



# Learn Sheffield Spring Update



*The main focus of Learn Sheffield, in its first six months since incorporation, has been to deliver the commission for statutory duties relating to school improvement in the city.*

*This update provides information about how this work is being developed, as well as a flavour of the other activities that Learn Sheffield has been involved in during the first half of this school year.*



[www.learnsheffield.co.uk](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk)

[@learnsheffield](https://twitter.com/learnsheffield)

# School Improvement Strategy

The new strategy has been developed in partnership with school leaders from each sector (primary, secondary and special) during the last few months. The strategy sets out a new vision for school improvement and considers the Sheffield context. It outlines a new approach to the delivery of the statutory duties that have been commissioned to Learn Sheffield from Sheffield City Council. Whilst this has been happening we have ensured that there has been continuity in the way that the statutory duties have been delivered, so that there has not been a gap in way that schools are challenged and supported.



The approach to school improvement in each sector is bespoke but they all follow a similar structure, which contains the features below. Each sector is also fully involved in planning the transition to the new strategy, which will already have started to take place before the next formal categorisation at the end of this school year.

**School Profile** – captures the information the sector will use to inform the categorisation and be the platform for support, challenge and partnership working.

**Categorisation** – traffic lights approach with common language, clear criteria and clarity about the support and challenge package that accompanies each category.

**School Improvement Cycle** – agreed timeline for the year, which includes the way that the sector will play a part in the review of the support and challenge that is taking place.

The School Improvement Strategy (2016-2018) will be available for consultation later in March, through to the end of April, and we look forward to receiving comments and feedback.

## Membership

The number of Learn Sheffield members is increasing all the time but, at the time of writing this update, has reached 112. This is more than 65% of the schools and colleges in the city,

with membership spread across all sectors and types of schools.

For more information about the process for joining Learn Sheffield, including the resolution to pass and the form that needs to be completed and sent to us, you can visit our website.

[www.learnsheffield.co.uk/Membership](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk/Membership)

## Sheffield Priorities

We have been working with Marc Rowland, Deputy Director of the National Education Trust, to identify what the key priorities for Sheffield should be during the period covered by the new School Improvement Strategy, up to July 2018.

The project has involved a large number of workshops with many different stakeholder groups, to understand the most difficult challenges to school improvement in Sheffield. The next phase has involved these priorities being developed into key themes, priorities and objectives, so that the strategies can be identified and partnerships created to carry out this work.

The Sheffield Priorities Action Plan is now available for comment and



consultation through to the end of April. We hope that people will take the opportunity to let us know when they agree or disagree with the suggested priorities, but also make suggestions about how we can achieve the ambitious targets that we will set ourselves.

Thank you to everyone who has invested time in supporting this work so far. Visit the [website](#) to see the priorities and see the different ways that you can provide feedback.

## Board Update

The Interim Learn Sheffield Board wrote to all school leaders and governors in January to set out their plans for the remainder of this school year. This letter, which can be found on the website below, welcomed Mike Allen as a co-opted member of the board, following the recruitment carried out in the autumn term. It also shared the plan to recruit the substantive Chief Executive during the summer term.



The board have also made the decision to delay the move from an Interim to a Substantive Board, which was originally planned to take place around the same time as the recruitment of the Chief Executive. They will, instead, guide the company through its first year, taking responsibility for the company's performance in its first full year and the recruitment of the substantive Chief Executive. The Interim Board will now present the first company accounts and annual report at the first Learn

Sheffield AGM, in the autumn of 2016, which will be followed immediately by an EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting). At the EGM the Interim Board will resign and be replaced by the first Substantive Board, elected according to our Articles.

There will be further updates on the recruitment, the date for the AGM/EGM and more information about the process by which the Substantive Board will be elected later in the year.

[www.learnsheffield.co.uk/AboutUs/OurBoard](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk/AboutUs/OurBoard)

# School Improvement Services

When the schools company was discussed last summer, there was an assumption in the financial model that Learn Sheffield would provide a subscription based school improvement offer. We have been working on this, in discussion with school leaders, through the autumn term and have come to the conclusion that this would be wrong model for this service at the present time.

What we have developed is a menu of options, which seeks to provide schools with a coherent and comprehensive range of review and evaluation activities. This is designed to support schools in obtaining a quality assured and objective 'external view', which they can feed in to their self-evaluation and development planning process. All delivery of these activities will be quality assured and, where the school opts to have a written report, will provide independent evidence for the school to share internally and with OFSTED.

We believe that this service meets the needs of our schools, whilst ensuring that the resources of Learn Sheffield are not diverted from the delivery of statutory duties.

[www.learnsheffield.co.uk/ServicesToSchools/SchoolImprovementServices](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk/ServicesToSchools/SchoolImprovementServices)

## Prevent Training

[www.learnsheffield.co.uk/downloads/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk/downloads/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf)



### The Prevent duty

Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers

The DfE published 'The Prevent Duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers' in the summer of 2015, which introduced a new statutory duty for all schools.

Learn Sheffield worked with colleagues from across Sheffield City Council to provide free training for any Sheffield school to attend, with sessions run across November, December and January. The sessions were well attended and we have recently reported to HMI that 95% of Sheffield schools have received training, in addition to two thirds of the schools in the Independent Sector.

This is an excellent example of the benefits that Learn Sheffield can bring to the city. By recognising an issue for schools and organising a central response Sheffield has been able to address this challenge more effectively than other parts of the country. This has happened in a highly efficient way, with limited cost to either the city as a whole or to individual schools, and provides a model for approaching similar situations in the future.



# Assessment Workshops

Assessment is a challenging area for schools across the country, as the implications of 'life after levels' impacts on all sectors. Learn Sheffield has been proactive in developing and supporting assessment practice across the city in a number of ways.

In the primary sector Learn Sheffield circulated an Assessment Update document in October 2015 which summarised the conclusions of different assessment groups in Sheffield over recent months, and included a series of frequently asked questions. The answers provided intended to support colleagues in reaching their own conclusions about how to approach these issues in their own schools. It was accompanied by three appendices, which were provided by different schools.



We also organised a series of sessions over the Autumn term for Sheffield schools who were due inspection, to support their preparation in relation to assessment and data. There was also an open workshop which shared the key learning from the sessions and provided a forum for discussion of the issues. Documents relating to both of these initiatives can be found on our website.

[www.learnsheffield.co.uk/DocumentStore/TrainingAndDevelopment](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk/DocumentStore/TrainingAndDevelopment)

In the special school sector we are working in partnership with both the sector assessment group and STAT Sheffield to develop resources to support planning and assessment for children with SEND, including those children whose attainment is currently assessed using P-levels.



In the secondary sector we are supporting the re-launch of the data group, with a focus on both the technical (e.g. examinations) and strategic (e.g. data analysis)

aspects of data in this sector. We are also co-ordinating the introduction of a new data group to focus on 'transitional data' to support data analysis in provision which has pupils with them for a limited period, for example hospital education or inclusion settings.

Finally, we are jointly funding (with STAT Sheffield) a pilot project supported by the EAL/New Arrivals team at Sheffield City Council. This project is trialling the use of new assessment materials to support the assessment of children and young people with English as an additional language. The thirteen schools taking part in this pilot will report back on the materials later in the school year.

## Inclusion Locality Workshops

During the autumn term Learn Sheffield facilitated an inclusion workshop for each of the seven localities in the city. The workshops, which were attended by almost every setting, provided an opportunity for schools to work with their colleagues from other agencies, find out more and contribute to the planning for a new approach to SEND and Inclusion within Sheffield.

Although we believe that inclusion is a school improvement issue, Learn Sheffield does not have a direct role in this area. All of the statutory duties relating to SEND and Inclusion are held by Sheffield City Council, and this will remain to be the case in the future. The role of Learn Sheffield in facilitating this kind of city-wide working does, however, provide a good example of the ways in which we can advocate for the concerns and challenges that schools have. The workshops also demonstrated the clear desire of schools to work together and be solution focused, even when the challenges involved are significant.



## Commissions

Learn Sheffield is very conscious that a new approach to commissioning is important, to support our vision for greater partnership working and ensure

that commissioning is open and transparent. The first three commissions came out in the new year; to find schools to take part in an EAL Assessment Pilot, two teachers for a Sheffield school & Associate Learn Sheffield Improvement Partners to grow the capacity of Learn Sheffield to support school improvement.

A new batch of commissions will be out shortly, along with the opportunity for schools and groups of schools to sign up for email alerts of future opportunities. More information can be found on our website...

[www.learnsheffield.co.uk/Commissions/CommissionsForSchools](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk/Commissions/CommissionsForSchools)



## Communication

We have, as you would imagine, been very busy on the communication front! We are trying to develop different approaches to communicating, so that information about Learn Sheffield is as accessible as possible. The website was launched in October and has been growing since then, and our twitter account is now providing regular information about Learn Sheffield and a range of education topics and learning activities.

You may well have received this update along with a letter from Learn Sheffield to introduce ourselves to every colleague working in a Sheffield school or college, or part of a governing body. If you haven't seen it yet, we would encourage you to have a look at our prospectus.

[www.learnsheffield.co.uk/Prospectus](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk/Prospectus)

As part of our efforts to be as accessible as possible we have started to record our primary headteacher briefings, so that colleagues who cannot attend can still receive the information. These briefings can be accessed via the website and it is our intention to take a similar approach to Governor Briefings in the future.

## Coming Soon

These are a few things that we are working on. Keep an eye out for them.



### Sheffield Priorities

Consultation & Comments  
(7th March to 29th April)

### School Improvement Strategy

Consultation & Comments  
(late March to late April)

### Governance Training

Further information after Easter about Learn Sheffield taking a co-ordinating role in the delivery of Sheffield's Governance Training.

### Professional Development Networks

Further information coming soon as Learn Sheffield explores the possibility of supporting a comprehensive range of teaching and leadership networks across the city.

### Workshops (Academisation)

Learn Sheffield will be sharing a paper that it has commissioned about the national academy agenda. We will also facilitate a range of opportunities for school leaders and governors to discuss the issues and hear about different approaches.

### Workshops (School Calendar)

Learn Sheffield will be facilitating an opportunity for school leaders and governors to discuss the issue of the term time calendar. This will support the setting of the 2017/18 calendar for Sheffield.

[www.learnsheffield.co.uk](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk)

 [@learnsheffield](https://twitter.com/learnsheffield)

# How can I find out more about Learn Sheffield?

Please contact us to find out more. We look forward to hearing from you.

**By Phone:** 0114 250 7417  
**By Email:** [enquiries@learnsheffield.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@learnsheffield.co.uk)

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*(shared site with Newfield and Talbot Schools)*

**Online:** [www.learnsheffield.co.uk](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk)

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