

Local Authority Statement of Action

St. Neots Community College

Date of Inspection: 11-12 March, 2009

This Statement of Action sets out the Local Authority's approach to supporting schools requiring Special Measures during the period of the designation. St Neots Community College, now subject to Special Measures, was inspected under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a Section 5 inspection under the same Act.

The target date for removal of the designation of Special Measures is the Spring Term 2011.

Options considered by the Local Authority

a) Scope for closure or federation

Having carefully examined the surplus places in neighbouring successful schools and assessed other local issues, the Local Authority has decided that there is no scope for closure. The school-age population is expanding in the St Neots area and, indeed, it may be necessary to secure additional secondary provision in the near future. The Local Authority has decided that, at present, federation is not an appropriate option, although the scope for federation will be kept under review during the coming year.

b) Scope for the school to become a Trust school or an Academy

The Local Authority has considered the scope for the college to become a Trust school or an Academy and has concluded that, at present, the interests of pupils, parents and the local community are best served by the Local Authority supporting a school improvement solution, rather than a structural one. However, this position will be kept under review over the coming year.

c) Local Authority intervention powers

The Local Authority intends to appoint additional governors to the college in order to strengthen governance and ensure that the Governing Body has the capacity to provide effective challenge and support. The Local Authority has appointed a Parent Champion who will attend key Governing Body meetings in that capacity. The Local Authority does not intend to replace the Governing Body with an Interim Executive Board because it is confident

that suitable measures are in hand to strengthen governance (i.e. additional governors, role of the Parent Champion and training for governors),

Although the college is anticipating a significant budget deficit and there are concerns about the financial position of the college, the Local Authority does not intend to withdraw delegation of the budget. Additional challenge and support in relation to the budget and financial management will be provided by LA School Financial Advisers and, if necessary, the LA Service Director: Strategy & Commissioning. Withdrawing delegation of the budget will be kept under review as an option for the Local Authority, should the college's budget position and financial management not improve significantly.

The Local Authority does not need to require the college to enter into arrangements, since the college is already partnered by a National Leader of Education and his National Support School. This partnership is a key element of the recovery plan for the college and the Local Authority will ensure that this partnership is adequately funded to secure rapid improvements to St Neots Community College. National Challenge and LA intervention funding will be the principal means for securing the future of this partnership.

The Local Authority's approach to securing improvement at St Neots Community

College

d) Action the Local Authority has taken so far

St Neots Community College has been subject to annual review in line with all the LA's secondary schools and, as a result, has been designated as 'high level contact' for the past five years. LA interventions have focused on raising achievement, improving teaching and learning, raising attendance and improving behaviour. Throughout this period, the college has been provided with additional monitoring time from the LA inspector and, latterly, the School Improvement Partner and National Challenge Adviser. Additional support has been provided, particularly additional funding to support school improvement and high levels of National Strategies consultancy support.

The school was inspected by Ofsted twice in 2006. The first inspection judged the school to be satisfactory but behaviour was judged inadequate. Personal development, care and the quality of the curriculum were judged to be satisfactory (good in the sixth form). With intensive LA support, the college responded vigorously to the behaviour issue and the follow-up inspection judged progress with improvement of behaviour to be good. This was a very successful outcome, given that the second inspection visit took place only three months later.

Although low standards have triggered LA intervention in the college in recent years, achievement, as measured by Contextual Value Added scores, has not been significantly low until 2008, which coincided with the college's percentage of pupils achieving 5+A*-C grades including English and mathematics at GCSE dropping below the national floor target of 30%. This meant that the college became included in the National Challenge and subject to even higher levels of support and challenge. Poor examination performance in 2008 was particularly marked in mathematics but the college has also suffered from ongoing difficulties

in recruiting and retaining staff of sufficiently high calibre. A high proportion of senior leaders in interim, temporary positions added to the college's problems.

Funding for the college to join the DCSF 'The Extra Mile' project for raising aspirations in deprived communities was secured by the LA and there was a joint visit to the launch of the project by Principal and LA SIP, in July 2008. The college has since engaged well with the project and hosted visits from DCSF Schools Standards Advisers.

More recent actions taken by the Local Authority have included:

- additional interim SIP support, prior to the college entering the National Challenge in November 2008 - actioned by the Head of Standards & Effectiveness 11-19, September 2008;
- high levels of LA consultant support to analyse reasons for the sharp fall in attainment in 2008 and implement improvement agreements with core subject areas;
- brokering of a refreshed approach to partnership work between the college and LA locality services;
- the SIP and the Principal conducted joint lesson observations in order to support validation of the college's judgements;
- the SIP participated in a meeting with the Principal and the college's personnel provider at which a teacher competency action plan was drafted;
- the Head of Standards & Effectiveness: 11-19 commissioning an Attendance Review by the LA SIP and LA Attendance manager in response to high persistent absence and low attendance - November 2008;
- the National Challenge Adviser (NCA) supporting the college to draw up the National Challenge Raising Attainment Plan;
- a Leadership Review by the Head of Standards and Effectiveness 11-19 and another LA inspector, conducted in November 2008;
- provision of additional intervention funding to support school improvement;
- brokering and commissioning of support for the college from a National Leader of Education (NLE) and headteacher of an outstanding local school. This has included support from the Deputy Principal and ASTs from the partner school. In particular, the partner school has provided expertise in the teaching of mathematics, which is a particular weakness at St Neots;
- National Challenge Adviser challenge and support tasks carried out on a fortnightly basis with the school from December 2008 with a particular focus on:
 - RAP milestone monitoring
 - Target setting
 - Attendance at RAP management meeting
 - Scrutiny of continuous assessment of attainment by the LA NCA
 - LA NCA carrying out joint learning walks with the Principal
 - Brokering of the National Challenge support materials
 - NCA Brokering and commissioning of support via in-school steering meetings with college leaders and LA Consultants

e) Additional support the Local Authority will provide or commission to help the college address the areas of weakness identified by Ofsted

The main elements of this support will be:

- Establishment of an LA Implementation Group, chaired by Director of Learning, including key LA officers, the Principal and the Chair of Governors. This Group will

monitor the school's progress and identify any additional actions that the school or the LA need to take;

- Challenge and support from National Challenge Adviser, focused on areas of weakness identified by Ofsted;
- Higher level of National Strategies consultancy support for English, mathematics, science, ICT and behaviour & attendance;
- Consultant Inspector to be recruited to provide external monitoring of lessons, particularly those taught by staff whose teaching has been judged inadequate or borderline satisfactory;
- Substantial level of support from National Leader of Education and his National Support School. Support to include: coaching/mentoring of senior leadership team; guidance in improving management systems; additional leadership capacity re data analysis and tracking student progress; middle leadership development programme; AST (Advanced Skills Teachers) support, particularly in mathematics and science;
- Additional support from the headteacher of a school that has had success in having Special Measures removed;
- Appointment of a Parent Champion to lead on ensuring that parents are kept informed and consulted about planned developments. An initial meeting, to which all parents are invited, has already been arranged. At this meeting, there will be contributions from the Principal, Chair of Governors, senior LA officers and the Parent Champion. The Parent Champion will also attend key Governing Body meetings;
- Appointment of additional LA governors to enhance the level of challenge and support to school leaders;
- Actions to support the school's recruitment strategy are being planned, particularly use of local Training School to run a programme for training unqualified teachers;
- Provision of a high level of targeted intervention funding to complement additional funding that will be received through the National Challenge (£103,000 in 2009-10);
- Further support for improving attendance and reducing persistent absence, including extension of funding for Attendance Project Worker;
- Additional support for financial management from relevant LA officers;
- Review of the need to consider a structural solution to the school's difficulties.

The Local Authority will implement an intervention plan to provide support and challenge for the school and to ensure that there is appropriate monitoring and evaluation of the progress the school is making.

The plan is detailed within the attached Annex.

The key outcomes resulting from this action will be:

- a. Raising of standards and achievement
- b. Improvement in the quality of teaching
- c. Improvement in overall attendance and reduction of persistent absence
- d. Improved accuracy and effectiveness of college self-evaluation

NB See attached plan for details.

f) Quality Assurance measures

An LA Implementation Group, chaired by the Director of Learning, will be set up consisting of:

- the Principal
- the Vice-Principal
- the Chair of the Governing Body
- the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body
- the Head of Standards and Effectiveness
- the LA Consultant Inspector
- the National Challenge Adviser
- the Locality Manager
- the Parent Champion
- the LA Schools Finance Adviser

This group will meet on a monthly basis to monitor and evaluate the progress of the school and the implementation of the Local Authority's plan. The group will determine further actions that may be needed, either by the college or the Local Authority. Reports from this group will be communicated to the Executive Director: Children & Young People's Services and his Management Team, as well as to elected members.

g) Conclusion

The Local Authority believes that the process outlined above, together with the actions detailed in the attached plan, will secure the required progress at St Neots Community College and ensure its removal from Special Measures by the Spring Term, 2011.

Guy Dickens
Head of Standards & Effectiveness: 11-19

St Neots Community College

The Local Authority plan to support the improvement of the school and secure removal from Special Measures.

This plan is an annex to the LA Statement of Action

Inspection date – 11th – 12th March, 2009
Target date for removal from Special Measures – Spring Term 2011

Contextual statement

N.B This plan should read in conjunction with the Local Authority Statement of Action, of which this forms an annex.

Priorities

The following priorities were identified by Ofsted

- Priority 1 – Raise standards and achievement by ensuring realistic but challenging targets are used effectively by all staff to secure rapid improvement
- Priority 2 – Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring teachers consistently:
 - use a range of activities which challenge and motivate and meet the needs of all students
 - provide students with clear information on how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve
 - improve overall attendance and reduce the level of persistent absence, particularly in Years 10 and 11
- Priority 3 – Improve the accuracy and effectiveness of the evaluation of the college's performance by managers at all levels by:
 - ensuring inadequacies are clearly identified and eliminated
 - making effective use of clear success criteria for evaluating the impact of interventions on improving students' standards, achievement and well-being

The LA has focused on 6 priorities (A - F) which cross reference to the school's priorities as set out in the table below:

LA Priorities	Issues for Action from report
A Standards and achievement	Priority 1
B Quality of teaching	Priority 2
C Attendance	Priority 2
D Leadership and management	Priority 3
E Financial management and budget deficit	
F Recruitment and retention of teachers, particularly in mathematics	

Monitoring of progress

To ensure that this plan and the schools' plan are appropriately monitored and evaluated, an Implementation Group will meet monthly and the following LA personnel will attend:

- LA Director of Learning (Chair)
- LA Head of Standards & Effectiveness: 11-19
- LA Locality Manager
- LA Consultant Inspector
- LA Schools Finance Adviser
- National Challenge Adviser
- Parent Champion
- Principal
- Vice-Principal
- Chair of Governing Body
- Vice-Chair of Governing Body

Reports will be presented orally to Executive Director: Children & Young People's Services, his Management team and elected members on a half termly basis, as set out in the Statement of Action.

Local Authority Support

To support the plan, the following LA personnel will support the school (please add time allocations from officers and include abbreviations)

Personnel	Time allocated		Personnel	Time allocated
National Challenge Adviser	20 days		LA Consultants for English, Mathematics, Science, ICT and Behaviour & Attendance	15 days each
Consultant Inspector	10 days		Locality Manager	As necessary
Secondary Strategy Manager	15 days		Education Welfare Officer	As necessary
Schools Finance Support Manager	10 days minimum		Attendance Project Worker	P/t appointment for 2 years
Head of Standards & Effectiveness	10 days minimum			

In addition, the LA has brokered time and support from a National Leader of Education and a Parent Champion. A significant element of the support package will be funded by the National Challenge (£103,000 in 2009-10).

Costings within the plan

<i>Italics</i>	<i>From LA allocation</i>
Red Bold	Additional LA funding
Plain type	School funded (including use of devolved National Challenge funding)

Priority A – Standards and achievement Cross reference to school plan -

Target – Raise standards and achievement

Success Criteria –

KS4 performance above floor target
 Statutory and specialist school targets met
 Contextual Value Added (CVA) to be at least in line with expectation

Performance of specific groups to be at least in line with expectation
 Improvement in percentage of pupils making 3 and 4 levels progress between KS2 and KS4

Tasks	Personnel	Resources	Timescale	Monitoring Process	Evaluation Process
1 National Challenge Adviser (NCA) to provide high level of support and challenge in relation to raising standards and achievement.	NCA	<i>LA National Challenge central funding</i>	<u>Ongoing</u>	Head of Standards & Effectiveness monitoring and performance management of NCA.	LA Implementation Group (monthly) and Local National Challenge board (termly)
2 NCA to agree challenging targets with the college for 2011 and monitor tracking of progress towards 2010 targets.	NCA	<i>As above</i>	<u>October 2009</u>	As above	As above
3 National Leader of Education (NLE) and National Support School (NSS) to work with college leaders on specific strategies to raise achievement and improve tracking of student progress.	NLE and key staff from NSS	National Challenge	<u>Ongoing</u>	NCA to monitor actions completed	As above.
4 Secondary Strategy Manager to co-ordinate high levels of Secondary National Strategy (SNS) consultancy support in English, mathematics, science, ICT and Behaviour & Attendance and ensure consistent and coherent focus on raising achievement.	LA Secondary Strategy Manager. LA SNS consultants for English, mathematics, science, ICT and B & A.	LA SNS Central Funding	Ongoing	Secondary Strategy Manager to monitor use/impact of consultancy.	As above.
5 Secondary Strategy Manager to ensure high level of consultancy support for specific interventions to secure improved progress of specific groups, e.g. - Study Plus - Literacy Plus	Secondary Strategy Manager	LA SNS Central Funding	Ongoing	Reports to NCA and Head of Standards & Effectiveness.	As above.
6 Funding for Locality Team to develop Girls' Engagement and Achievement Project with the college.	Locality Manager and designated college and locality staff.	£2500	June 2009 onwards	Locality Manager to monitor project implementation. Reports to NCA and Head of Standards & Effectiveness	LA implementation Group (monthly) and Local National Challenge Board (termly)
7 Head of Standards & Effectiveness to allocate high levels of targeted funding for strategies and actions to improve student progress.	Head of Standards & Effectiveness	£50000 from SF Grant 1.8	<u>June 2009</u>	Secondary Strategy Manager and NCA to monitor us/impact of funding.	As above.
8 Head of Standards & Effectiveness to allocate high level of funding and support to enable maximum number of students to benefit from One to One Tuition.	Head of Standards & Effectiveness	£24000 from Making Good Progress Grant	May 2009 onwards	NCA to monitor use/impact of funding.	As above

Priority B: Quality of Teaching Cross reference to school plan -

Target – Improve the quality of teaching

Success Criteria –

Elimination of inadequate teaching
Increasing proportion of satisfactory teaching moves to good/outstanding

Tasks	Personnel	Resources	Timescale	Monitoring Process	Evaluation Process
1 NLE/NSS to provide support from Advanced Skills Teachers, particularly in mathematics and science, on a weekly basis.	NLE. NSS Advanced Skills Teachers.	National Challenge	<u>Ongoing</u>	Secondary Strategy Manager and NCA to monitor use/impact of ASTs.	LA Implementation Group (monthly) and Local National Challenge Board (termly)
2 Secondary Strategy Manager to support college leaders in developing and implementing clear and high expectations about The St Neots Lesson, and leading associated CPD for staff in order to secure quality first teaching and challenge/motivate all students.	Secondary Strategy Manager.	<i>LA central resources</i>	<u>June 2009 onwards</u>	Reports to Head of Standards & Effectiveness.	Consultant Inspector to evaluate impact on teaching and learning. LA Implementation Group (monthly) and Local National Challenge Board (termly) As above.
3 SNS consultants for English, mathematics, science and ICT to work with key staff on strategies for improving teaching and learning.	Secondary Strategy Manager and SNS Consultants	<i>LA central resources</i>	Ongoing	Secondary Strategy Manager to monitor use/impact of consultancy support.	As above.
4 SNS consultant for Behaviour & Attendance to work with key staff on improving management of behaviour in lessons and developing the SEAL programme.	Secondary Strategy Manager and SNS Consultants	<i>LA central resources</i>	Ongoing	Secondary Strategy Manager to monitor use/impact of consultancy support.	As above.
5 Secondary Strategy Manager to broker support for the college from ASTs/leading teachers in foundation subjects, particularly in relation to the college's Performing Arts specialism.	Secondary Strategy Manager	£5000	<u>September 2009 onwards</u>	Secondary Strategy Manager to monitor use/impact of AST support.	As above.
6 NLE and Secondary Strategy Manager to secure appropriate support and coaching for teachers whose performance is deemed inadequate or borderline satisfactory.	NLE and Secondary Strategy Manager	National Challenge	June 2009 onwards	NCA to monitor provision.	As above.
7 Secondary Strategy Manager and SNS consultants to provide high level support and training to staff re Assessment for Learning and Assessing Pupils' Progress.	Secondary Strategy Manager and SNS Consultants	<i>LA central resources.</i>	Ongoing	Secondary strategy Manager and NCA to monitor provision of support and training.	As above.

Priority C – Attendance Cross reference to school plan -

Target – Improve overall attendance and reduce the level of persistent absence.

Success Criteria –

Raise attendance to at least the national average by 2010
Reduce the level of persistent absence to 6% by 2010

Tasks	Personnel	Resources	Timescale	Monitoring Process	Evaluation Process
1 SNS Behaviour & Attendance Consultant to provide high level of support to the college re strategies to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence.	SNS B & A Consultant	LA central resources	Ongoing	Secondary Strategy Manager to monitor us/impact of consultancy support.	LA Implementation Group (monthly) and Local National Challenge Board (termly).
2 SNS Behaviour & Attendance Consultant to work with college leaders on conducting half-termly Attendance RAG reviews and ensuring that actions are followed up.	SNS B & A Consultant	LA central resources	Ongoing	As above	As above.
3 Locality Manager to ensure high level and high quality support for the college from Education Welfare Officer.	Locality Manager	Locality resources.	Ongoing	Locality Manager to monitor use/quality/impact of EWO support.	LA Implementation Group (monthly) and Local National Challenge Board (termly).
4 Extension of funding for Attendance Project Worker.	Attendance Project Worker. Locality Manager	National Challenge	September 2009 onwards	Locality Manager to monitor use/quality/impact of APW	LA implementation Group (monthly) and Local National Challenge Board (termly)

Priority D: Leadership and Management Cross reference to school plan -

Target – Improve leadership and management at all levels

Success Criteria –

Ofsted, NCA and other external monitors rate the college's self-evaluation as accurate and effective
Clear success criteria are developed and used for evaluating the impact of interventions on improving students' standards, achievement and well-being.

Tasks	Personnel	Resources	Timescale	Monitoring Process	Evaluation Process
1 NLE/NSS provide support and training for rigorous school self-evaluation.	NLE	National Challenge	June 2009 onwards	NCA to monitor provision and impact of support and training.	LA implementation Group (monthly) and Local National Challenge Board (termly)
2 NLE provides support, guidance and coaching for new leadership team.	NLE	National Challenge	Ongoing	As above	As above
3 NLE/NCA lead training for college leaders on Stronger Management Systems (SMS).	NLE/NCA	National Challenge	June 2009 onwards	As above.	As above

4 NLE/NSS provide training programme for middle/subject leaders on increasing their effectiveness, accountability and impact.	NLE/NSS	National Challenge	June 2009 onwards	<i>As above.</i>	<i>As above.</i>
5 NCA and Consultant Inspector conduct lesson observations, jointly with senior/middle leaders, to ensure that college judgements are accurate, robust and lead to inadequacies being clearly identified and eliminated.	NCA. Consultant Inspector	£5000	<u>June 2009 onwards</u>	Head of Standards & Effectiveness to monitor Notes of Visit	<i>As above</i>
6 NLE to support college's review of its management systems, processes and structures.	NLE	National Challenge	July 2009	NCA to monitor use/impact of NLE time	<i>As above</i>
7 Funding to purchase support/training from headteacher with experience of leading a school out of Special Measures.	NCA to broker this support.	£4000	July 2009 onwards	NCA to monitor provision/impact of support	<i>As above</i>
8 Consultant Inspector to lead training and CPD for governors on improving their monitoring and evaluation role.	Consultant Inspector	LA central resources	July 2009	Head of Standards & Effectiveness and Cambridgeshire Governor Services to monitor training.	<i>As above</i>

Priority E – Financial Management Cross reference to school plan -

Target – Improve financial management and significantly reduce budget deficit

Success Criteria –

- LA Schools Finance Adviser reports improved financial management processes
- LA Audit indicates college is low risk
- Budget deficit significantly reduced

Tasks	Personnel	Resources	Timescale	Monitoring Process	Evaluation Process
1 Financial Process and Reporting Audit to ensure that Senior Management and Governors are receiving accurate and meaningful reports to enable decisions to be taken.	Internal Auditors with Schools Finance Support Manager	LA central resources	<u>Summer Term 2009</u>	Audit copied to NCA and Head of Standards & Effectiveness	LA Implementation Group (monthly)
2 As part of Audit or wider review, ensure transactions are being recorded according to Consistent Financial Reporting guidelines, budget profiles are understood and set correctly, cost centres are used appropriately to monitor specific funding streams (e.g. National Challenge), forecast outturn is produced and benchmarking used to identify areas of possible saving.	Schools Finance Support Manager, School Business Manager	LA central resources	<u>Summer Term 2009</u>	Reports copied to NCA and Head of Standards & Effectiveness	LA Implementation Group (monthly)
3 Following a benchmarking exercise, advise on review of key areas of school expenditure/income	Schools Finance Support Manager	LA central resources	Summer Term 2009	NCA to check outcomes/impact of review	LA Implementation Group (monthly)

with a clear objective of reducing expenditure and increasing income: - Teaching Staff - Support Staff - Premises - Admin - Income generation	with School Senior Leadership Team				
4 Scrutiny of monthly finance reports submitted to the Local Authority.	Schools Finance Support Manager	LA central resources	Monthly	Schools Finance Support Manager	LA Implementation Group (monthly)
5 Schools Finance Support Manager to meet with Business Manager and school senior leadership each month to monitor financial progress with budget.	Schools Finance Support Manager	LA central resources	Monthly to start with, moving to quarterly when appropriate.	Schools Finance Support Manager	LA Implementation Group (monthly)

Priority F – Recruitment and Retention Cross reference to school plan -

Target – Improve recruitment and retention of teachers, particularly in mathematics.

Success Criteria –

College fully staffed with appropriate specialists
Staff climate survey indicates staff satisfaction and confidence in college leadership

Tasks	Personnel	Resources	Timescale	Monitoring Process	Evaluation Process
1 LA to advertise and support secondment opportunities with a view to enhancing the college's capacity, particularly in mathematics	Head of Standards & Effectiveness	LA central resources	May 2009	NCA to monitor progress.	LA Implementation Group (monthly)
2 Head of Standards & Effectiveness to conduct termly climate survey with staff and work with senior leaders to address any issues resulting from it.	Head of Standards & Effectiveness	LA central resources	June 2009	NCA to review outcomes	As above.
3 Head of Professional Development Services to work with NSS/Training School on programme for accrediting unqualified teachers at the college.	Head of Professional Development Services	National Challenge	July 2009 onwards	NCA to monitor progress	LA implementation Group (monthly) and Local National Challenge Board (termly)
4 NLE to work with college leaders/governors on exploring joint staffing appointments.	NLE	National Challenge	May 2009 onwards	NCA to monitor progress	LA Implementation group (monthly) and Local National Challenge Board (termly)