How do we describe more strategically the School Improvement Journey?

Sir David Carter
National Schools Commissioner
What underpins the way that the school led system delivers improvement?

• Secure **Sustainable Improvement TAKES TIME** but leaders need to prioritise and sequence the changes they need to make
• Schools and Trusts need to see themselves as **capacity givers** and **capacity takers** over a period of time
• Schools improve sequentially and in stages
• School Improvement is the product of high quality leadership so understanding the stage of the improvement journey is important for getting the right leaders in place
• School Improvement can be judged through the lens of results and OFSTED inspections **but not exclusively**.
• **STRATEGY+CAPACITY + PACE = Improvement**
Working in partnership with Capacity Givers?

Connecting the school to wider system thinking
- Diagnosis of Improvement Need
- Bring evidence based thinking to strategic development
- Challenge the emerging strategic plan
- Offer Advice and Guidance to Leaders and Governors on managing change
- Mentor and Coach School Leadership teams
- Challenge thinking and practice and review implementation
- Open up access to new networks

Bringing the wider system into the school
- Take over the leadership of a school in severe crisis
- Add capacity at team level and review team performance
- Source classroom and middle leader support
- Build sustainability for long term success
- Identify talent and potential for succession planning
- Deliver bespoke training
- Identify better schools for leaders to visit and learn from
The four stages of Improving a School - The Stabilise Phase

**Observable Features from the System**

- Unstable leadership & Ineffective governance has recently failed to hold anyone to account
- Limited evidence of any external support having had an impact
- High staff turnover and high staff absence with recruitment of better staff challenging
- Pupil attendance and PA below national floor
- Significant financial risk or mismanagement
- Poor student outcomes at KS2/KS4 – below floor and/or coasting
- T&L is poor, with limited or no CPD for staff
- Student behaviour has been chaotic or unsafe
The four stages of Improving a School - The Repair Phase

Observable Features from the System

- Stable leadership across the school and trust is securing standards
- The support from a strong TSA and/or MAT is starting to repair and improve the school
- Governance is improving & holding the school leadership to account
- Improvement in outcomes is clear in internal assessments even though outcomes from national tests are taking longer to improve
- Pockets of improved performance in key year groups and subjects
- CPD quality is mixed and focus not bespoke to the needs of the school
- Student behaviour is improving but low level disruption is common and remains a barrier to progress
The four stages of Improving a School – The Improve Phase

Observable Features from the System

- Stable leadership across the school and trust is securing sustainable improvement
- The TSA/MAT support and the work of the leaders in the school is shifting as much to assuring quality as on operational delivery
- Governance is strong and consistently holds leadership to account
- Student outcomes are above floor and there is confidence that this can be sustained by younger children in the school
- T&L is strong in most year groups and subject areas with just a few pockets of ineffective practice that are being addressed appropriately
- CPD is addressing the bespoke needs of more teams and individuals
- Behaviour in the school is more positive with limited low level disruption
The four stages of Improving a School – The Sustain Phase

Observable Features from the System

- Effective strategic leadership looking longer term and beginning to provide the wider school system with capacity to support other schools
- Leadership team are developing new areas of expertise that it contributes to wider system CPD and support
- Governance is strong and sustainable for the future
- Outcomes for all learners are good, the school is consistently above floor and no groups of learners significantly underperform
- Embedded and effective CPD is bespoke to need and encourages effective succession planning
- Behaviour of students is positive and low level disruption is rare
Performance Trajectory

Strongest Performers
Rapid Improvers
Rapid Decliners
Slow Decliners
Steady and Secure
Steady Improvers
Improver Decliners
Weakest System Performers

School Improvement

Department for Education
If you only ask 5 questions.....

1. How well do we know what our schools need to do to improve?
2. What is it like to be a child with SEND in our trust?
3. How big a priority is the performance of disadvantaged students for us?
4. Are we better at monitoring improvement than we are at raising standards?
5. How willing are our leaders to take responsibility for all of the children in the trust and not just those in their schools?
8 Questions Leaders of SI should know the answer to

• **Q1**-Are we delivering on the promise we made to *raise standards* in our school(s)?

• **Q2**-Do parents know and understand what we do and how they can *communicate* with us in an easy and transparent manner?

• **Q3**-Are we testing all of the *evidence* available to us to determine the right course of action?

• **Q4**-What does the current performance of our school(s) tell us about the areas we need to *prioritise*?
8 Questions Leaders of SI should know the answer to

• **Q5**-Are we open to new models of **support** and do we know what we need?
• **Q6**-How will we know that the educational leaders are working on the **right things**?
• **Q7**-What are the **future challenges** that we can anticipate that will test us over the next five years?
• **Q8**-How secure is our governance in terms of governing school improvement?