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Dear Colleague,

School Improvement in Barnet – a new approach

Towards a self-improving school system

Background

The proposed approach for school improvement was outlined in the document: '**A new approach to school improvement in Barnet**' which was consulted upon and circulated to schools last term. Our aim is to establish a series of school improvement partnerships by April 2015 in Barnet so that every school is a member of a partnership and able to benefit from or contribute to system leadership and a self-improving school system. Schools were asked to complete a Survey in October 2014 indicating the schools they already have informal partnerships with, schools they would like to partner with and the type of partnership they are interested in. The rationale for this approach and the types of partnership suggested are included as Appendix 1 for your information

Thank you to the 49 schools who responded to the survey directly and to the schools who had discussions and meetings last term with other schools which enabled some responses to be on behalf of a number of schools. The views of 64 schools were thus taken into account in forming the draft list of partnerships and it was ensured that all of the schools who responded got at least one school that they mentioned in their proposed partnership. This proposal was presented to the **Schools Standards Partnership Board** on 15th December 2014 who approved the approach and the draft proposals of these partnerships as a basis for discussion and agreement with schools. This Board comprises six Headteachers (Primary, Secondary, Special and PRU) as well as Kate Kennally, Ian Harrison, Val White and myself. The Director's Meeting with Primary Headteachers on Thursday has this item on the Agenda and time has been allocated at this meeting to have discussions about the possible remit and development of the partnerships. We will be discussing the partnerships with Secondary Headteachers at a later meeting. We welcome your suggestions and ideas at the meetings.

Suggestions of school partnerships

The following suggested partnerships are based on:

1. The responses to the survey and the schools that were identified as ones which the respondent would welcome working in partnership with
2. Existing partnerships
3. The LA's knowledge of the schools – current OFSTED judgement, current view of the LA/Self Evaluation by the school, experience of the current Headteacher
4. The geographical location of the school

Note: Secondary Schools have been included if they responded to the survey or are already working in a partnership

The following partnerships are being suggested:

Partnership 1 – Loose Partnership (Infant Schools) - Moss Hall Infant (NLE/National Support School), Queenswell Infant, Annunciation Infant, Brookland Infant, Garden Suburb Infant, Dollis Infant, Grasvenor Infant (also in Partnership 8), Deansbrook Infant

Partnership 2 – Loose Partnership (Junior Schools) - Moss Hall Junior, Queenswell Junior, Annunciation Junior, Brookland Junior, Garden Suburb Junior, Dollis Junior

Partnership 3 – Loose Partnership (Special Schools) - Northway, Oakleigh, Mapledown (NLE/National Support School), Oak Lodge (NLE/National Support School)

Partnership 4 – Loose Partnership (East Barnet Area) – Monkfrith, Church Hill, Danegrove, Cromer Road, Livingstone, East Barnet Secondary School (NLE/National Support School)

Partnership 5 – Loose Partnership (East Barnet/Southgate Area): Brunswick Park, St Mary's EN4 (NLE/National Support School), Osidge, Trent, Brookhill Nursery School, St. Margaret's Nursery School, Hampden Way Nursery School

Partnership 6 – Loose Partnership (N10, N11, N20 Areas) – St Paul's N11, Holly Park, St John's N11, Coppetts Wood, Hollickwood, All. Saint's N20

Partnership 7 – Loose Partnership (Whetstone and Totteridge Area) – St John's N20, Alma, Sacred Heart, St. Andrew's, Woodridge

Partnership 8 – Loose Partnership (High Barnet/Finchley Area): – Martin, St. Catherine's (NLE/National Support School), Northside (NLE/National Support School), Foulds, Christ Church, Underhill School, Grasvenor Infant (also in Partnership 1), Whittings Hill, Monken Hadley

Partnership 9 – Loose Partnership (Finchley Area) – Holy Trinity, Akiva, Manorside, Tudor, Our Lady of Lourdes, Pardes House, St. Mary's N3, Sacks Morasha, St. Theresa's, Summerside, Moss Hall Nursery

Partnership 10 – Loose Partnership (Hendon Area) – Hasmonean Primary, Independent Jewish Day School, St. Joseph's, St Mary's and St John's, Sunnyfields, Chalgrove

Partnership 11 – Loose Partnership (Mill Hill Area) – Fairway, Courtland , St Paul's NW7, Millbrook Park, St. Vincent's, Etz Chaim, Frith Manor, Mathilda Marks Kennedy

Partnership 12 – Loose Partnership (Cricklewood Area) – All Saints NW2, Childs Hill, Claremont, Wessex Gardens, St. Agnes', Bell Lane, Menorah Primary, Blessed Dominic, Whitefield Secondary School

Partnership 13 – Loose Partnership (Colindale /Edgware / Golders Green Area) - London Academy/Deansbrook Juniors, Broadfields, Beit Shvidler , Northgate Teaching School (NLE/National Support School), QE Boys Secondary School, Henrietta Barnett Secondary School, Woodhouse College, Mill Hill County High, Beis Yaakov, Rimon, Edgware Primary

Partnership 14 – Loose Partnership (Edgware / Colindale Area) – Barnfield (LLE), The Orion, Goldbeaters, Colindale, Woodcroft, Menorah Foundation, Rosh Pinah

Partnership 15 – Hard Partnership (The Elliot Foundation) – The Hyde, Parkfield, Lena Garden (Hammersmith), John Locke Academy (Hillingdon), Pinkwell (Hillingdon), 8 other schools in Birmingham and Cambridgeshire

Apart from **The Elliott Foundation Partnership** which is a Multi Academy Trust, all of the schools indicated that the partnerships would initially be loose but they may consider a more structured partnership at a later date either as a whole partnership or for smaller groups of schools within a loose partnership.

In addition the following partnerships were indicated:

- 1. Compton Teaching School Alliance** - The Compton School Teaching Alliance has a partnership with 19 different educational institutions – Northside, St Mary's EN4, St Theresa's, Our Lady of Lourdes, Sacred Heart, Blessed Dominic, St Agnes, St Catherine's, St James' Catholic High, Queen Elizabeth's Girls School, Whitefield, The Totteridge Academy, Finchley Catholic High, Wren Academy, Hendon, Oak Lodge, Northumberland Park (Haringey), Claremont (Brent), Heartlands (Haringey), Wembley High (Brent), Woodside High (Haringey), Institute of Education, Middlesex University
- 2. Northgate Teaching School Alliance** - Northgate School, London Academy, Woodhouse College, Henrietta Barnett School, Queen Elizabeth's Boys, Mill Hill County High School, Broadfields Primary School, Underhill Primary, Grasvenor Infant School, Deansbrook Junior School, Hollickwood Primary School, Greenwich University, Middlesex University (via School Direct link with Broadfields), UCon University (USA)
- 3. Christ's College, Ashmole, Cophall**
- 4. St Mary's High, St. Marylebone Teaching School, Kingsmead**
- 5. St. Marylebone Teaching School, St. Mary's and St. John's**
- 6. Alexandra Park Teaching School, Hollickwood, Friern Barnet**
- 7. Consultation on a Multi Academy Trust with St. Catherine's, St. Theresa's and Sacred Heart Primary Schools**

Next Steps

1. Discussion to take place at the Director's Meeting with Headteachers on **Thursday 15th January**
2. Schools to consider proposed Partnerships and contact me before the end of January if you want to discuss any issues with the proposals
3. Local Authority and schools to produce suggestions for the remit and expectations of the Partnerships and how they are going to work effectively in partnership with Barnet
4. Partnerships to have an initial meeting to explore ways of working together and discuss possible remit. It is suggested to have these initial partnership meetings on the day of the next Network Meetings for Headteachers, on **Thursday 5th February between 11.30am and 12.30pm**

Please contact me if you want to discuss any aspects of this proposal.

Yours sincerely



Appendix 1

A reminder of the rationale for this new approach

- Schools should be **responsible for their own improvement** and so we need a self-improving school system
- **System leaders** in schools should be driving improvement across the school system
- Nearly all schools need to have **regular external challenge** in order to identify key areas for development and to improve continuously.
- The **local authority** is no longer able to offer such challenge to all schools or to pay for it for most schools (from April 2015).
- With the **removal of the scaffolding** provided by the LA – some time ago for secondary schools and now for primaries – schools that work in isolation are likely to be putting their own school improvement at risk. This is especially the case with primary schools, which are generally too small to maintain a sufficiently robust internal challenge function.
- The **way forward** is for schools to join together in school improvement partnerships.

Types of Partnership

- A **hard partnership** with a strong internal structure and clear lines of accountability to an **executive leader** and a **partnership governance board** – e.g., school **federations**, **multi-academy trusts** or academy **chains**.
- A **structured partnership** - a slightly looser internal structure but still very clear **agreements on roles and accountabilities for challenge, support, intervention**. This may involve an **executive board of headteachers**, with roles allocated to different heads according to their strengths, experience etc.
- A **loose partnership** – less structured than either of the above - two or more schools agree to **work together to challenge and support each other**.