

DfE RISE in the South-east and Local Authorities
Collaborative Approach to Local School Improvement
October 2025

Introduction

As a result of discussions between the SESLIP Education Directors Network and DfE Regions (South-east) the following agreement and shared positions were made.

DfE RISE and South-east LAs

All LAs and the DfE SE RISE team are committed to working collaboratively together and with local schools, trusts, dioceses, supporting organisations and other responsible bodies and interests.

The following steps were agreed:

- Targeted intervention: all SE LAs are welcome to prepare their own 'rules of engagement' (flowchart and communication guide) in preparation of joint work with the allocated RISE adviser, taking the agreed Hampshire model as a starting point and amending it if needed following the initial conversation with the RISE adviser which takes place at the beginning of each deployment.
- Targeted intervention: Monitoring of progress and communication of this with stakeholders is an important aspects of the improvement journey. DfE Regions Office will propose additions to the Hampshire model based on national guidance. This will include the option to meet to discuss and adapt to local circumstances with SE LAs.
- Universal offer: Our shared ambition is to work together to support children to achieve and thrive and to minimise duplication of opportunities for schools. SE LAs seek early and on-going engagement from and with the DfE RISE team in the process of the development of the universal RISE offer as part of the SE Regional RISE Plan, and in collaborating to communicate opportunities as effectively as possible with leaders of schools and trusts.
- Universal offer: SE LAs are offering to be active partners with mapping their local ecosystem of networks, hubs and peer-to-peer arrangements to both inform the Regional Directory and the agreement of local priorities for school improvement. In this way, to ensure that established local systems and resources are integrated into any new proposals to ensure efficiencies and avoid duplication. Early planning for this is sought from DfE RISE Team.
- DfE SE RISE Team will work closely with sub-regional team colleagues, so that information about schools subject to targeted intervention and progress are included in liaison with LAs.

SESLIP First Principles to Inform Place-based School Improvement

- Recognition of the shared moral purpose across the middle tier of education (including DfE regions, Ofsted, trusts, LAs, dioceses)
- RISE should be sector-led with the goal of capacity building to sustain continual improvement
- Improving schools are a keystone of improving outcomes for all children and inclusive education systems
- Across the South-east our goal is education systems that balance subsidiarity, autonomy, accountability and transparency
- The evolution of local structures, systems and partnerships should enable increased collaboration leading to improved outcomes.

