

Chair of Governors Update

9 February 2023

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to share this update with you. We include the [video](#), [slides](#) and headlines from last week's virtual forum, together with further relevant announcements and educational reports. We also signpost you to our virtual training opportunities, all of which we trust will support your crucial work in governing our schools.

Sincerely,

Governance Services

The content:

Our updates provide summary headlines from our virtual forum, reference to other announcements and reports, and signposts to governor training. These are presented under 5 key themes:

- 1. Promoting Equalities: with focus on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion**
- 2. Enabling achievement**
- 3. Assuring provision for Pupils with SEND**
- 4. Sustainable school systems**
- 5. Safeguarding, wellbeing and pastoral provision**

Future Dates of Hackney Governors Virtual Forum (5 to 6:00pm):

- Thursday 16th March 2023
- Thursday 18th May 2023
- Thursday 29th June 2023

We remind you of our previous [updates and tools](#), our [Governors Training Programme for 2022/23](#) and our [Governance Services offer](#), all designed to assist the crucial work you do. We encourage you to share this update with board members and your wider networks, who can [subscribe here](#) to be included in our future communications.

Education Director's Update

Key Notes from Governors Forum

Paul Senior - Director of Education & Inclusion shared major issues currently facing the education system nationally and locally. These include :

- The Council will continue its work of looking at school provision overall. There is 21% percent overcapacity in Hackney schools, whereas the DfE recommends a level of 5%.
- The Council will talk to Headteachers and Chairs of Governors about closures and mergers. The proposals will be discussed in cabinet in May, after which the formal process will begin.
- A joint inspection by Ofsted and the Quality Care Commission is shortly to take place. The inspectors will be visiting Hackney schools.
- The Scrutiny Committee's recent meeting focussed on exclusions. Numbers of exclusions have fallen, but the committee looked at the numbers of Black, Asian and Caribbean children being excluded and also noted the rise in the number of females being excluded. The Re-engagement Unit has increased its capacity and is now able to work with all schools.

- The Schools Bill has been withdrawn but some elements e.g. attendance may still be pursued. The government drive towards academisation has for the time being stopped. Hackney will continue to work towards collaborative working between schools.
- A summit is being organised in the near future to look at the vision moving towards 2030, with SEND and inclusion being particular focuses.

1. Promoting Equalities: with focus on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Relevant Announcements and Reports

- [Does our school workforce reflect our community in Hackney?](#)
- The HR team has written [inclusive staff development and career progression](#) and [inclusive recruitment and selection](#) for schools.
- Race Equality Week this year is 6-10 February. At Hackney we are on a journey to become an actively anti-racist council so we felt that it's imperative to mark the week in the calendar. This year's theme is It'sEveryone'sBusiness, and we're asking all Childrens and Education and Adults to:
 - Understand
 - Take time to educate yourself about active anti-racism, especially if you do not have lived experience of racial trauma.
 - Listen to [Children and Education Podcasts recorded with BACP](#)
 - Watch the [Video from Cllr Bramble and Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu at the Anti-Racist Praxis Conference](#)
 - Explore our [Anti-Racism Learning Resources](#)

Guidance on Handling Strike Action

- Following the announcement of strike action by teacher members of the National Education Union, the Department for Education (DfE) has updated [its guidance on handling strike action](#), which explains the law on trade disputes and picketing: The guidance says that headteachers are expected to take all reasonable steps to keep the school open for as many pupils as possible. Headteachers should consult with their whole governing board before deciding whether to close, however given the urgent nature of the issue, consultation with the chair is acceptable.

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- **Thursday 9 February 2023 17:00 - 19:00**
[Staff welfare, morale and workload: how do schools create excellent workplaces with a diverse workforce?](#)

2. Enabling achievement

Relevant Announcements and Reports

The annual OFSTED report highlighted a number of national issues, not all of which will be especially relevant to Hackney. However, OFSTED may ask about them so it would be good if governors are aware of them.

- 64% of schools have not had a graded report in 5 years. 58 Hackney schools could potentially be inspected this year.
- Schools which were graded as Requires Improvement or Inadequate are more likely to improve at the next inspection. Schools graded as outstanding are decreasing in number as many receive a lower grading in the next inspection.
- Part time timetables are used as an alternative to exclusion. There is a danger that part time timetables could be misused. There has been an increase in exclusions nationally at secondary level (although an overall decrease in secondary exclusions in Hackney).
- There are insufficient powers to regulate unregistered schools. This has been an issue in Hackney.
- There is significant SEND weakness nationally. There are delays in accessing support.
- Some children may have been mistakenly identified as having SEND. The proposals in the green paper are addressing these issues. There has been a rise in independent special schools nationally.
- There have been difficulties in finding training places for teachers nationally. This does not appear to be an issue as Hackney works closely with the East London teaching hub, but governors are advised to check the position with their schools.

- Ofsted reported that feedback from inspection suggests that the Early Career Framework is seen as cumbersome and adding to the overall workload in schools.
- There have been no exclusions in the past few years in Hackney Primary schools. However, it is still important to be aware of the possibility of offrolling.

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- **Monday 6 March 17:00 - 19:00**
[What do Governors need to know about the Ofsted Inspection process?](#)

3. Assuring Provision for Pupils with SEND

SEND Strategy 2022-2025

Hackney has launched a new SEND Strategy 2022-25. We would like to thank all partners who have worked with us to produce this.

The Strategy has been co-produced with a wide range of key stakeholders across Hackney including: Families, young people, schools and settings. The overall aim of the Strategy is to provide detail on Hackney's current approach to SEND, and to set key priority areas for the coming years.

Hackney has a vision to provide an excellent, inclusive and equitable local experience for all Hackney children and young people with SEND. We want all our children and young people to have access to the right support at the right time from local services and to be able to travel easily to a great inclusive local school which engages with their neighbourhood parent/carer community. We want all our children and young people to be in schools and to access services which fairly reflect the diversity of the Hackney community.

The four main priorities in the Strategy will ensure that the above vision is progressed for our children and young people and are as follows:

- Priority One - Outstanding Provision and Services
- Priority Two - An Earlier Response
- Priority Three - Preparing for Adulthood
- Priority Four - Joining up our Services

Relevant Announcements and Reports

SEND Inspection

Ofsted published its new [SEND Inspection framework & handbook on 29 November 2022](#).

The framework outlines a new inspection model which will include full inspections, monitoring inspections, engagement meetings and area SEND thematic visits. Inspections will be unannounced and will be undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspectors who will look at:

- The experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND; and
- How local area partners work together to plan, evaluate and develop the SEND system.

Inspection outcomes will be published and will determine the timing and type of further inspection arrangements within the framework.

The framework sets out that inspectors will meet with children & young people, parents & carers and practitioners offsite during week 2 and onsite during week 3. This is likely to include education professionals in multi-agency tracking meetings as well as sampling visits to providers & services across education, health and care to review the experiences of Hackney resident children & young people (including those at SEN Support). During these sampling visits, inspectors may include meeting children & young people and, if appropriate, scrutinising files and talking to practitioners.

Hackney's SEND provision was last inspected in November 2017 and we, therefore, anticipate a full inspection of our arrangements across education, health and care early on in the cycle. Schools & settings will have an important role to play in the inspection and we encourage you to read the inspection framework and handbook ahead of an inspection being announced.

We will also place SEND Inspection briefings on agendas for various school based forums and meetings.

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- **28th March 2023 17:00 - 19:00** [How do we ensure an inclusive approach for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\)](#)

4. Sustainable School Systems

Disability Access Fund

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) can help schools make their settings accessible to children with special needs. The funding can help providers make reasonable adjustments to their settings.

Schools can use the funding, for example, to purchase specialist equipment or seek specialist training that would help meet the child's needs. Three and four year olds are eligible for DAF funding, if they meet the following criteria:

- the child receives child disability living allowance (DLA); and
- the child receives 3 and 4 year old funded early education.

Schools are responsible for identifying eligible children, and will need to obtain confirmation that the child is eligible before contacting Hackney Education Schools' Finance team to verify the child's DAF status. Any children confirmed as eligible will then need to be recorded as eligible in the January school census.

Relevant Announcements and Reports

- <https://www.education-today.co.uk/fuelling-learning-with-magic-breakfast/>
- <https://www.education-today.co.uk/achieving-sustainability-and-value-for-money-through-technology-procurement/>

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- **Thursday 9 February, 17:00 - 19:00** [Staff welfare, morale and workload: how do schools create excellent workplaces with a diverse workforce?](#)
- **Wednesday 1 March, 17:00 - 19:00** [How does the Chair of Governors shape strong governance and what is distinct about this role?](#)
- **Wednesday 15 March, 09:00 - 11:00** [How do you strategically assess and manage risks in your schools?](#)

5. Safeguarding, wellbeing and pastoral provision

Relevant Announcements and Reports

CHSCP Annual Report for 2021/22

- The [CHSCP annual report for 2021/22](#) has been published on the [CHSCP website](#). The report sets out examples of the impact, evidence, assurance and learning arising from the safeguarding arrangements in the City of London and the London Borough of Hackney.
- It covers activity between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 and includes the following:
- The governance and accountability arrangements for the CHSCP's safeguarding arrangements.
- The context for safeguarding children in the City of London, highlighting the progress made by the City partnership over the last year.

- The context for safeguarding children in the London Borough of Hackney, highlighting the progress made by the Hackney partnership over the last year.
- The lessons that the CHSCP has identified through its Learning & Improvement Framework and the actions taken to improve child safeguarding and welfare as a result of this activity.
- The range and impact of the multi-agency safeguarding training delivered by the CHSCP.
- The CHSCP's priorities going forward and its most recent draft Strategic Threat Assessment.
- The key messages for those involved in the safeguarding of children and young people.

Governor Training - hosted virtually

- **Tuesday 14 March, 17:00 - 19:00** [How do we safeguard our children including those from Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic communities?](#)
- **Wednesday 29 March 09:00 - 11:00** [How can we improve the outcomes for those children most at risk of exclusion?](#)

