based on research and consultation the proposal recognises the broad spectrum of need among Doncaster primary schools and thus proposes the following 3 strands:

- **Targeted Intensive School to School Support programme** for 8 schools with the most entrenched issues and serving those communities with highest levels of disadvantage.
- **Targeted CPD programme** for up to 36 schools whilst not meeting the criteria for the intensive programme, have need of support to improve pupil outcomes
- **Universal Offer** available to all Doncaster primaries to support school improvement

Action Required

The Board is asked to consider the proposal and following deliberation determine whether they wish to support the project at the levels indicated below.

Strategic context

Research and evidence indicate that high quality teaching is the most significant lever schools have to improve pupil outcomes; this has been highlighted in the EEF's School Improvement Planning Toolkit.

Although the pandemic has had a huge impact on all children's education it is widely accepted that the disadvantaged students have been disproportionately affected and nationally the disadvantage gap is widening.

This proposal aims to provide interventions that recognise the needs of schools and focus on quality of teaching and the leadership of teaching aims to support the raising of standards and pupil outcomes.

Financial implications

The total funding requested to support these proposals is £ 225,000 distributed as follows:

- Intensive school to school support Programme - £125,000
- Targeted Support Programme - £80,000
- Universal Offer / Support of Networks - £20,000

Background

In 2018/19 (the last year where KS2 data is available) approximately 45% of Doncaster primary schools were recorded as having fallen below the national average for achieving the expected standard in KS2 reading, writing and maths (RWM). Similar figures for 2017/18 and 2018/19 were approximately 52% and 47% respectively. Indeed, around a quarter of primary schools in Doncaster consistently fell below the national standard for the last 3-years where data is available.

In 2019, Doncaster was in approximately the lowest 15% of local authority areas of students achieving the expected standard in RWM at KS2, ranking joint 130th out of 151 areas in England. For reference, Doncaster was joint 134th out of 152 in 2018 and 148th out of 152 in 2017.

Over its 4-year existence, the Doncaster OA board has approved a number of projects in Priority 1 to support the progression of Doncaster schools. Those schools most in need of support often have least capacity to engage and/or are potentially overwhelmed with offers. Typically, these schools have significant and long-standing issues and challenges and require a more bespoke and targeted approach to support them in their journey to improved outcomes. Similarly these are also the schools serving those communities with highest levels of disadvantage and the OA team therefore propose an intensive school-to-school support programme.

Our analysis also shows that there is a need for a level of provision for improvement opportunities for those schools, (with high levels of disadvantage), who whilst not requiring intensive support, still would benefit from a more focussed offer of targeted CPD to drive school improvement and raise pupil outcomes. We also appreciate that all schools need to constantly review and reflect on existing practice in order to maintain excellence, move from good to excellent or move into good delivery. This proposal aims to address the above in a targeted and structured manner that aims to fulfil the specific requirements of schools and proposes to deliver the following programmes of support

- **Targeted Intensive School to School Support programme:** that will target schools with the most entrenched issues and serving those communities with highest levels of disadvantage.
- **Targeted CPD programme:** that will target schools who while not requiring the intensive support, have been identified as benefiting from focussed support to improve pupil outcomes
- **A Universal Offer** available to all Doncaster primaries to support school improvement

To ensure we make evidence informed decisions on the selection of schools for both the intensive and targeted CPD programmes we have interrogated the data available as well as soliciting local intelligence. We propose to target schools based on a range of factors including, historically low outcomes, 3-year trend in KS2 data combined of all students, 3-year trend in KS2 data combined disadvantaged students, High level of pupil premium schools, Ofsted grade and local intelligence (including consultation with LA and the RSC's team).

Underlying these programmes is the aim to support and promote collaborative working among schools. Ultimately our goal is that these programmes will help schools to raise the percentage of children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined at the end of KS2 and narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined at the end of KS2.

Intensive School to School Support Programme

Proposal

This proposal aims to provide a programme of intensive wrap-around school-to-school support that addresses the specific issues of each targeted school. The programme aims to ensure that the target schools play an integral part in the process and aims to employ a “done with” model of support to effect buy-in from the school.

It aims to build on the lessons learned from other Opportunity Areas where school-to-school support has been put in place to support the improvement of schools with the most entrenched issues and those that are in need of additional leadership capacity/ system leadership in specific identified areas.

We propose to support the costs to allow a National Leader of Education (NLE) to work collaboratively with the head teacher, and where appropriate Trust leaders, from a target school. Together, they will carry out a diagnostic of needs from which they will establish and agree the individual school's priorities linked to the school's improvement plan and jointly design an action/implementation plan. Where schools have previously been supported, previous diagnostics can also be used to inform planning.

The action plan for school improvement will set out the areas to be addressed. It will include the improvement priorities, improvement activities,

improvement resources, period of activity, associated time/cost and success criteria.

To ensure the plans provide additionality to what has already been planned and not replace funding or actions/activities already scheduled, these will demonstrate how this new investment will complement, and not duplicate or cut across, existing improvement activity.

The action plan will also include clear benchmarking to establish the position of the school in the areas to be addressed at the beginning of the programme so that distance travelled and impact can be clearly tracked and evaluated throughout the project.

During the development of this offer the OA team has liaised closely with RSC's team to ensure join up and additionality for any schools targeted by this offer who also receive support from the DfE school improvement 21/22 offer. In this way we aim to provide an integrated and comprehensive one-year programme to schools for those eligible for both offers and thus reduce multiple offers to schools. The OA team will continue to liaise with the RSC's team to ensure consistency across the joint programme.

A budget of £15k will be provided for each school to support a bespoke programme of activities and training to address their specific issues as outlined in the action plan. The NLE will facilitate and/or provide support and be responsible for the deployment of resources allocated for the school.

As action plans will be bespoke to each school it is not possible at this time to identify the specifics but this support may involve drawing in capacity from national school improvement providers, targeting activity from the LA and Research school as well as deploying expertise from the school system.

We envisage that those tasked with providing the support are recognised NLEs however where NLE's are not available a leader can be selected from those schools who evidence strong KS2 data results (over a period of time), high pupil premium and good or outstanding Ofsted judgements. In the event that this occurs in addition to interrogating the data the OA team will also consult with the LA and Research school for input.

As collaboration underpins this initiative, the matching of schools is key. It is vital that the relationship between the schools is one of genuine partnership and collaboration. The target school will be consulted on the selection of NLE and where existing relationships exist, we aim to build on these if viable. The OA team will facilitate the initial matching conversations with final selection following consultation with the supported school and liaising with the RSC's team and other local stakeholders.

To ensure currency and to assist in planning and delivery, all schools receiving support will, with their matched NLE be offered additional support from the Research School on the Education Endowment Foundation's guide to effective implementation of school improvement.

This is planned to include

- An introductory session in September - Meeting with NLE's & HTs to introduce school to school support and focus on development of Implementation Plans/ Logic Models

- A twilight session to support SLEs being deployed by NLE's
- Termly network meeting (2-hourly sessions) for NLEs & HTs to reflect on practice, share learning and discuss evidence base research available
- One final session to review and share learning from the programme with the NLE's and the supported schools

Monitoring/Progression

The NLE will be responsible for quality assuring all support and ensuring it is implemented as detailed in the school action plan. The NLE will report on a half-termly basis (more frequently if needs arise). They will be responsible for reporting and providing an update on the progress against the action plan, impact and the detail of actual and projected spend. The OA team together with a qualified independent party will quality assure the implementation plans and the progression made.

Head teachers of the supported schools will also be invited to attend with their NLE (or separately if they prefer) in order that they have opportunity to provide feedback on progress from their own perspective. This will build on the commitment and fidelity to the work.

To build wider collaboration where viable NLE's will promote the wider school improvement support available in the borough and the benefits of the school engaging in these. The OA team will also promote this with the target school to help encourage greater engagement across the sector and where appropriate, will update the Local Authority and the RSC's team to keep them sighted on the work and progression. Where the school being supported is receiving funding from the DfE for their wider School Improvement offer, the monitoring will accommodate national reporting requirements and the RSC's team staff representative will be invited to attend.

Sustainability

By providing an intensive and bespoke programme of expert support to those schools with most challenges that is focussed and scaffolded on their specific needs we envisage that these will be in a better position to deliver to their communities both this academic year and future years.

In adopting a school-to-school support methodology, the OA aims to facilitate and strengthen relationships between schools. The development of such partnerships aims initially to foster strong relationships between those being supported and those providing the support that will last beyond the OA and into the future.

Building from this, where viable and appropriate, the NLE supporting the schools will be promoting the benefits of greater collaboration across the system.

In recognising the value and impact that can be achieved from collaboration we anticipate that the participating schools will, from this initial programme, be more open to adopt a greater culture of collaborative working at all levels which will go towards building their long-term capacity for improvement for the future.

Supporting these schools to progress aims to place them in a much better position to take a more active role in the wider collaboration across the school system in Doncaster and engage with the Doncaster networks, and Maths and English Hubs which support continued school improvement.

Funding Requested

Item	Cost
8 schools with a budget of £15K per school (which includes NLE costs)	£120,000
Research school advice and information sessions and general follow-up	£5,000
Total	£125,000

KPI's

KPI	Target
No of target schools who participate and have implementation plans developed.	8
Number of target schools who consider the programme has positively impacted on their school improvement	8
Number of target schools attending the Research School delivery	8
Percentage of target schools achieving over 85% of outcomes as identified on their action plans	90%
Number of target schools who consider the project has supported and achieved improved practice within the school	8

Milestones

Milestones	Target
Year 5 delivery commences	Sept 21

Action plans written	Oct 21
Implementation commences	Oct 21
EEF Guidance session 01	Sep 21
EEF Guidance session 02	Oct 21
EEF Guidance session 03	Jan 22
EEF Guidance session 04	Apr 22
Year 5 delivery concludes	Jul 22

Targeted CPD Programme

Proposal

This proposal aims to support school improvement through a structured professional development opportunity to targeted schools (with high pupil premium levels) to help support their drive towards school improvement and raising pupil outcomes.

Recent research from the Teaching School Hub survey (serving Barnsley, Doncaster, Selby and Wakefield) has identified the top two priority areas for leadership and professional learning priorities across the hub region as:

- Improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and other vulnerable groups
- Improving the quality of teaching, including subject expertise and pedagogy

Improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and supporting social mobility lie at the core of Opportunity Area and as such all programmes we support are targeted at addressing these issues.

Building from this research the OA team has consulted with a number of Heads and Trust leaders from our potential target schools, the Local Authority, Doncaster Research School to identify more specifically the emerging needs of primary schools in Doncaster.

Areas identified in the consultation were pedagogy, subject leadership and the widening gap in reading and writing for disadvantaged students.

To ensure the OA does not duplicate or cut across other local offers we have consulted LA, Research School and Teaching School Hub on the CPD planning for the next academic year. Similarly we have reviewed offers across the wider DfE in our bid to ensure an integrated and comprehensive programme across the borough.

The Teaching School Hub's focus will be on ECF and NPQ's. We are also aware of the new NPQ qualification: "*Leading teacher development: supporting and training and development of others*". This programme, aimed at teachers in schools with responsibility for development of teaching staff, is timetabled to be available from January 2022.

Therefore, based on the information we have currently in respect of wider delivery we propose to focus OA support to an offer focussing on improving Reading and Writing. This addresses two of the primary areas of support identified in the research.

The OA is also in discussion with Local Authority on the Reading Writing Maths strategy which is integral to the Doncaster 2030 Education and Skills strategy. The Reading, Writing, maths strategy is being launched in the autumn term and will be supported by events and courses over a 2-year period to support Doncaster schools. The specifics of our targeted CPD programme being delivered will complement any work planned.

In addition to the potential of building from our own previously successful and programmes that have demonstrated high engagement the OA team has also explored a number of CPD programmes (e.g. Outstanding Teacher Intervention, TDT Pedagogical Coaching etc.) and models of delivery to best support the targeted schools to build capacity and expertise. The developed model will aim to provide teachers with adequate time to learn, practise, implement and reflect upon new strategies. These will be facilitated by the provider to ensure the following professional learning cycle is featured:

- Training sessions
- In-school tasks (gap tasks)
- Programme provider review/ monitoring of practice
- Opportunities to share learning from in-school tasks as a network of schools

Included in the delivery would be the opportunity for schools to collaborate and share best practice. It is intended to build expertise within the school to provide better support to teaching staff so they can provide best teaching and learning.

- Opportunities for participants to collaborate and be engaged in a small practice sharing group through visits to each other's settings, with a clear focus on the intended outcomes
- Opportunities for participants to be coached themselves, to coach colleagues in-school and beyond their own setting (within the practice sharing group)
- Opportunity to visit a setting with excellent practice in a comparable area

To ensure currency and to assist in planning and delivery, all schools receiving support will, with the provider, meet as a group of teachers accessing the programme (in September) and will be involved in the delivery cycle outlined above. Schools will be encouraged to work in practice sharing groups. Where existing relationships between schools are already in existence we would look to support these to ensure we do not create capacity issues.

In respect of eligibility this offer would be available to targeted schools using detailed analysis of data, including 3-year trend, most recent OFSTED judgements, intelligence obtained via our local partners including Doncaster Research School, Doncaster LA etc.

Monitoring/Progression

The programme provider will be responsible for the delivery and this will be monitored and reviewed on a monthly basis with the OA team. Feedback from school and trust leaders as well as the participants, will be sought on a half termly basis. Providers will be tasked to provide evaluative data to demonstrate the quality of support provided to the participants and will reflect how this has had a direct impact not only on their own practice but also on other colleagues through effective coaching and collaboration.

Head teachers of the schools will also be invited to attend a termly reflection meeting in order that they have opportunity to provide feedback on progress from their own perspective. This will build on the commitment and fidelity to the work.

Sustainability

By funding a targeted CPD programme which involves opportunities for working in collaboration across a number of schools, the OA aims to facilitate stronger relationships between schools and build a culture of collaborative working and long-term capacity for improvement for the future. The aim is that participants will learn from each other and visits to schools other than their own will support strengthening partnerships on a number of levels (teachers, middle leaders etc.).

It is envisaged that this model will facilitate professional working relationships where both challenge and support will be welcomed through a reciprocal and non-judgemental approach, potentially cascading out into other areas of the curriculum.

Supporting and scaffolding those schools experiencing challenge, we envisage that these will be in a better position to deliver to their communities both this academic year and future years. Furthermore, in supporting teachers and middle leaders, we aim to support schools and place them in a better position to take a more active role in the wider collaboration across the school system in Doncaster and engage with the Doncaster networks, and Maths and English Hubs which support continued school improvement.

Funding Requested

Item	Cost
Cost of programme(s) for up to 36 schools to support teachers & middle leaders to improve reading and writing	£ 80,000

Total	£ 80,000
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KPIs

KPI	Target
No of schools receive targeted support programme	36
Percentage of schools who consider the programme has positively impacted on practice in their schools	90%

Milestones

Milestones	Target
Programme Finalised	July 21
Target schools selected and recruited	Pre and Sep 21
Delivery commences	Sep/Oct 21
Events/ CPD Sessions commence	Oct 21
Sessions End	Apr 21
Evaluation and Impact	May/Jun 22

Universal Offer

Ensuring that there is a comprehensive offer of networks available that schools can access allows the sharing and developing of best practice.

We have seen a number of networks develop which have ranged from the exemplars of best practice in the classroom to the high-level thinking on leadership.

All have been well received by schools with more schools becoming engaged in these difficult times. However there still remains a challenge in Doncaster to engage those schools that sit outside the networks to become part of the Doncaster collaborative work. In Year 5 the OA will actively encourage those schools that do not engage to take all opportunities to benefit from the collaboration in the system.

This proposal aims to strengthen work in this area and increase participation and accessibility of these. We propose to work with the LA to ensure all networks, both formal and informal are mapped out and schools have access to a cohesive offer with which they can engage. Similarly, we aim to ensure that this offer is communicated out to schools and there is a reference point to access.

A number of networks act as a vehicle to support cross-phase working with for example a number of secondary schools currently engaged with the Leadership networks. However, we recognise the potential benefits that may arise if this were to increase and aim to support this.

We recognise the range of networks that exist across the primary system including those targeted at specific issues or groups. Based on the feedback from our consultation and the desire to drive school improvement we propose to continue to work with and support such networks as:

- **The Leadership Network.** However, based on the feedback that will be available from the final evaluation we envisage that this will not necessarily in its current iteration. We need to ensure how this becomes sustainable and explore the potential of using these as a platform to promote programmes that have demonstrated positive impact from the wider OA.
- **The DL30 Network.** Consultation with DL30 has indicated that there is a growing appetite for colleagues to observe the case studies presented by best practice sharing schools in school/classroom settings. We propose to support the DL30 to build on its school-to-school practice by supporting opportunities to plan and facilitate visits to those schools following the delivery of the virtual session. These post presentation visits will be made available to other Doncaster Schools and offer them an opportunity to get feedback from a wider range of stakeholders within the best practice school.
- **Writing Network:** This has built from the OA's previously funded literacy project (delivered by the Research School) and focusses on moderation of writing across schools. Currently, the programme is operating with around 20 schools and feedback is that a number of additional schools are looking to attend. These funds will provide the network with an opportunity to expand and to share best practice across a wider cohort.

Sustainability

By supporting a cohesive offer of networking to the primary sector that links with the secondary, we plan to build capacity post OA. Moving forward the proposal aims to support school leaders to drive the improvement agenda and build greater collaborative working across the sector.

Our aim is to use our 5th year to embed and secure the networks, making every effort to support the engagement of those schools that are yet to

engage or schools that are demonstrating low engagement levels with the OA.

Integral to all three strands of the Priority 1 programme is the development and strengthening of relationships. This will afford schools opportunities for closer working and collaboration in year 5. It is envisaged that these relationships will continue post OA and support the continued collaboration to secure continued improvement and create a more integrated education culture in Doncaster.

Funding Requested

Item	Cost
Support to DL30 to operate 18 school to school visitation events (18 x £250) and associated costs to promote and administer events	£ 5,000
Support to run new programme of leadership network events	£10,000
Support to run new programme of Writing Network events	£5,000
Total	£ 20,000

KPIs

KPI	Target
Leadership Network: No of schools attending events	50
DL30: No of school-to-school visits supported	18
DL30: No of schools attending school-school visits	40
Writing Network: Schools participating	40
Writing Network: No of events delivered	8

Risk

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Target schools do not engage	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to year 5, all agreement reached with CEOs and HTs • Open consultation with Target schools prior to the project commencing to secure buy-in • Meetings arranged with providers to ensure programme is fit for purpose
Limited capacity for participants to remain engaged	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with target schools to agree prior to programme commencing. • Support available from provider/NLE to support participants with any concerns/ challenges
Impact of further COVID measures	M	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of aspects of work could be conducted remotely • Planned for remote/virtual initiatives.