Department for Education

DfE schools policy May 2025.

Liz David – Team Leader Wiltshire and Swindon

Regions Group

What am I going to talk about?

- Who I am and what's my role in DfE.
- The government's opportunity mission
- What does this mean for schools and trusts
- Regional improvement, standards and excellence (RISE teams)
- What does this mean for Wiltshire?
- Changes to school and trust funding
- Your questions.

The opportunity mission and Regions Group

The Opportunity Mission is focused on breaking down barriers to opportunity. We will deliver this through our mission pillars.

- **Best start in life -** high-quality early education; early-child health; home-learning environment; family support
- **Every child achieving and thriving -** high and rising school standards with a broad curriculum; excellent teachers; an inclusive approach to SEND; wider support and enrichment
- **Skills for opportunity and growth -** a strong skills offer; pathways into work including youth guarantee, work experience, careers advice
- **Family security -** removing underlying barriers to opportunity including tackling child poverty, improving housing and keeping children safe

The department will support a mission-led government, working closely with other departments and partners. As well as leading on opportunity, DfE has a key role in contributing to all the missions – growth, health, safer streets and energy.

Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill

- The Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill was announced in December
- It aims to deliver the Government’s manifesto commitments where legislation is needed including strengthening multi-agency child protection and safeguarding
- Aims to break the link between young people’s background and their future success by implementing a package of support to drive high standards in education and care systems. It focuses on protecting children at risk of abuse, supporting children in the care system, and ensuring high educational standards

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill

Keeping Families Together and Children Safe:
- Mandating local authorities to offer family group decision-making meetings
- Improving information sharing across agencies
- Strengthening the role of education in safeguarding
- Implementing multi-agency child protection teams

Driving High and Rising Standards for Every Child:
- Delivering commitments on school admissions, qualified teacher status, and the national curriculum
- Repeal of Duty to Make Academy Order; Extension of Statutory Pay and Conditions to academies
- Introducing new duties for schools and local authorities to co-operate on admissions and place planning; extending local authorities' powers to direct academies to admit children
- Changing the legal framework for opening new state-funded schools

Removing Barriers to Opportunity in Schools:
- Providing access to free breakfast clubs for every primary school child.
- Limiting the number of branded uniform items that schools can require

Creating a Safer and Higher Quality Education System for Every Child:
- Introducing Children Not in School Registers

Other measures relate to:
- Making a Child-Centred Government
- Cracking Down on Excessive Profit Making
- Supporting Children in the Care System to Thrive

RISE Teams: Objectives

Ultimately, the goal of RISE teams will be **to raise standards for all schools**, as part of the government's Opportunity Mission. Through targeted intervention and a universal service, RISE teams will work to ensure that capacity and expertise from across the school system is used to deliver improvement. Their specific objectives will be to ensure that:

Schools facing particular challenges improve rapidly through **bespoke targeted intervention for 12-24 months**. Where necessary, RISE teams will secure support high-quality organisations with a strong track record of improvement, such as an LA partnership or a MAT. For now, our focus is **stuck schools.** From September 26, we will provide targeted interventions to schools judged to require significant improvement.

Every school, with its Responsible Body, can **navigate a path to improvement** drawing on local expertise. Most schools will do this by themselves, aided by a more granular evaluation of school performance in the Report Card. However, RISE teams will make it easier for schools to do this by delivering a **universal service to schools,** signposting to hubs and best practice, facilitating connections between schools and trusts, and promoting peer review and networking.

Every part of the country has **a coherent set of local area priorities**, working across local authorities and dioceses so that local partners work collaboratively to solve issues affecting children in their communities.

SoS speech to ASCL conference – RISE national priorities

"Our new RISE teams…taking what's best in schools and trusts and spreading it, so that all children can benefit"

RISE national priorities:

- Attainment, with a focus on English and Maths
- Inclusive mainstream
- Reception year quality
- Attendance

Inclusion in Practice call for evidence

We are urging schools and stakeholders leading the way to share their approaches…they will help shape a national resource that ensures every child, in every school, has the best opportunity to succeed" (Tom Rees)

Reminder: Universal Service – a catalyst for change

The RISE universal support service is for all schools. It will transform how schools, with their responsible bodies, can access support and how the sector engages collectively in providing support.

RISE teams will map existing national and local best practice and make sure **signposting** to support is much clearer than it is now

RISE teams will **foster an open culture** of sharing best practice, including through regional roadshows or networks, and robust peer review

RISE teams will **convene and empower local partners** to deliver change against local priorities including commissioning capacity where needed

National priorities

- **Attainment with a focus on English and maths**
- **Reception Year quality**
- **Mainstream inclusion**
- **Attendance**

Regional and local priorities

Regional Directors and RISE Teams working with LAs, dioceses and mayoral combined authorities to identify thematic improvement priorities

…but what does this all actually look like?

- Opportunities and events for colleagues across the sector to come together to share and learn from best practice linked to the national priorities:
  - 3 national attendance conferences aimed at sector leaders (trust CEOs and LA SI leads) this summer
  - Developing delivery work on the other three national priorities over the summer term and into the next academic year.
  - Discovery mornings across the SW aimed at bring school leaders together to share best practice – initial focus on attendance but this will broaden to other national priorities in time
  - South West networks for school and trust leaders

- Gaining a better understanding of opportunities for local partnership working through ongoing engagement with our sector partners, and ensuring our future work reflects this

- Looking at how we can improve signposting of the support available to schools

Discovery Mornings

Discovery Mornings are targeted school visits designed to showcase excellent practice around key national and regional priorities. Each session is a short, sharp opportunity for school leaders to see outstanding work in action, followed by a focused call-to-action discussion.

Discovery Mornings will be delivered as a series of 3-4 events on a national and/or regional RISE priority. Events will take place approximately once per month with the aim to have a good geographical spread across the South West so that school leaders can attend Discovery Mornings local to them.

Your secondary school leaders will have received invitations to the first series of discovery mornings which are focussed on secondary attendance, following on from the March attendance conference in Exeter.

School leaders can sign up for their local Discovery Morning via the Eventbrite pages here.

Series 1 – attendance Discovery Mornings:
Blaise High School, Bristol – Thursday 26th June, 8am – 11am
Marine Academy Plymouth – Friday 4th July 8am – 11am
Hans Price Academy, North Somerset – Thursday 25th September 8am – 11am

Hosting Discovery Mornings

We're keen to expand Discovery Mornings further and are currently looking for schools to host future sessions. Hosting is straightforward: the Department for Education (DfE) team will organise sign-ups, marketing, and logistics. If you believe your schools have excellent practice to showcase under any of the national RISE priorities, please encourage them to contact the RISE team.

South West schools networks 2024-25

Collaboration on behalf of children in the South West

For all schools

Disadvantage Network

THE WHITE HORSE FEDERATION

dnicholls@twhf.org.uk

Primary SI Network

Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust
'Beyond expectations for all of God's children'

jhicks@dsat.org.uk

EDI Network

david.watson@sast.org.uk

Secondary SI Network

Ted Wragg Trust

jon.lunn@tedwraggtrust.co.uk

Attendance Network

Cabot Learning Federation

Kate.richardson@clf.uk

Inclusion Network

Futura Learning Partnership

tdexter@futuralearning.co.uk

For trust leaders

Trust Leaders Network

The Olympus Academy Trust

sarah.gardner@olympustrust.co.uk

CEO and Chair Learning Sets

chloe.olley@education.gov.uk

Our SW RISE advisers

Siobhan Meredith – Executive Director of Education, The Ted Wragg Trust

Joe Ambrose – Associate Director of Growth and Development, Greenshaw Learning Trust

Mike Ion – former Education Director, Avanti Schools Trust

Jo Stoaling – Headteacher, Three Ways Special School

Chris Gould – Director of Education and Deputy CEO, Truro and Penwith Academy Trust

Jonathan Bishop – CEO Cornerstone Academy Trust

Alison Fletcher – Director of CLF Institute, CLF

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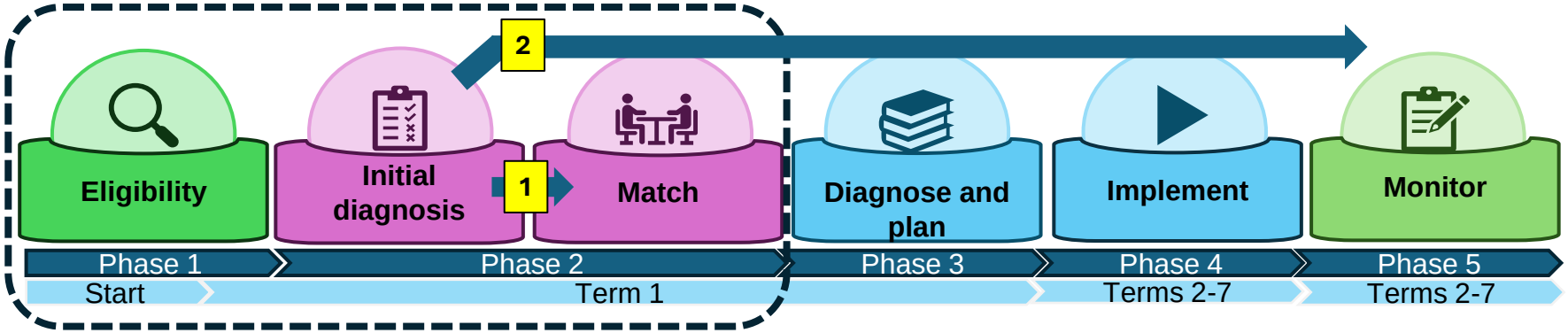
Targeted RISE intervention: step by step (1)

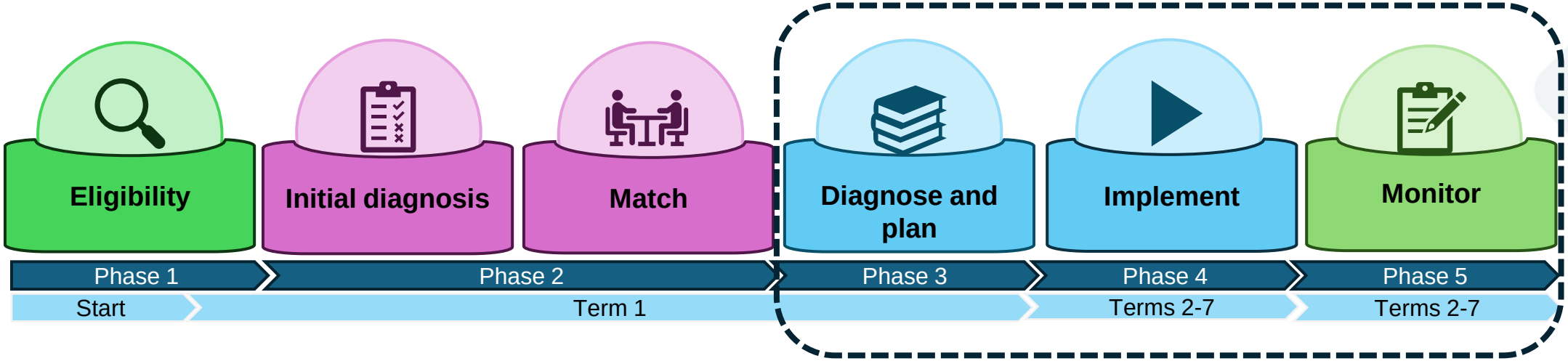


We are strengthening our tools for faster and more effective school improvement with the introduction of our new RISE teams.

- **Eligibility**:
  - Schools graded Requires Improvement – or equivalent* – at their most recent Ofsted inspection and also graded below Good at its previous inspection, and where no structural change has taken place since the most recent Ofsted inspection;
  - Inadequate schools that are currently in a category of concern and where no structural change has taken place since the most recent Ofsted inspection.
- **Initial diagnosis** carried out by a RISE adviser.
  - **Option 1 (for schools earlier on in improvement trajectory):** additional capacity and support is needed, including from an organisation that brings experience and capacity to help. We envisage this will be most schools.
  - **Option 2 (for schools further on in improvement trajectory):** the responsible body (RB) has strong capacity and the school is improving. The full RISE service would not be needed but the school would be monitored/given opportunities for regular check ins. We envisage this will be a smaller number of schools.
- **Match (option 1 schools)**: RISE advisers will work collaboratively with schools and RBs to commission support from a high-quality supporting organisation. They will meet the school's trust or local authority, as well as the school's leadership, and diocese where applicable, to discuss improvement priorities. The supporting organisation will work with the school's RB to deliver improvements.

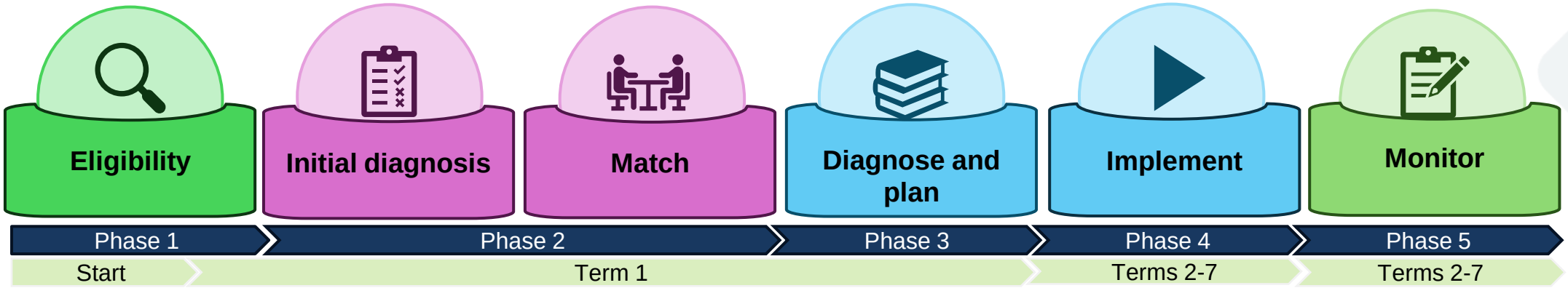
* 'or equivalent' = less than 'good' judgements in Quality of Education or Leadership and Management for schools inspected after September 2024

Targeted RISE: step by step (2)



- **Diagnose and plan**:
  - The adviser, school, diocese (where applicable) RB and supporting organisation will co-construct an improvement plan (or update/refresh any current plans).
  - RISE teams will be able to draw on funding to support this activity where necessary. Funding could potentially cover, for example: including training, resources, additional hub support, leadership support and additional staffing to cover specific and time limited activities – but there is no guarantee of funding.
- **Implement & monitor:**
  - Led by the RB and working with the supporting organisation, to happen over an agreed period (12-24 months). The RISE adviser is there to support and monitor progress of the implementation of the plan, agreeing how best to do this with the RB.
  - The RB – the trust for an academy, and the governing body and LA for a maintained school – will continue to be accountable for their schools, including driving school improvement.

Targeted intervention: intervening in stuck schools to improve standards…



RISE schools become **eligible**

RISE adviser and RISE team assess **capacity to improve**

1

Match to a high-quality organisation and be considered for funded intervention

Co-construct improvement plan with responsible body

School delivers the plan

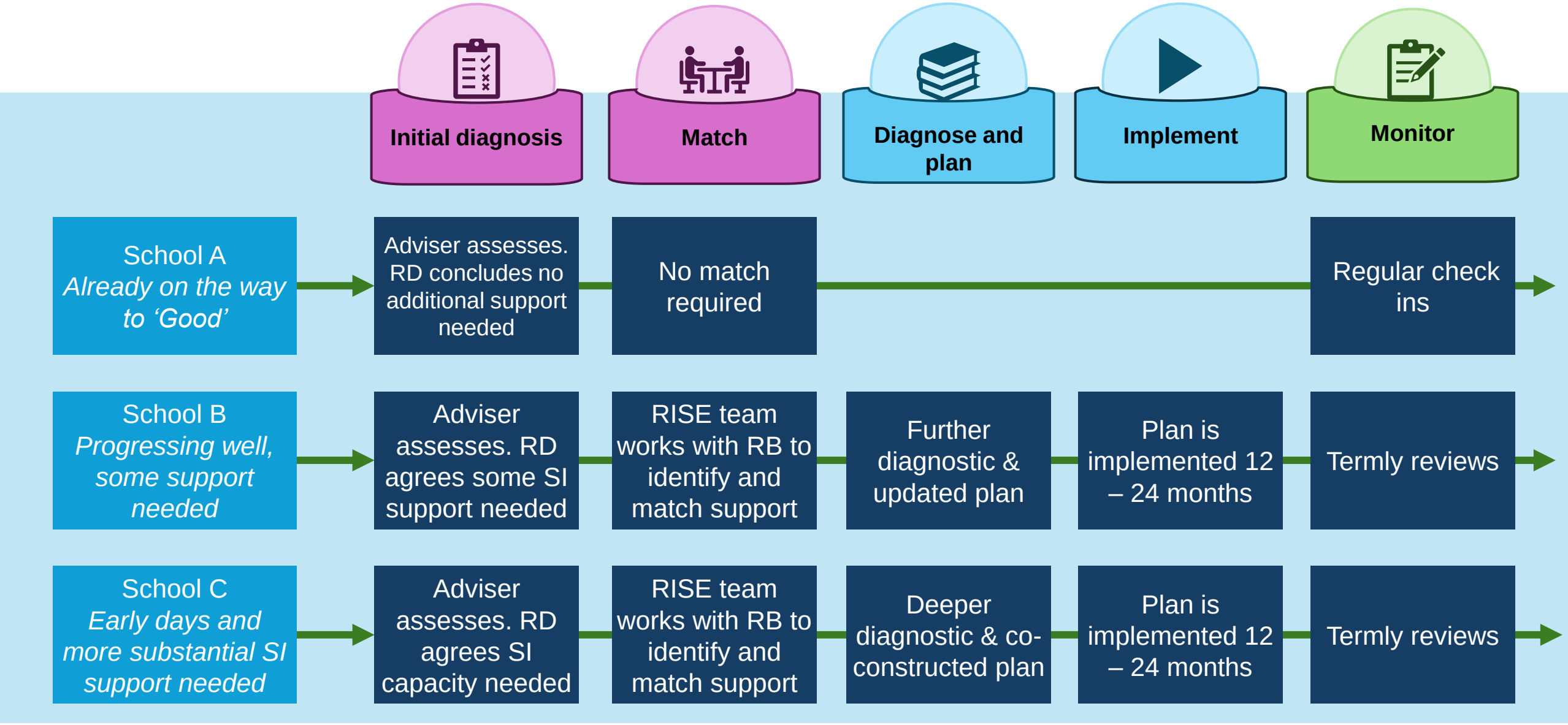
High-quality organisation provides support, including access to wider resources

RISE Adviser monitors delivery of the plan

2

Review progress

Example RISE journeys



Wiltshire Performance Data 2024: % meeting expected RWM

All Pupils

Local Authority	2019 All pupils	2022 All pupils	2023 All pupils	2024 All pupils
Bath and North East Somerset	67%	60%	58%	60%
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	67%	61%	63%	63%
Bristol, City of	65%	58%	56%	56%
Cornwall	61%	55%	58%	60%
Devon	64%	56%	55%	57%
Dorset	61%	55%	54%	55%
Gloucestershire	65%	57%	58%	57%
Isles Of Scilly	47%		37%	57%
North Somerset	65%	59%	60%	60%
Plymouth	64%	59%	60%	63%
Somerset	61%	54%	53%	56%
South Gloucestershire	67%	60%	60%	62%
Swindon	62%	58%	58%	60%
Torbay	66%	58%	59%	60%
Wiltshire	64%	57%	56%	57%

Disadvantaged Pupils

Local Authority	2019 disadvantaged pupils	2022 disadvantaged pupils	2023 disadvantaged pupils	2024 disadvantaged pupils
Bath and North East Somerset	43%	34%	30%	33%
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	50%	39%	45%	44%
Bristol, City of	49%	39%	38%	38%
Cornwall	45%	38%	42%	42%
Devon	45%	35%	35%	36%
Dorset	44%	36%	35%	37%
Gloucestershire	47%	37%	37%	36%
Isles Of Scilly	100%			0%
North Somerset	45%	37%	36%	33%
Plymouth	51%	42%	45%	48%
Somerset	44%	36%	35%	36%
South Gloucestershire	48%	36%	35%	37%
Swindon	46%	42%	40%	44%
Torbay	54%	44%	46%	46%
Wiltshire	42%	34%	34%	32%

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Wiltshire Performance Data 2024 (Provisional): Attainment 8

All Pupils

Local Authority	Attainment 8 2019	Attainment 8 2022	Attainment 8 2023	Attainment 8 2024	% of pupils achieving grades 4 or above in English and Mathematics GCSEs 2019	% of pupils achieving grades 4 or above in English and Mathematics GCSEs 2022	% of pupils achieving grades 4 or above in English and Mathematics GCSEs 2023	% of pupils achieving grades 4 or above in English and Mathematics GCSEs 2024
Bath and North East Somerset	48.9	52.2	49.7	49.2	69.9	75.1	72.1	71.1
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	50.0	52.7	50.1	50.1	70.5	76.4	72.9	73.7
Bristol, City of	44.7	48.2	45.4	45.2	59.7	66.7	63.4	63.4
Cornwall	45.4	46.9	44.2	43.7	63.0	65.2	61.4	61.4
Devon	46.3	48.2	45.7	45.3	64.9	70.0	65.7	65.2
Dorset	46.4	47.9	44.1	44.3	66.7	68.5	63.4	63.3
Gloucestershire	49.6	52.6	50.0	50.2	68.5	73.8	70.8	70.9
Isles of Scilly	52.4	52.5	53.2	52.8	78.6	86.7	78.1	88.2
North Somerset	46.1	49.0	46.5	46.1	66.6	69.4	66.9	66.7
Plymouth	43.7	47.5	44.9	46.2	56.7	66.5	60.9	65.6
Somerset	44.9	45.6	43.3	42.7	62.2	65.2	60.5	61.2
South Gloucestershire	44.8	47.7	45.5	43.4	62.4	68.5	64.3	63.8
Swindon	45.3	46.6	44.2	44.0	62.9	65.5	63.5	62.5
Torbay	46.2	48.7	47.4	45.8	63.4	66.3	67.4	64.4
Wiltshire	48.7	49.3	46.9	46.1	68.3	69.8	66.9	65.8

Disadvantaged Pupils

Local Authority	2019 Disadvantaged	2022 Disadvantaged	2023 Disadvantaged	2024 Disadvantaged
Bath and North East Somerset	33.7	37.1	35.1	34.3
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	36.1	39.0	36.5	36.2
Bristol, City of	33.5	35.1	32.8	31.8
Cornwall	34.5	35.7	33.2	32.8
Devon	34.0	36.1	32.9	32.0
Dorset	35.8	35.7	33.1	33.3
Gloucestershire	33.6	36.3	34.6	34.8
Isles of Scilly	38.0	19.0	46.9	53.0
North Somerset	35.5	36.1	31.8	32.3
Plymouth	31.4	38.2	32.6	34.2
Somerset	33.1	33.3	30.7	30.1
South Gloucestershire	32.3	34.4	32.8	30.1
Swindon	36.1	35.7	33.8	32.8
Torbay	33.0	30.2	32.3	30.5
Wiltshire	34.7	35.2	31.4	31.1

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Wiltshire Performance Data 2024 (Provisional): Progress 8

All Pupils

Local Authority	Progress 8 2019 All pupils	Progress 8 2022 All pupils	Progress 8 2023 All pupils	Progress 8 2024 All pupils
Bath and North East Somerset	-0.04	0.14	0.26	0.16
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	0.22	0.20	0.18	0.18
Bristol, City of	-0.05	-0.05	-0.03	-0.01
Cornwall	-0.05	-0.15	-0.12	-0.12
Devon	-0.13	-0.13	-0.09	-0.08
Dorset	0.02	-0.09	-0.10	-0.10
Gloucestershire	0.01	0.10	0.18	0.19
Isles of Scilly	0.31	0.49	0.73	1.07
North Somerset	-0.20	-0.02	-0.02	-0.05
Plymouth	-0.28	-0.20	-0.16	-0.06
Somerset	-0.15	-0.26	-0.21	-0.18
South Gloucestershire	-0.17	-0.09	0.02	-0.17
Swindon	-0.09	-0.10	-0.07	-0.05
Torbay	-0.22	-0.24	-0.14	-0.33
Wiltshire	0.04	-0.05	-0.01	-0.01

Disadvantaged Pupils

Local Authority	2019 Disadvantaged	2022 Disadvantaged	2023 Disadvantaged	2024 Disadvantaged
Bath and North East Somerset	-0.79	-0.58	-0.35	-0.56
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	-0.37	-0.35	-0.46	-0.43
Bristol, City of	-0.48	-0.62	-0.61	-0.59
Cornwall	-0.50	-0.68	-0.63	-0.62
Devon	-0.68	-0.74	-0.74	-0.75
Dorset	-0.49	-0.78	-0.63	-0.70
Gloucestershire	-0.71	-0.60	-0.49	-0.47
Isles of Scilly	0.19	-0.88	0.66	0.04
North Somerset	-0.64	-0.67	-0.72	-0.69
Plymouth	-0.82	-0.60	-0.66	-0.64
Somerset	-0.71	-0.85	-0.88	-0.78
South Gloucestershire	-0.79	-0.73	-0.63	-0.82
Swindon	-0.56	-0.63	-0.55	-0.61
Torbay	-0.70	-1.16	-0.84	-1.03
Wiltshire	-0.49	-0.65	-0.76	-0.66

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Wiltshire Performance Data 2025 Attendance

				Authorised absence rate	Overall absence rate	Persistent absence rate	Unauthorised absence rate
2024/25 Spring term	South West	Wiltshire	Primary	4.0%	4.8%	14.0%	0.9%
			Secondary	6.2%	9.2%	23.6%	3.0%
			Special	9.9%	11.7%	31.9%	1.8%
	England		Primary	4.0%	5.3%	16.3%	1.3%
			Secondary	5.4%	8.7%	24.5%	3.3%
			Special	9.8%	13.1%	36.1%	3.3%

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Wiltshire Performance Data Suspensions and Exclusions

		England	South West
			Wiltshire
Total	Suspension (rate)	3.50	3.33
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.04	0.01
State-funded primary	Suspension (rate)	0.66	0.93
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.01	0.01
State-funded secondary	Suspension (rate)	7.06	6.17
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.07	0.02
Special	Suspension (rate)	3.73	3.87
	Permanent exclusions (rate)	0.03	0.00

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SW RISE regional priorities Attainment and Reception year quality

Attainment:

- KS4 Maths outcomes (which are below KS4 English outcomes in all LAs)
- KS4 outcomes for pupils experiencing disadvantage
- KS2 outcomes for all pupils, in writing and particularly in maths
- KS2 outcomes for pupils experiencing disadvantage

Reception year quality:

- Numeracy and literacy
- Outcomes for pupils experiencing disadvantage (phonics outcomes gap)
- GLD gender gaps for boys

Are these the right areas of focus?

Are there other particular issues or challenges that we should be focussed on?

Mainstream inclusion and Attendance

Mainstream inclusion:

- Exclusions and suspensions of children with SEND
- Outcomes for pupils experiencing disadvantage
- Belonging and wellbeing in schools

Attendance:

- Authorised absence rates
- Persistent Absence rates, particularly for FSM pupils
- Secondary and Special phases

Are these the right areas of focus?

Are there other particular issues or challenges that we should be focussed on?