

Birmingham City Council

Education, Children and Young People

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

29 November 2023



Subject: School Improvement – the New Relationship with Schools

Report of: Sue Harrison, Director Children and Families

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report accompanies a presentation which sets out a proposed new relationship with schools that is currently being discussed with school leaders.
- 1.2 The presentation supports consideration by the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposals and provides the opportunity from feedback.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee notes and provides feedback on the presentation (Appendix 1) that sets out details of a new relationship with schools.

3 Any Finance Implications

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with the proposed new relationship set out in the presentation.

4 Any Legal Implications

- 4.1 Local authorities have statutory school improvement functions under Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and additional school improvement expectations as set out in the DfE's Schools Causing Concern guidance.

5 Any Equalities Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct equalities implications associated with the proposed new relationship set out in the presentation.

6 Appendices

6.1 Presentation: School Improvement and the new relationship with schools

School Improvement: The New Relationship with Schools

Sue Harrison – Director, Children and Families
Birmingham City Council



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Context

This presentation sets out

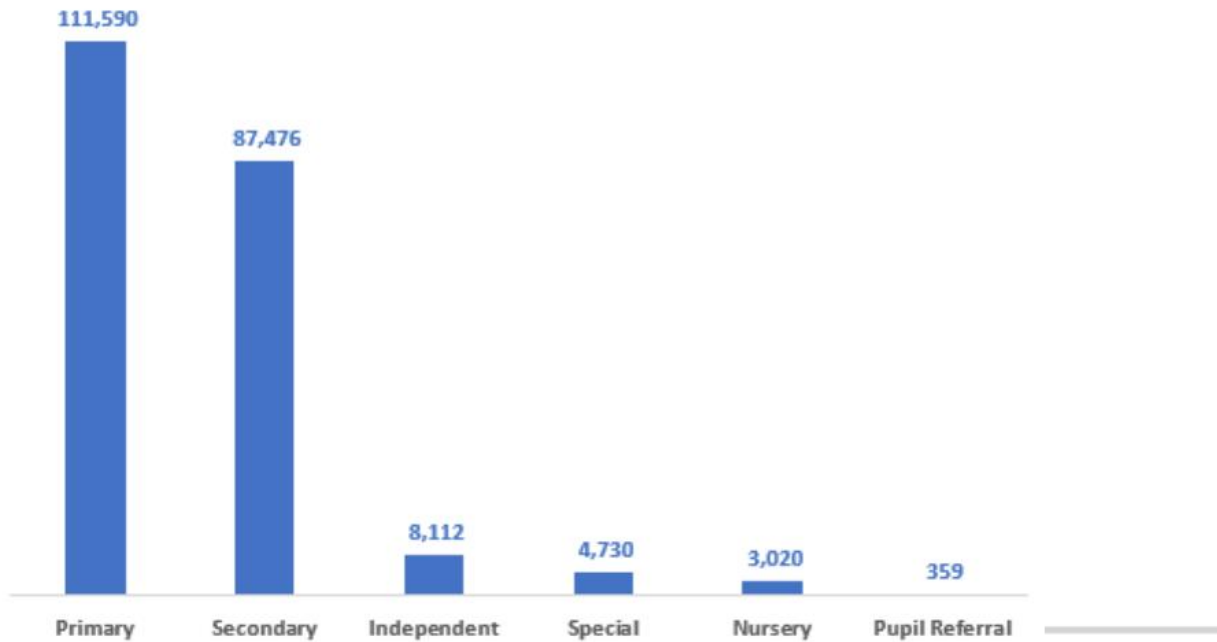
- An overview of schools and pupil characteristics in Birmingham
- The current position regarding our relationship with schools
 - What works well
 - School improvement support in the city
- Our new relationship with schools
 - The universal truths underpinning the vision
- Our shared purpose
- Concurrent work
- Next steps, including consultation with school leaders

Overview – Pupil Characteristics

- Large population with 215,287 state funded pupils in Birmingham
- High levels of diversity and deprivation
- Large SEN cohort

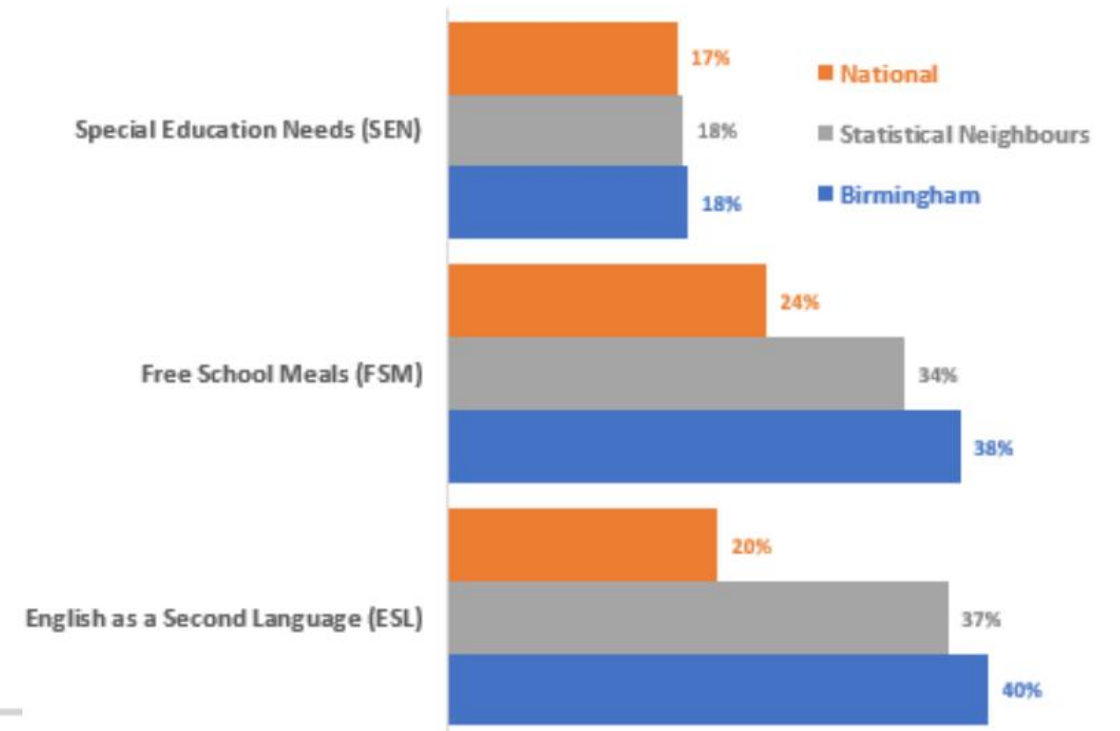
Number of Pupils by School Type

Based on Jan 2023 School Census for State Funded Pupils



Birmingham Pupil Characteristics and Comparisons

Based on Jan 2023 School Census for State Funded Pupils



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Overview – Schools

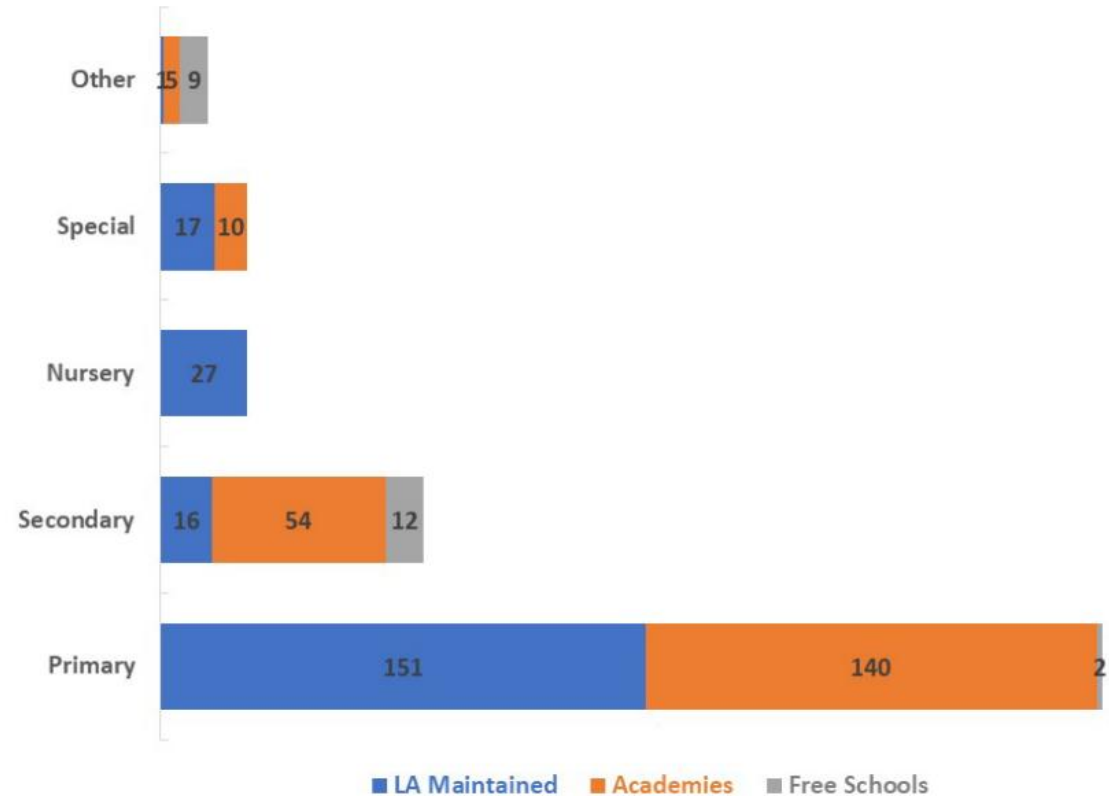
Key Points

There are 444 schools and settings in Birmingham of which 212 (48%) are LA Maintained

There are 293 primary schools of which 52% are LA Maintained

There are 82 secondary schools of which 20% are LA Maintained

Number of Birmingham Schools and Settings by Type and Phase



*Other includes AP, Post 16 and All Through

**Primary includes Primary, Infant and Junior schools

Overview – Quality Provision

Of the 444 schools and settings in Birmingham there are 382 with a **Good** or **Outstanding** Ofsted rating (86% of Birmingham schools)

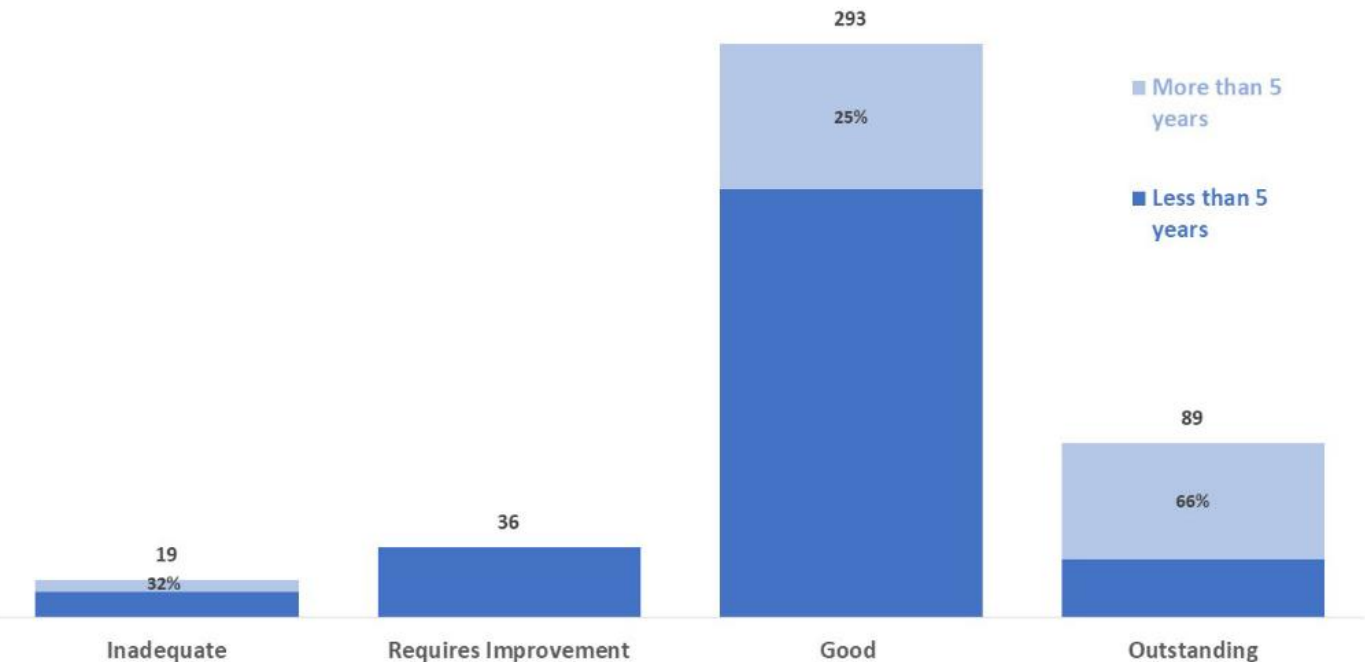
35% (133 schools) of these **Good** and **Outstanding** schools have not been inspected for at least 5 years.

66% (59 schools) of **Outstanding** schools and 25% (74 schools) of **Good** schools have not been inspected for at least 5 years

89% of schools (49 schools) rated as **Inadequate** or **Requiring Improvement** have been inspected in the last 5 years. Only 6 inadequate schools have not been inspected for at least 5 years.

7 schools have not been inspected due to recently converting to Academy Status.

Ofsted Ratings for Birmingham State Funded Schools and Settings
Number of schools shown by time since last inspection and latest Ofsted Rating



Current position

School leaders under most pressure of last 30 years

Years of inadequate SEND provision has had a negative impact on schools

Academies, maintained, VA, foundation, 14-19, free schools

Insufficient special school and resource base places

Reform needed around Alternative Provision

Worryingly high absence rates for primary and secondary schools

Exclusions too high

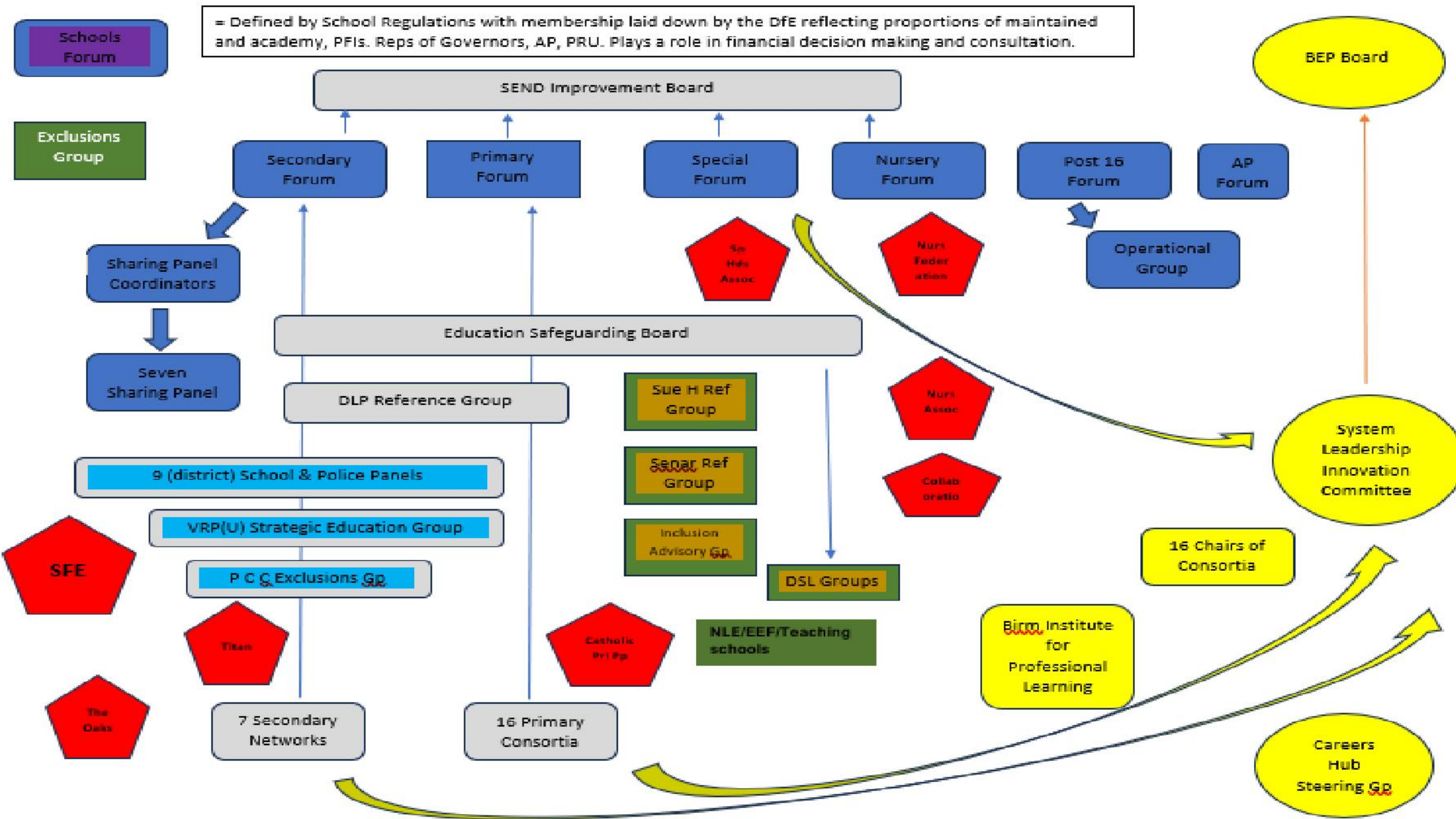
Impact of pandemic – significant challenges at every phase, need for rethinking approaches

Constant churn of senior leadership at the council and lack of systems leadership

Recent improvements in BCT, years of inadequate CSC has made an impact

Financial challenges, including Oracle

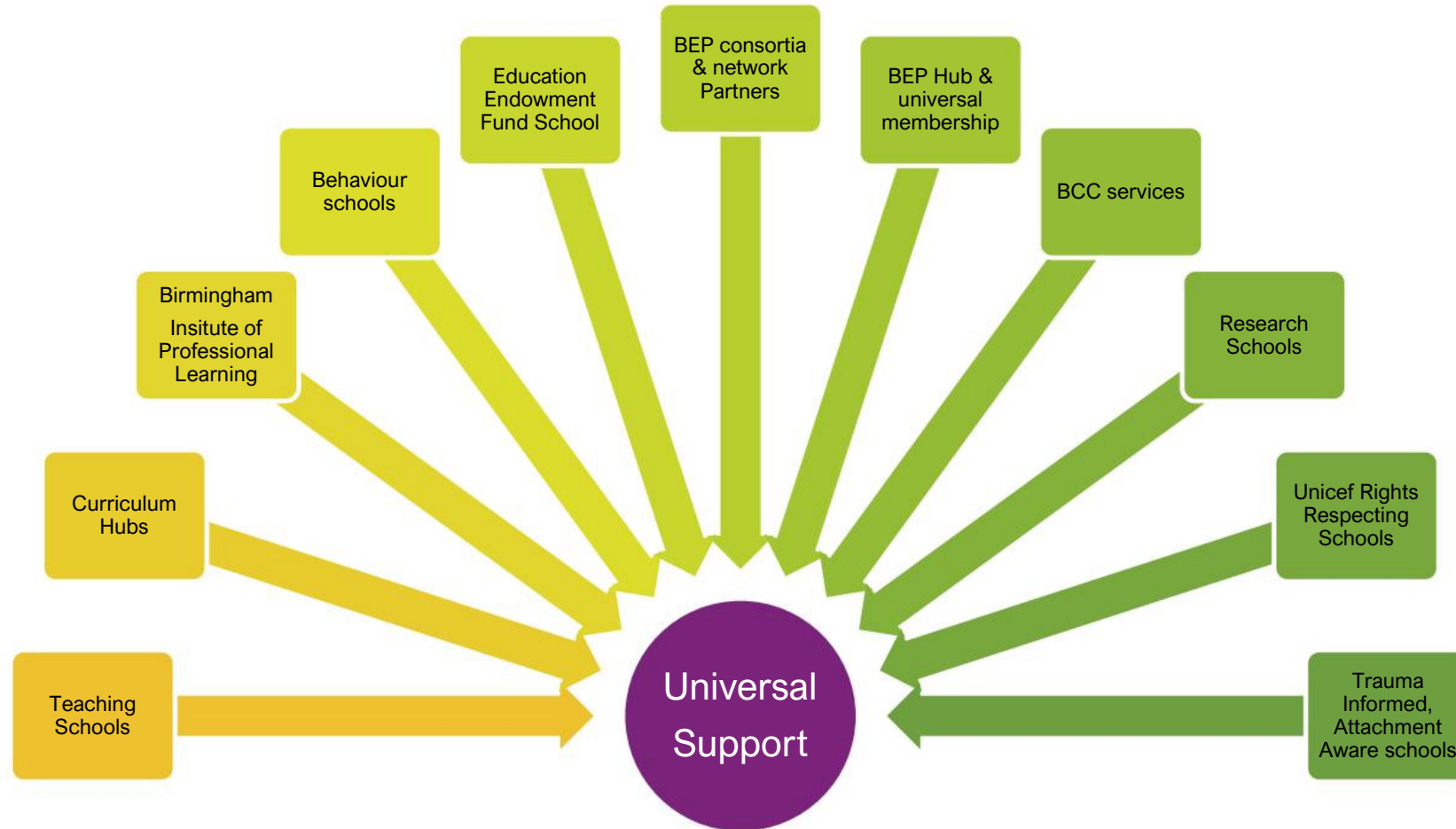
No way of holding schools to account where policy impacts negatively on children or on other schools

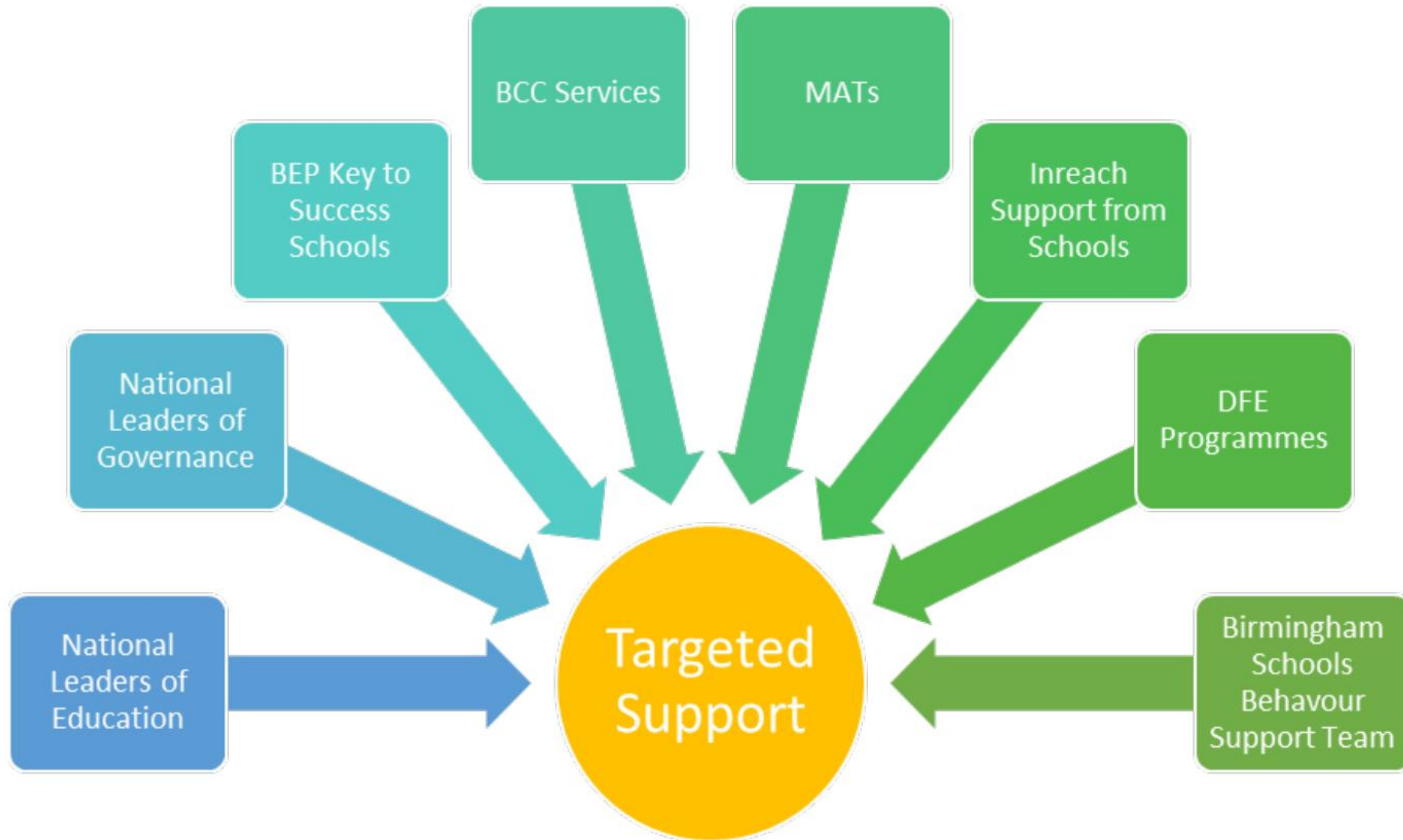


Keeping what's great and building on it

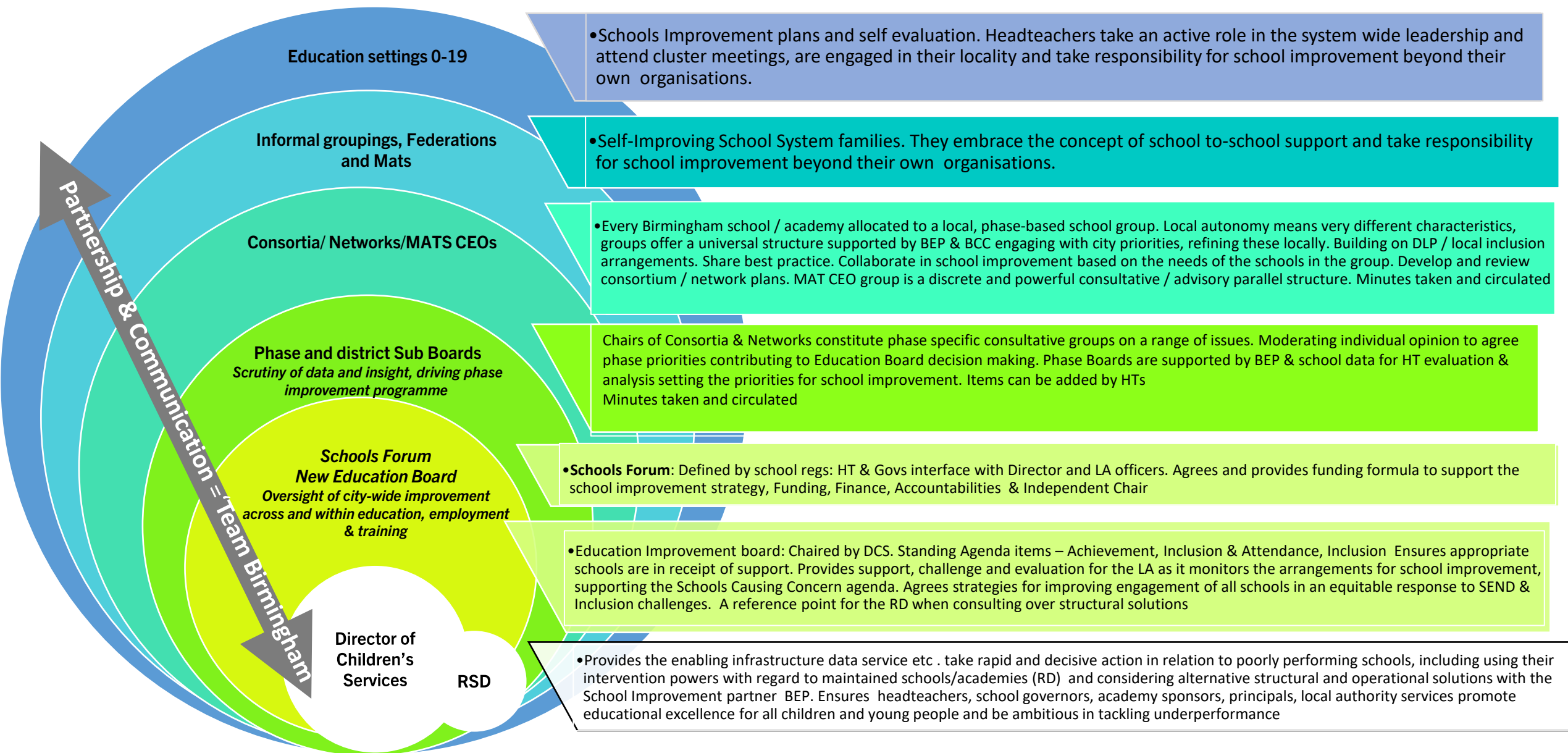
- Positive relationships between schools in localities
 - Positive engagement from schools with Director for Children's Services, who is building a stable leadership team to last.
 - Innovation in Birmingham results in great teaching and learning
 - 251 UNICEF Rights Respecting schools and 175 Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware schools
 - Inclusion and SEND strategies have been adopted by the council and we are beginning to see an improvement in SEND services and attainment
 - Achieving good coordinated partnership work between BCC, BEP and schools around DLP
 - Birmingham Children's Partnership has launched a Children's Plan
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- But we need to recognise that there has been a lack of education strategy across the city – schools have carried on working themselves but now there needs to be a genuine partnership with the local authority
 - Schools see children every day – local authority committed to providing teams around schools to ensure that children thrive

Wide range of existing school improvement support in the city





New ways of working



Our new relationship with schools

- The council must own its statutory duties relating to schools causing concern and school improvement
- Every headteacher needs to have an equal voice in the system
- Collegiate working is the only way through some of the complex challenges we face in Birmingham
- Local authority services will be held to account in a professional way
- Individual schools and governing boards will be held to account in a professional way
- This requires a significant system change if we are going to deal with the ever-growing pressures that are affecting our frontline teachers and school leaders.

Universal truths underpinning the vision

Statutory duty on the council in terms of education performance for all children

Need to understand all our children – we're all corporate parents

Inclusion, SEND, attendance and achievement are everyone's business

Owning difficult spaces and leaning in together to create solutions/way forward

Openness and transparency is a critical element of the school/council/BEP relationship

Effective communication underpins the vision, adopting a strengths-based and relationships-based approach

The proposed model

Every school will
be part of a
locality network

Every locality
network will be
represented at
district boards

All district boards
are represented
on the Education
Board

Clear terms of reference for all groups to be drawn up
Interest from HTs for network and district chairs is welcomed (one academic year term)

Our shared purpose

Inclusion

- Clear key priorities set out in the SEND and Inclusion Strategies
- Inclusive City steering group and Head Teacher Strategic Advisory Group

Attendance

- Attendance Strategy currently being developed
- School Attendance Workshops for schools, headteachers and parents

Achievement

- DLP Phase 2 projects to improve educational outcomes for children and young people who are SEND support or have an EHCP
- BCC working with BEP to identify 'Key to Success' schools

Concurrent work to be completed by September 2024

- We will be revising the schools causing concern strategy and policy
- We will be launching the data dashboard bringing together all our key indicators around school performance, risks and achievements
- We are continuing to work with the Regional Schools Director and MAT CEOs
- We will shortly go out to advert for Director Schools and Employability

Next steps

- Headteachers will be able to contribute at workshops where we'll unpick how the new model will work
 - What sorts of roles will help – what do you want from a good school improvement officer?
 - How should that support be offered?
 - How are you going to help us to shape it going forwards?
- Pilot network and district boards with clear terms of reference – spring and summer term
- Establish temporary transformation board to oversee the pilots and sharing the learning
- We'll reflect on the learning from the discussions and pilots
- We'll agree with schools the network arrangements during the summer term
- New relationship launched – September 2024

Thank you to everyone who has worked with us to get us to this point

- Alison Taylor, Headteacher Cherry Orchard Primary School
 - Bridget Jay, Headteacher Welsh House Farm Community School
 - Craig Clarke-Castello, Headteacher Lea Forest Academy
 - David Camps, Headteacher Nechells Academy
 - Guy Rimmer, Principal Ark St Albans Academy
 - Julie Eaton, Headteacher Selly Oak Trust School
 - Mike Dunn, Headteacher Swanshurst
 - Tim Boyes, Chief Executive BEP
 - Juliet Silverton, School Improvement Director BEP
 - Paul Mitchell, Birmingham City Council
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- Thank you to the other local authorities who have shared their journeys:
Coventry, Ealing, Haringey, Hertfordshire, Leeds, Sheffield and Warwickshire



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