



# Learn Sheffield Summer Update

*Learn Sheffield has successfully completed its first year since incorporation. It has delivered the commission for statutory duties relating to school improvement in the city, developed a new school-led approach to school improvement and outlined an ambitious set of Sheffield Priorities.*

*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 second half of this school year.*



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

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

## Membership Update

The number of Learn Sheffield members continued to increase throughout last year, with the proportion of schools who have joined or indicated an intention to join being just over 94% at the end of term in July. The proportion of schools who had joined had reached 79% (138 schools and colleges), with a further 15% (27 schools and colleges) having indicated an intention to join but awaiting the completion of the process.

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, please visit our website.

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



## Learn Sheffield Board Update

The Interim Board will guide the company through until November 2016, taking responsibility for our performance in this first full year. The Interim Board will present the first company accounts and annual report at the first Learn Sheffield AGM, 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.



The Interim Board has also completed the recruitment of the CEO, which took place in the summer term. Stephen Betts, who had been the Interim CEO since the start of the year, was the successful candidate. Darren Tidmarsh, the Interim Chair of the Learn Sheffield Board, announced the appointment. *“Stephen is currently our Interim CEO and his performance this year, and throughout the recruitment process, gives us great confidence for the future. We would also like to thank all of the applicants, especially those shortlisted to take part in the recruitment. It was a strong field and we are grateful for their interest in both the role and the work that we are doing”.*

Date for the diary – **Learn Sheffield AGM/EGM**  
**Thursday 24th November 2016**, starting at **6:30pm**.

The venue, which will be in the city centre, will be confirmed closer to the date, once there is a clear indication of the numbers attending.

# Sheffield Priorities

We have continued to work with Marc Rowland, Deputy Director of the National Education Trust, on the Sheffield Priorities. The first draft of the document was made available for comment and consultation in the spring and the feedback from this was used to develop the final version.

The Sheffield Priorities document will be shared in early September and this will include information about the strategies that we are developing alongside a range of partners, from within the city and beyond. We will also be holding a Sheffield Priorities Day on Monday 10th October, which will include a number of open sessions to provide people with the opportunity to contribute to the development of some of the key strategies.

To ensure that the Sheffield Priorities work has a positive impact in the short term, as well as the longer term, we will share, following the Sheffield Priorities Day, two sets of commitments. The first will include the things that will be accomplished in the next 100 working days, which extends to just after the mid-point of the school year. The second will describe the things that will be accomplished by the end of next school year.



We are also committed to sharing an open and transparent evaluation of the progress that we are making with these priorities and the impact that work is having on the city. To this end we will share an annual report which will include both a review of the progress made against our objectives and an updating of the priorities themselves. We will work with partners from across the city on this evaluation but also seek additional external objective viewpoints.

More information about the Sheffield Priorities can be found on our website, which will shortly include dedicated pages for each of the six themes. These pages will provide up to date information about the work through the year, which can also be found by searching twitter using #SheffieldPriorities and the other tags found at the bottom of each page in the document.

Date for the diary – **Sheffield Priorities Day**  
**Monday 10th October 2016**

at **Learn Sheffield Training and Development Hub**

The day will include a number of open sessions to provide colleagues with the opportunity to contribute to the development of some of the key strategies.

# School Improvement Strategy

In our last update we described the plan to consult on the new strategy in the spring term. This was delayed and the School Improvement Strategy will now be published early in September. The reason for the delay was the degree of commitment from all sectors to the new approach, which resulted in the decision to 'dry run' the new school profiling and categorisation across the city in the summer term. Whilst this has caused a delay in sharing the strategy it also means that the strategy has been thoroughly tested prior to being used for the first time in the autumn.

As you will remember, the new strategy has been developed in partnership with school leaders from each sector (primary, secondary and special) and outlines a new approach to the delivery of the statutory duties that have been commissioned to Learn Sheffield from Sheffield City Council. The approach to school improvement in each sector is bespoke but they all follow a similar structure, which contains the features below.

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

**Categorisation** – each school will be put into a category, using a traffic lights approach with common language, clear criteria and clarity about the support and challenge package that accompanies it. This process ensures that resources are used to support the right schools and will involve the school itself, Learn Sheffield and a group of colleagues.

**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.



Whilst we have been working on the new strategy, we have also ensured that there has been continuity in the way that the statutory duties have been delivered, so that there hasn't been a gap in the way that schools are challenged and supported. Sheffield school outcomes have continued to improve at a faster rate than nationally, leading to the gap between the proportion of good or better schools in Sheffield and nationally closing.

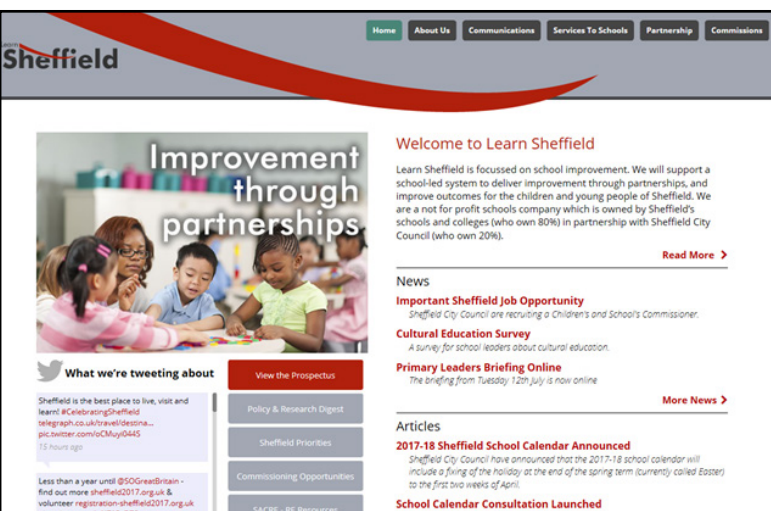
Sheffield ended the year with 81.8% of schools good or better, an increase of 5.2 percentage points last school year and 10.5 percentage points since January 2015. This improvement was

two and a half times faster than the rate of national improvement between January 2015 and April 2016. We celebrate this improvement, and recognise the school communities across the city whose hard work has made it possible, but remain focussed on our ambition to reach and exceed the national figures.

# Learn Sheffield Communications

The website has continued to develop in the second half of last school year. It now includes our latest tweets, quick links to key pages, news items, articles and events. More changes are scheduled for the start of term, with a city calendar being added and a range of updates and new pages.

Another addition to the website has been the development of a 'partnership' section. We are giving partnership pages to some of the groups that we work closely with, to ensure that the information they provide is easily accessible for the education community.



At present this includes the Inclusion Programme Board and SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education). The Inclusion Programme Board have used the space to share updates on their work and some key inclusion documents, including the template for the 'My Plan'. SACRE have shared a range of RE resources, including the Agreed Syllabus for RE.

Twitter has increasingly become an easy way to keep up with everything that's going on at Learn Sheffield and a good source of information about education in the city and

nationally. We tweet regularly about our work, national education developments and things that are happening in Sheffield's schools and colleges. We also take every opportunity to celebrate Sheffield – as current followers will have seen!

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

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

## Professional Subject Network

One of the Sheffield Priorities, within the workforce theme, relates to the development of school leaders. An early part of our response to this has been to work with Sheffield's six teaching schools, and other organisations including Sheffield Hallam University, to re-introduce subject networks to the city.

These networks will provide middle leaders in all sectors with the opportunity to attend a termly network meeting along with colleagues from across the city, to consider the latest developments and share strong practice in the subject that they lead. These networks will be confined to a one or two week window each term, to support schools in planning this into their own staff training programmes.

Learn Sheffield has funded a proportion of these networks and this has been supplemented by additional contributions from the teaching schools and other organisations. This will enable a wide range of networks to be made available to schools at no cost in the first year, so that we can judge if this is an activity that has the potential to have a positive impact on the city. The list of networks and further information will be shared early in the autumn term.

## Services to Schools

When the schools company was first discussed, there was an assumption in the financial model that Learn Sheffield would develop and provide services to schools. These services will support the school improvement aims of Learn Sheffield and also support the financial stability of the company. As a 'not for profit' company, Learn Sheffield will reinvest any surplus that is generated. Schools and colleges then have the opportunity to benefit from the success of the company by purchasing some of its services. A brief update on the services we currently offer is below. Keep an eye on communications for updates as further services are determined.

### School Improvement Services

We have developed 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 into 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.

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



### Training and Meeting Room Facilities

Learn Sheffield provides professional conferencing, training and meeting facilities. The Training and Development Hub offers a range of rooms with flexible layouts that can be tailored to meet requirements. The Hub provides Learn Sheffield with a useful partnership resource, enabling us to offer the venue to our partners to support the work that they are doing, as well as a commercial venue. The Hub has had a successful first year, with high satisfaction ratings and positive repeat bookings.

[www.learnsheffield.co.uk/ServicesToSchools/Conference-Facilities](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk/ServicesToSchools/Conference-Facilities)

### Governance Training

Learn Sheffield is being commissioned by Sheffield City Council to co-ordinate the delivery of Governance training in Sheffield. We have worked with a range of partners (including all of the Teaching School Alliances in the city, both universities, National Leaders of Governance & the Sheffield Association of School Governing Bodies) to develop the offer, which can be found on our website. Subscribers will be able to book on to sessions via the website from early in September.

## Commissioning & Opportunities

The new approach to commissioning schools has developed during the second half of last year. It has been used to recruit school improvement capacity from schools, as it was designed to do, to support partnership working and ensure that commissioning is open and transparent. It has also proved a useful way to identify schools to take up good opportunities, including for a range of pilot activities and projects.

This was supplemented last year, in the primary sector, with a Primary Opportunities bulletin. This was produced each half term and sent out alongside the agenda for each primary



leaders briefing. It was used as a way of collecting together opportunities for schools which had come through to Learn Sheffield. It was originally felt that the special and secondary sectors did not need a bulletin, as they are able to meet as a sector more easily. The plan for next year is to make the bulletin cross-sector and share it with all schools, with sector specific opportunities clearly identified.

Commission opportunities are frequently added to the website and emailed out to all schools. More information can be found on our website.

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

## School Calendar Workshop

Following the consultation regarding the 2017-18 Sheffield School Calendar, Sheffield City Council have announced that the 2017-18 school calendar will include a fixing of the holiday at the end of the spring term (currently called Easter) to the first two weeks of April. This option was developed in the workshop for school leaders which Learn Sheffield hosted, in partnership with officers from Sheffield City Council.



The workshop, which discussed the principles behind drawing up the calendar and considered the written feedback from schools which couldn't be present, was a huge success. In total, the views of approximately 70 schools fed into the process and around 25 leaders discussed the issues in person.

The workshop illuminated the issues well and provided school leaders from different sectors with a good opportunity to consider the needs of children in other phases. There was a widespread consensus about the idea of fixing the holiday that we currently call Easter, in order to ensure two even half terms of similar length, and school leaders will, no doubt, be pleased to see this as the outcome from the final consultation.

## Coming Soon

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

### School Improvement & Achievement Strategies

These have been developed with each school sector and will set out the approach of Learn Sheffield to school improvement and pupil achievement. They will be published in September.

### Sheffield Priorities

Further information will be shared from September through to the Sheffield Priorities Day event on 10th October. There will be updates on each of the themes on new dedicated pages on the Learn Sheffield website. We will report back on the impact of the strategies throughout next year.

### Governance Training

Learn Sheffield has launched its Governance Training offer. Subscribing schools will be able to book via the website from September.

### Professional Development Subject Networks

Learn Sheffield is working with teaching schools and others to develop a comprehensive range of subject leadership networks across the city. The first networks will be in autumn 2016.

### Prospectus

A revised version of the Learn Sheffield Prospectus will be available in September.

### Communications

The Learn Sheffield website continues to develop. Look out for news, events and articles in addition to partnership pages which provide space for partners such as SACRE and the Inclusion Programme Board.

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

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



# Learn Sheffield Priorities Day

Monday 10th October 2016

at Learn Sheffield Training & Development Hub

(Lees Hall Road, Sheffield, S8 9JP – shared site with Newfield and Talbot schools)



**Audience - School Leaders / Sheffield Governors / Education Professionals**

**Purpose - Contribute to the design of key strategies in relation to Sheffield Priorities**

The Sheffield Priorities document will be shared early in September. It is the result of the work that we have done with the National Education Trust to understand the barriers to school improvement in the city. The themes, priorities and strategies will inform the work of Learn Sheffield in the year ahead.

During the Priorities Day we will be working on several of the strategies, including the 'Wellbeing and Development Taskforce' and 'Teach Sheffield'. We will also be holding the open sessions below, which will provide opportunities to contribute to the development of some of the key strategies.

**We hope that you will be able to join us for some or all of the day.**

This includes the following open events:

<i>Open Sessions</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Venue</i>
<b>Priorities Strategic Group - to consider the 'key pledges' we may make to the city</b>	8.00 - 10.00	Training Room 2
<b>Governance Strategy - recruitment, development &amp; retention</b>	8.00 - 10.00	Training Room 3
<b>Transitions Priority - including discussion about the 'Early Risers' project</b>	10.30 -12.30	Training Room 2
<b>Networking Lunch (with speakers)</b>	12.30 - 14.00	Comfort Zone & Training Room 1
<b>Cultural Education &amp; Sheffield as a stimulus/resource for learning</b>	14.00 -16.00	Training Room 3

To book on please email [bookings@learnsheffield.co.uk](mailto:bookings@learnsheffield.co.uk) or call 0114 250 7417



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



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

# How can I find out more about Learn Sheffield?

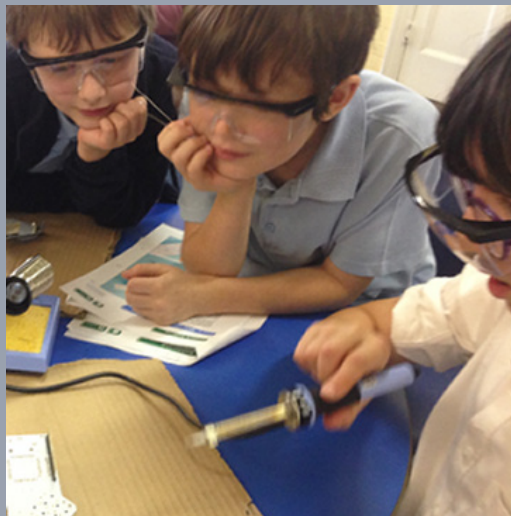
Please contact us to find out more. We look forward to hearing from you.

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

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

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